



Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2025

The Centre at University Park

Attendance: Ben France, James Ferstl, Samuel Ellis, Cannon Fletcher, Mike Bernardo, Summer Campbell, Chemia Woods, Quinten Whiteside

Absent: Ron Bara, Quincy Grant, City Director-Andrea Lewis

City Board of Director Liaison: City Director-Capi Peck

LRPR/LRCAO Staff: Parks Director-Leland Couch, Deputy Director Administration Resources-Angela Nelson, Deputy Director Recreation-Shawanda Craig, Deputy Director Operations-Justin Dorsey, Deputy City Attorney-Simone Blagg, Courtney Perry-Safety and Training Coordinator, Administrative Assistant to the Parks Director-Mahogany Burkhalter, Karen Sykes-Volunteer Coordinator, Graham Brown-Parks Data and Marketing Coordinator, Kyndall Richardson-Secretary, Savannah Wells-Secretary

Welcome: Chairman France welcomed everyone. Meeting called to order at 12:04 pm.

Roll Call: Roll call completed. Eight (8) Commissioners out of Ten (10) Commissioners in attendance. Quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman France asked for a motion to approve January 2025 minutes & February 2025 minutes. Commissioner Campbell made a motion for the approval of the minutes. Motion 2nd by Commissioner Ellis. Motion carried

Citizen Communication: No Citizen Communication.

Staff Reports/Director's Presentation/Events:

Director's Presentation:

Director Couch presented on the following:

- BOD Agenda Items & Upcoming Items from Parks
 - ❖ Strategic Plan – Explained what the plan is, encouraged Commissioners to review and provide input.
 - ❖ War Memorial Playground Improvement presented to the BOD and hopefully will be approved next week.
 - ❖ Future items for BOD:
 - New Golf Cart Fleet for Rebsamen
 - Reservoir Playground Improvements/Design that will be taken to the BOD
 - ❖ LR Marathon was successful



- ❖ Thanks for LRM – Parks Directed expressed his appreciation and thanked the LR Marathon Staff, Parks Staff, Fire Dept, Police Dept, and all other City Employees, and Volunteers who assisted with the LR Marathon.
 - ❖ Parks Department applied for a CPRG Grant through Metroplan for War Memorial Park.
 - ❖ Parks Department supported the Rose Creek Initiative application for a CPRG Grant.
 - ❖ Parks Department will apply for an additional that will be applied towards War Memorial Park Infrastructure.
 - ❖ Employee News
 - Sue Matheny – Acting Role at the
 - Michael Ingram – New Position – Facility Supervisor
 - Working to backfill this position – Candidate has been selected.
 - New Parttime position being offered as well.
 - Graham Brown – New Position – Parks Data and Marketing Coordinator
 - ❖ Facility Supervisor – Michael Ingram wants to restart the Parks Commission Fundraiser Golf Tourney. He extended invite to the Commission to restart this initiative. Chairmen France will meet with Michael to get information and discuss logistics and dates to share with the Commission.
- Events
 - ❖ Project Impact on April 26th dates were given out. They're also listed in the February Minutes
 - ❖ City Director Capi Peck – May 21st, 5pm -7 pm-Fundraiser for Reservoir Park tornado recovery at Trios Restaurant. Please come out and support.

Questions from the Director's Report.

- ❖ Commissioner Whiteside asked about overcrowding at Rebsamen Golf Course. Michael advised that they're the most attended city owned golf course. They're working with the Volunteer coordinator to get volunteer marshals to assist with moving play along. Rebsamen Golf Course is an Executive Nine course and not a full championship course. Director Couch advised that improvements to the golf course were listed in the Sales Tax Initiative, but it wasn't approved. But trying to work with that funds they have.
- ❖ Commissioner Fletcher asked about an AI chatbot for the website, Graham advised of the City of Little Rocks new AI system.



Staff Reports:

- Karen Sykes – Presented an Invitation to Impact the Rock which is the City’s Beautification Day. The event date is April 26, 2025 – Saturday at 9am.
 - ❖ There will be a project in every ward to attend.
 - ❖ Will have Speakers
 - ❖ Lunch will be served at 11:30am
 - ❖ There are three (3) for Parks
 - Fouche Creek in Benny Craig Park. Cleaning the waterway via Canoes and Kayaks
 - Rock Creek Trail – Picking up Litter
 - Reservoir Park – Tree planting (1st Post tornado event)
 - ❖ Projects in each Ward
 - Ward 1 - Downtown LR Streets
 - Ward 2 - Benny Craig Park
 - Ward 3 - Little Rock Zoo
 - Ward 4 - Reservoir Park
 - Ward 5 - Rock Creek
 - Ward 6 - Kanis Road
 - Ward 7 - The Animal Village

Presentation:

- No Presentation

Unfinished Business:

- Subcommittee Reports
 - ❖ Masterplan Subcommittee – Chair - JT Ferstl stated that they met prior to the meeting.
 - Commissioner Ferstl stated that they will review the Strategic Plan and bring back a list to the Commission of ideas that are in line with the Plan.
 - Commissioner Fletcher requested the following.
 - Digital copy of Strategic Plan
 - Digital copy of the Indoor/Outdoor Facility War Memorial Youth Sports Complex.
 - Digital Copy of the LRCVB and Parks and Rec reports from the past year or two.
 - Digital Copy of any consulting reports that supported the Sales Tax Initiative.
 - ❖ Parks Conservancy – Chair – Sam Ellis will start to plan to attend their meetings going forward. Next Meeting is 4/2/2025 at Trios Restaurant.



- ❖ Marketing Subcommittee – Chair - Quinten Whiteside no report but will work with Graham now that he is in place.
- Chairman France asked if they could move to new business since a lot of the items were listed in New Business as well. No one was opposed. Moved onto New Business.

New Business:

- Quarterly Site Visits at the Center/Parks visit dates for Parks Commission & Vote on the dates for the Quarterly Visits.
 - ❖ Chairman France suggested doing social outings for three dates
 - April 24th at 5pm, Thursday afternoon/evening – MacArthur Park / AMFA
 - July 10th at 4pm, Thursday afternoon – Southwest CC or West Central CC-Ballfield.
 - October 9th at 4pm, Thursday afternoon – Boyle Park
 - ❖ Commissioner Woods requested that she or Commissioner Whiteside are present so that the Marketing committee can get photos to document the event.
 - ❖ Commissioner Woods submitted a motion for site visits. Commissioner Fletcher 2nd the motion. Motion carried.
- Finalize details for Parks Commission – BOD Presentation (Summer Playground Program, Sales Tax Efforts, Kanis Park Improvement, any extra ideas that haven sent in)
 - ❖ Chairman France put together a Draft Presentation and presented it for review.
 - ❖ Commissioners and Park Director offered suggestion and discussed draft.
 - ❖ Deputy Atty Blagg suggested a Special Meeting as an option for the Commission to discuss and work on the presentation.
 - ❖ Commissioner Woods made a motion to have a special meeting to discuss meeting.
 - ❖ Motion passed for Virtual Special Meeting on Wednesday 3/19/25
 - ❖ Parks Director and Deputy Atty Blagg discussed getting on the BOD calendar and the process.
 - ❖ Commissioner Bernardo asked about attendance in reference to bylaws, special meeting, and special outings.
- Vote on Applications for Commission Vacancies
 - ❖ Chairman France asked about the vacancy process.
 - ❖ Director Couch advised that he thought it was best for this to be discussed with the Commission.
 - ❖ City Director, Capi Peck stated that it has never been done this way.
 - ❖ Vice Chair Ferstl stated that these bylaws were made prior to the current administration and suggested that they may need to be amended.
 - ❖ Parks Director suggested that they meet offline w/ BOD Liaison Peck to discuss options.
- Discuss/Vote on Extending Meeting Time



- ❖ Chairman France asked for motion to vote to move meeting time to 11:45 am.
 - Vice Chair Ferstl made a motion. Motion 2nd by Woods. Motion passed.
 - Meeting will now start at 11:45 am starting April 9th meeting.
- Discuss Commission Absenteeism/Commission Removal
 - ❖ Commissioner Fletcher asked about the process to appeal the removal. Advised that per bylaws the BOD still has to approve.

Agenda items for next meeting:

- Discuss Special Meeting on March 19, 2025

Board – liaison Feedback

- City Director – Capi Peck –
 - ❖ Impact the Rock.
 - ❖ Fundraiser for Reservoir Park at Trios on May 21st.
 - ❖ Litter problem across the city.
 - ❖ Pick It up Campaign w/ CALS
 - ❖ Adopt A Street, Park, Hwy.

**Meeting location for next meeting will be at The Centre at University Park .*

Meeting Adjourned at 1:09 pm