



Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

May 9, 2024

The Centre at University Park

Attendance: Ben France, Samuel Ellis, Cannon Fletcher, Linda Smith, Mike Bernardo, Ron Bara, Summer Campbell, Chemia Woods, Quinten Whiteside

Absent: James Ferstl, Quincy Grant, City Director-Capi Peck, City Director-Andrea Lewis

City Board of Director Liaison:

LRPR Staff:

Parks Director-Leland Couch, Deputy Director Administration-Angela Nelson, Deputy Director Recreation-Shawanda Craig, City Attorney-Beth Carpenter, Data Special Programs Coordinator-Briana Hatfield, Parks Marketing and Social Media Coordinator-Brittany Nichols, Administrative Assistant Parks Director-Mahogany Burkhalter

Welcome: Chairman France: Welcomed everyone.

Roll Call: Roll call completed. Nine (9) Commissioners in attendance out of Eleven (11) Commissioners in attendance. A Quorum was established. Introduction of Simone Blagg, new City Attorney working with City Attorney Beth Carpenter and the Parks Commission.

Approval of Minutes: Chairman France asked for a motion to approve minutes. Commissioner Mike Bernardo made a motion for approval of the minutes. 2nd by Commissioner Ron Bara.

Citizen Communication: Ryne Pruitt with the Walton Heights Neighborhood Association made a presentation to the Commission regarding the Associations efforts to build a playground in the area on the South side of South Ridge. He advised that they're working with LR Parks and Recreation on the design and will not move forward until the project has been approved by LR Parks and Recreation. Chairman France wanted to know if the area was city owned. Parks Director advised that the area was owned by the city. He also encouraged this approach because they have secured outside funding to assist with the project and are working closely with the Parks Department. Chairman France discussed the upcoming Sales Tax ward meetings and discussed the need for the commissioners to attend and support.

Director Presentation: Director's Report: Parks Director opened the floor to questions in reference to the Staff Reports. Commissioner Fletcher asked about Jim Dailey. Director Couch advised of the following items:

- The computer system was interrupted when the old systems were removed.
- Computers are back online with a few challenges.
- Multiple Air Conditioners went down but service has been restored.



- An AC Unit failed and is being replaced.
- A water leak was discovered and is being repaired.
- The new HVAC units have been delivered and are waiting to be installed.
- Will work to do a ceiling and stain cleaning.
- The roof has some issues and is being patched.
- There will need to be a roof project set in the future to address other roof issues but just attempting to get Jim Dailey back and fully open again.
- Projected date of all repairs being completed is before the end of the Summer.
- Reviewed recent BOD Item that has been approved. The Musco System Project for West Central Complex. Advised that the funds for this project have to be used quickly. Removed Musco Lights from project. Received BOD approval for this to be encumbered.
- Listed the upcoming projects that will be presented to the BOD in the upcoming meetings.
- Applying for Outdoor Rec Grant – State grant used in the past for playground purchase.
- Looking to add an Archery range.
- Considering improvements for Soft-Surface trails & Disc Golf at Reservoir.
- The BOD provided funds for an ADA transition plan. Working with Cromwell on this proposal to take the BOD for approval.
- ARPA projects discussed over the past year which include West Central Ballfield, Dunbar Community Center, Stephens Community Center, East Community Center, Senior Facility at the Centre at University Park, and the Senior Facility at Southwest Community Center. These are all projects slated for upcoming Bid. Some are already out to Bid and working to get the others out. BOD allocated 2 million from ARPA funds for general improvements. These funds will go toward deferred maintenance issues. It's exciting because we can actually replace and fix things. Updates will mostly be aesthetic improvements. There will be no new square footage and additions of that nature. West Central was removed from this list because ARPA funds were already allocated to that center for another project. No new renovations have been done since the addition was completed at Dunbar Community Center in 2006. East Little Rock Center has been closed since then. Working to address the community's needs for spaces by getting East Little Rock Center back online.
- Discussed upcoming Sales Tax Meeting. Provided schedule and handouts as an overview of the items will be covered especially with Parks being a big part of the initiative. Discussed the following items.
- The Indoor Sports Complex was discussed in detail. The Complex will house Volleyball, basketball, and pickleball courts. There is a need for more space to build a standalone facility. Hopeful to be able to acquire the funds to build in the future.
- The Downtown Little Rock area update was discussed in detail.



- Discussed the status of First Tee and the process behind rebranding the golf course in place of building a new course. Looking to add Cart paths and a few other improvements.
- Continued Sales Tax discussion. Decided to place this on the next meetings Agenda after the Sales Tax meetings have been completed.

Presentations: Deputy Director Shawanda Craig gave a requested presentation on the Summer Programs and discussed what indoor and outdoor activities are being offered at the centers.

Unfinished Business

Subcommittees and the appointment of Chairs were discussed. A decision was made to table the voting due to lateness of time.

New Business

The subcommittees were going to give a small overview of their purpose and their objectives. It was determined at that time that City employees could not chair subcommittees. The discussion continued about possibly changing the subcommittee. The option of making an amendment to the bylaws was offered. It was decided that a possible amendment would be tabled and discussed at the next meeting.

New Items for Next Meeting:

Outdoor Recreation Grant Application

Subcommittees will be discussed.

Appointment of Chairs for Subcommittee.

Voting for the Chairs.

A discussion about possible amendment of the bylaws.

Follow-up feedback from Sales Tax Meeting

Board Liaison Feedback

Board Directors were absent due to this being a rescheduled meeting.

Director Peck had a previously scheduled meeting conflict.

Director Lewis was away representing Little Rock at the Daisy Bates statue unveiling in Washington, D.C.

Meeting Adjourned at 1:00 pm