

Norman Board of Parks Commissioners
June 6, 2024

The Norman Board of Parks Commissioners of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building on the 6th day of June 2024 at 5:30 p.m., and notice of the agenda of the meeting was posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and on the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Davison, Isacksen, Ross, Sallee, Usry, and Wright

Absent: Commissioners Moxley and One Vacancy

City Officials

Present: Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation
James Briggs, Park Development Manager
Mitchell Richardson, Interim Recreation Manager
Wade Thompson, Parks Manager
Karla Sitton, Administrative Technician IV

ITEM 1, being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDED AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 4, 2024, PARK BOARD MEETING

Commissioner Usry made the motion, and Commissioner Ross seconded to approve the Park Board minutes on April 4, 2024. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Davison, Isacksen, Ross, Sallee, Usry, and Wright

NAY: None

ITEM 2, being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDED AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF PREVIOUSLY APPROVED COUNCIL ACTIONS

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, highlighted the previously approved Council actions pertaining to the Parks and Recreation Department as follows:

- Proclamation P-2324-30 proclaiming May 18, 2024, as Kids to Parks Day in the City of Norman.
 - Proclamation P-2324-35 proclaiming May 17, 2024, as Bike-To-Work Day in the City of Norman.
 - Proclamation P-2324-35 proclaiming the Month of May 2024 as Oklahoma Water Safety Month in the City of Norman.
 - Contract K-1920-133 for Authorization for Partial Release of Retainage, from 5% to 2.5%, with Crossland Construction, Inc., for the Municipal Court Portion of the Municipal Complex Renovations Project.
 - Contract K-2324-47 with Can Do, LLC, for the Sutton Wilderness Park Trail Upgrade and Parking Lot Addition Project and Final Payment of \$22,500.
 - Contract K-2324-183 with Coca-Cola Southwest Beverages LLC, for Exclusive Sale of Coke Products at the Young Family Athletic Center, Westwood Golf Course, and Westwood Family Aquatic Center in Exchange for \$82,500 in Incentive Fees to be Paid Over the Five Year Term of the Contract.
 - Contract K-2324-184 with GSB, Inc., in the amount of \$54,240 for the Westwood Park Golf and Tennis Facilities Master Plan Project.
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ITEM 3, being:

ANNUAL PRESENTATION FROM THE FIREHOUSE ART CENTER

Mr. Andy Couch, Firehouse Art Center (FAC) Director, presented the Firehouse Art Center (FAC) annual report and highlighted the Board of Directors and FAC Staff. He said the Board increased from a 5-member to an 8-member Board and introduced Ms. Kendall Hurley, FAC Board President. Mr. Couch said the FAC serves thousands of children, teens, and adults through visual arts programming, including painting, jewelry making, glass, and ceramics. He gave an overview of FAC's programming, including the Healing Studio, Art Forces, and Healing Outreach. He said FAC has several new programs, including Zoo Sketch, Fire Tots, and Firehouse Equality Club. Mr. Couch said the Firehouse Gallery and Gift Shop are free to the public, promote visual arts awareness, and provide art exhibitions and opportunities to local artists. He said that in FYE 2022-23, 1,054 participants attended FAC classes, and 3,223 attended the FAC gallery, gift shop, and various community events.

Ms. Hurley said FAC has partnerships with Soonercon, Pioneer Library System, Mayfair Arts Festival, Oklahoma Craft Brewers Association, Norman Pride, Equity Brewing, and the University of Guadalajara. She said new fundraising initiatives include an annual Chili Bowl, Beer Tasting, and Mario Kart Live at exhibitions and monthly workshops.

Before the meeting, staff provided the FAC FYE 2022-2023 Budget and Financials to the Board. Mr. Couch said the FAC had its highest revenue year ever at \$480,000 and expects it to be \$600,000 next year. Commissioner Isacksen asked about the Master's Endowment Liability Fund and Madole Arts Education Liability Fund #1231 listed on the Statement of Financial Position and whether that money was set aside for a particular reason. Mr. Couch said FAC has many different endowments at the Community Foundation of Oklahoma (CFO), which are gifted annually to FAC. Chair Sheriff noted this is the most active she has seen the FAC, and the Board agreed, thanking Mr. Couch and Ms. Hurley for all their efforts.

The Board acknowledged the report.

ITEM 4 being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDED AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF A DONATION TO THE FIREHOUSE ART CENTER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$120,652

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said the Firehouse Art Center (FAC) approached staff regarding a proposed Pottery Patio Project and Security System Plan. The patio project will entail renovating the current kiln yard into a small outdoor event space with a functional gas kiln and space for a new clay mixer, and the new area will provide additional space for events. Mr. Olsen said the FAC also plans to install a new security system to increase the safety of their faculty, students, and citizens visiting the facility. He told the FAC that he voted to approve an allocation of \$25,000 to develop the patio, and the City has agreed to assist with the concrete for the patio, and construction needs to add a new garage door.

Mr. Olsen said the Kirkpatrick Pottery Patio and Security System funding will consist of a \$10,000 grant from the Kirkpatrick Family Fund, a \$74,152 grant from the American Rescue Plan Act Funds from the Oklahoma Arts Council, a \$11,500 FAC cash contribution from remaining grant funds from the Zarrow Family Foundation and an in-kind donation from the P&R Department for \$25,000 for a total of \$120,652.

Staff recommended that the Board recommend that the City Council accept the grants and in-kind donations in the amount of \$120,652 for improvements to the Kirkpatrick Pottery Patio, Security System, and new garage door at the FAC. The Board discussed and agreed.

Commissioner Sallee made the motion, and Commissioner Wright seconded to recommend that the City Council accept the grants and in-kind donations in the amount of \$120,652 for improvements to the Kirkpatrick Pottery Patio, Security System, and new garage door at the FAC. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Davison, Isacksen, Ross, Sallee, Usry, and Wright

NAY: None

ITEM 5 being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDED AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE RED EARTH GROUP AND SIERRA CLUB'S REQUEST FOR THE PRAIRIE RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION PLAN FOR SAXON PARK

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said representatives from the Red Earth Group of the Sierra Club approached staff about starting a prairie restoration pilot project at Saxon Park, which included a request to use one to two acres near the park entrance. Mr. Howard Bear, Sierra Club, gave a short presentation to the Board. He highlighted the history of prairie restoration and said Norman has some prime open grasslands at Saxon Park, which include many invasive plants.

Mr. Bear said the Cross Timber Prairie Restoration Project Committee (Prairie Committee) met with the Parks and Recreation (P&R) Staff in February 2024 to discuss selecting 1 to 2 acres for the project. He distributed a current plant inventory that the Prairie Committee performed for Saxon Park. He said the Prairie Committee would like to formalize a commitment with P&R Staff for a long-term shared vision as well as a list of the following best steps to include: determining a spray schedule, strategic mowing schedules, assessing what invasive plants are located in Saxon Park (to include the creek bed area), stake 1 to 2 acres for the project, design and purchase temporary signage that state "Cross Timber Prairie Restoration Project – Watch Us Grow" (and include the City and Sierra Club logos) and work with the City Forester to remove some of the trees, i.e., honey locusts and some of the red cedar.

Mr. Bear said the Prairie Committee would also like to minimize the lighting at Saxon Park because overzealous lighting affects migratory birds and can ruin public viewing of night sky/star gazing. He suggested downward-pointing lights to reduce light pollution or benign light colors such as red/yellow instead of white.

Ms. Bethany Grissom, Park Planner, said the project could begin in the spring of 2025 with a controlled burn (with assistance from the Norman Fire Department) and that staff has gathered a small collection of native seeds. She said a small pilot patch could be reseeded in the fall of 2024 or early spring 2025. Mr. Bear said the long-term maintenance would include watering on small patches, weeding, controlled burn every 3-5 years, strategic mowing, possible treatment(s) with benign herbicides, and additional seeding. He said the Sierra Club has some money to start the pilot project (\$500 - \$2000), and if the project is successful, the goal would be to expand the prairie restoration to open grassland.

Mr. Olsen said Staff recommends that Park Staff and the Red Earth Group of the Sierra Club work toward a functional project plan for the Prairie Restoration at Saxon Park.

Commissioner Ross made the motion, and Commissioner Isacksen seconded to recommend Park Staff and the Red Earth Group of the Sierra Club work toward a functional project plan for the Prairie Restoration at Saxon Park. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Davison, Isacksen, Ross, Sallee, Usry, and Wright

NAY: None

Additionally, Mr. Olsen said staff further recommends that once the parties agree upon a Prairie Restoration Project Plan, the Director of Parks and Recreation can approve the Plan.

Commissioner Davison made the motion, and Commissioner Ross seconded to recommend that once the parties agree upon a Prairie Restoration Project Plan, the Director of Parks and Recreation can approve the Plan. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Davison, Isacksen, Ross, Sallee, Usry, and Wright

NAY: None

ITEM 6 being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDED AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE WESTWOOD GOLF AND TENNIS MASTER PLAN PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jason Olsen, Parks and Recreation Director, said on May 28, 2024, the City Council appropriated funds in the amount of \$29,240 from the Community Park Development Fund Balance into the Westwood Park Master Plan Project and approved Contract K-2324-184 to GSB, Inc., in the total amount of \$54,240 for the Westwood Park Golf and Tennis Master Plan Project (WWPGT) Master Plan. He said staff selected local citizens and/or professionals to give input and assist with the design of the WWPGT Master Plan. The members are Judith Blake, Rick Davis, Jud Foster, Mandy Haws, Kyle Hurley, Sean Simpson, and Nina Wadley. Mr. Olsen said the Steering Committee will have a kick-off meeting tomorrow, June 7th, to begin the process that will result in a guiding design program to help plan for a significant project at Westwood Park to modernize and expand the facility and bring those areas up to the standard set by the new Westwood Family Aquatic Facility and the Westwood Indoor Tennis Facility built in the early phases of Norman Forward. He said that when designed, the proposed WWPGT Master Plan will be returned to the Park Board for their consideration, approval, and recommendation to the City Council.

Mr. Olsen said staff recommends the Board direct the Parks and Recreation Director to accept the WWPGT Master Plan Steering Committee.

Commissioner Wright made the motion, and Commissioner Davison seconded to direct the Parks and Recreation Director to accept the Westwood Park Golf and Tennis Master Plan Project Steering Committee. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Davison, Isacksen, Ross, Sallee, Usry, and Wright
NAY: None

ITEM 7 being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDED AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE 12TH AVENUE PICKLE BALL RULES

Mr. James Briggs, Park Development Manager, said that in 2019, the 12th Avenue Recreation Center updated half of its outdoor tennis courts to pickleball courts. Since opening, the pickleball activity has been very successful and highly used on the court. He said 12th Avenue Recreation Center is close to a neighborhood, and the success of the pickleball courts has come with frustration from the neighborhood due to the noise produced by the court and players. He said the neighbors have asked the city and staff to develop solutions to help with the noise and that the staff has researched rules for other communities.

Mr. Briggs highlighted the 12th Avenue Recreation Center pickleball rules and etiquette to include the park hours, no smoking and/or alcohol allowed in the park, no glass containers and/or animals allowed on the courts, no motorized vehicles are allowed on unpaved surfaces and the courts are closed at dark. He said the permanent nets cannot be removed, the court is first come, first serve, and no tournament or league play may be scheduled without contacting staff. Mr. Briggs said patrons should refrain from using loud music, profanity, and abusive language and that all litter should be placed in trash receptacles. He said if the Board approves the 12th Avenue Recreation Pickleball rules, signage reflecting the rules and etiquette will be placed near the pickleball courts.

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said staff researched sound barriers; however, they are very costly and would not allow any wind. He told staff that he welcomes any input and/or suggestions regarding the rules and etiquette highlighted today. Member Wright asked if the proposed rules only apply to the 12th Avenue Recreation Center pickleball court, and staff said yes for now. When completed, Mr. Briggs noted Bentley Park would include a pickleball court and similar rules may be posted there. Member Ross asked whether lighting would be installed, and the staff said no, as the pickleball court is closed at

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dusk/night. Member Isacksen asked whether the trash receptacles are easy to access, and the staff said yes, but more can be added.

Commissioner Usry made the motion, and Commissioner Isacksen seconded to direct the Parks and Recreation Director to adopt and post the Pickleball Rules at the 12th Avenue Recreation Center Tennis/Pickleball Courts, as well as all Pickleball Courts in the City of Norman, excluding Westwood Tennis. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Davison, Isacksen, Ross, Sallee, Usry, and Wright

NAY: None

ITEM 8 being:

NORMAN FORWARD UPDATE

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, highlighted the Norman Forward projects.

Bentley Park

Mr. Olsen said we are starting to wrap up work at Bentley Park to prepare it for a grand opening/ribbon cutting in 30-60 days.

Falls-Lakeview and Sunrise Parks

Mr. Olsen said crews finished installing the playground replacement at Falls-Lakeview Park, and a separate crew is working on installing the new play equipment, improving/expanding walkways, and some new tree plantings at Sunrise Park. He said staff will schedule future ribbon cuttings for the new playgrounds at both parks and will notify the Park Board so they can attend.

Saxon Park

Mr. Olsen said the Saxon Park Ad Hoc Group met in April and May and is scheduled to meet on June 14th. He said the early estimates were about 10-15% over the \$2 million budget. Wallace Design Collective will bring back a proposed design, including cost-saving options to get the project back into budget.

James Garner Legacy Trail

Mr. Olsen said the James Garner Legacy Trail over Robinson Street is nearly complete and said the "Revolution" art installation will be installed in the next few weeks. He said the overpass work across Robinson Street and the roundabout north of Robinson Street at Flood Avenue are Public Works projects, and Norman Forward is funding the art piece. Mr. Olsen said a ribbon cutting/art dedication will soon be scheduled.

Adult Wellness and Education Center (AWE)

The AWE has 3,000+ members, but the membership numbers and revenue coming into the AWE are a little deceiving. Mr. Olsen said many membership(s) are paid by insurance plans (Silver Sneakers, etc.); however, if an AWE member who has Silver Sneakers insurance does not visit for a month, Healthy Living will not receive \$7 per visit (with a \$21 maximum) from Silver Sneakers, for that particular month and member. He said approximately 50% of the members are paying the regular individual monthly fee of \$35, while others are utilizing insurance and/or scholarship discounts. He said the AWE should break even when the membership numbers are 3,200 to 3,500. Mr. Olsen said staff is honing in on the classes that have good attendance and/or can be combined, while eliminating classes that are not doing well to save on instructor fees.

ITEM 9 being:

DIVISION UPDATES

Mr. Mitchell Richardson, Recreation Manager, said the YFAC just finished registration the Men's Summer Basketball League, which starts on June 10th, and Adult Volleyball registration is still open. He said the Legacy Park Fest, a battle of the bands type of festival featuring four local bands, will be held on June 8th, and

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Westwood Family Aquatic Center (WWFAC) will host Let It Glow (21 years and up) on June 14th and the World's Largest Swim Lesson on June 20th. Mr. Richardson said additional events include Juneteenth at Reaves Park on June 19th and three on July 4th, beginning with the Firecracker 5K at Legacy Park, Red, White, and Blue swim at WWFAC, and Norman Fourth Fest at Reaves Park.

Mr. James Briggs, Park Development Manager, said the City Council will consider approving a contract with Davey Resource Group (Davey) on June 11th for services to include a tree inventory, review/update the City's Tree Ordinance, and work with City Staff to produce an Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP), which will help guide the work plan for the City Forester for the next decade and beyond. He said Davey should begin the tree inventory from July to early August and only count trees in City parks and other public properties (located in town, owned by the City, and containing trees). Mr. Briggs said the UFMP should take approximately one year and will include citizen outreach, staff feedback, and inventory data collected by Davey. He said staff will soon begin working on the next new neighborhood park near the Southlake Division and The Links Apartments. A contractor is currently painting the Cleveland County Historical House, and a separate contractor is working on repairing and replacing the Sooner Theatre sign.

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Sheriff adjourned the meeting at 7:14 p.m.

Passed and approved this _____ of _____ 2024

Sherril Sheriff, Chair