



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION - AMENDED

Municipal Building, Executive Conference Room, 201 West Gray, Norman,
OK 73069

Tuesday, June 16, 2026 at 5:30 PM

MINUTES

The City Council Study Session of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room in the Municipal Building, on Tuesday, June 16, 2026 at 5:30 PM, and notice of the agenda of the meeting was posted at the Norman Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and on the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

It is the policy of the City of Norman that no person or groups of persons shall on the grounds of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, marital status, including marriage to a person of the same sex, disability, relation, or genetic information, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in employment activities or in all programs, services, or activities administered by the City, its recipients, sub-recipients, and contractors. In the event of any comments, complaints, modifications, accommodations, alternative formats, and auxiliary aids and services regarding accessibility or inclusion, please call 405-366-5424, Relay Service: 711. To better serve you, five (5) business days' advance notice is preferred.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Holman called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Stephen Holman
Councilmember Ward 1 David Gandesbery
Councilmember Ward 2 Matthew Peacock
Councilmember Ward 3 Robert Bruce
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Trey Kirby
Councilmember Ward 6 Joshua Hinkle
Councilmember Ward 7 Kimberly Blodgett

ABSENT

Councilmember Ward 8 Scott Dixon

AGENDA ITEMS

1. CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING UPDATES TO ORDINANCES RELATED TO CITY PARKS AND CAMPING ON PUBLIC PROPERTY.

Mr. Rick Knighton, City Attorney, presented proposed ordinance language related to conduct in City parks and camping on public property. Mr. Knighton explained that the first proposed ordinance would amend existing regulations applicable to Sutton Urban Wilderness and expand certain provisions to other community and neighborhood parks. A second proposed ordinance would separately address camping on public property.

Council reviewed proposed changes related to activities in City parks, including watercraft, firearms and other projectile devices, motorized vehicles, bicycles and electric-assisted bicycles, park hours, posted park rules, organized activities, fires, signage, animals, alcohol, glass containers, drones, and other park uses. Staff explained that several provisions were being updated to comply with state law and to distinguish between activities appropriate for Sutton Urban Wilderness and those appropriate for neighborhood and community parks.

Council discussed the distinction between administrative park rules and codified ordinances. Staff explained that incorporating certain prohibitions into City ordinance would allow violations to be enforced directly rather than requiring officers to first provide notice and rely upon trespassing provisions. Council discussed retaining operational flexibility for Parks and Recreation staff and the Board of Park Commissioners while codifying rules that warrant stronger enforcement.

Mr. Knighton also reviewed a proposed ordinance prohibiting camping and maintaining campsites on public property except in connection with City-sponsored or City-approved events. Council discussed the need for exceptions to accommodate activities such as the Medieval Fair, organized recreational events, scouting activities, and other approved events where overnight camping may be appropriate.

The proposed ordinance also addressed obstruction of sidewalks, trails, public entrances, easements, and ADA-accessible routes; notice and outreach prior to removal of unauthorized campsites; coordination with service providers and shelters; enforcement options; and removal of personal property associated with unauthorized campsites.

Council discussed the importance of providing reasonable notice and an opportunity for individuals to voluntarily remove their belongings when practical. Several Councilmembers expressed a preference that the City coordinate with service providers, shelters, outreach organizations, and other agencies when addressing unauthorized campsites rather than making such coordination discretionary. Council also discussed development of a consistent Citywide policy for handling personal property removed from campsites, including identification documents, medications, and other important belongings, while recognizing safety concerns associated with handling unknown property.

Item 1, continued

Additional discussion included the appropriate definition of City-approved events, emergency exceptions, the length and circumstances of notice prior to campsite removal, and the need to preserve flexibility when immediate action is necessary to address public health or safety concerns.

Staff indicated that the proposed language would be revised based upon Council's comments and brought forward for first reading at a future Council meeting, with consideration given to allowing incoming Councilmembers an opportunity to review and provide input before final action.

2. CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING THE SOONER MALL SALES TAX REBATE AGREEMENT.

Ms. Kathryn Walker, Assistant City Attorney, presented additional information regarding the proposed Sooner Mall Sales Tax Rebate Agreement and facilitated continued Council discussion regarding the use of retail economic development incentives.

Staff provided information regarding visitor trends at Sooner Mall and comparable regional shopping centers, examples of retail incentives utilized by other municipalities in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, and Oklahoma City's recently updated retail incentive policy. Staff explained that Oklahoma City's process includes an application, financial analysis, staff review, and criteria identifying the types of retail projects eligible for consideration.

Council discussed whether Norman should develop a formal retail incentive policy that could be applied consistently to businesses and commercial areas throughout the community rather than evaluating incentives solely on a project-by-project basis. Discussion included establishing eligibility criteria, requiring financial and feasibility information, identifying measurable public benefits, and tying incentives to specific improvements or performance standards.

Councilmembers discussed the importance of ensuring that any incentive is performance-based and generated from new revenues rather than existing City revenues. Discussion also included whether agreements should identify specific improvements or outcomes, such as property improvements, increased occupancy, enhanced amenities, or other measurable investments.

Council discussed the proposed Sooner Mall agreement within the context of a broader retail incentive policy. Concerns included equitable access to incentives for other businesses and commercial districts, the percentage of new sales tax revenues that could be rebated, the appropriate duration of incentives, and the effect of incentives on General Fund revenues available for City services. Staff clarified that dedicated sales taxes would not be included in the rebate and that the City's existing base revenue would continue to be received; only qualifying new revenue would be subject to an incentive under the contemplated structure.

Item 2, continued

Discussion also addressed potential tools for downtown, Campus Corner, and other commercial areas, including the possible use of business improvement districts or similar mechanisms that could allow groups of businesses to collectively generate and reinvest additional revenues. Council discussed the value of having a consistent framework that could accommodate different types of retail and redevelopment projects while recognizing that different areas may require different approaches.

Council expressed interest in further exploring development of a Citywide retail incentive policy and additional performance measures before determining how to proceed with the proposed Sooner Mall agreement. Staff indicated that additional work would be necessary to develop potential criteria and a process for Council consideration.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor