



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING

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

Thursday, November 07, 2024 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

The City Council Business & Community Affairs Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room on the 7th day of November, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. and notice of the agenda of the meeting were 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.

CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chairman Holman called the Meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash
Councilmember Ward 6 Joshua Hinkle
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman (Acting Chair)
Councilmember Ward 8 Scott Dixon

ABSENT:

Councilmember Ward 2 Matthew Peacock

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mr. Anthony Francisco, Director of Finance
Mr. Rick Knighton, City Attorney
Mr. Chris Mattingly, Director of Utilities
Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation
Ms. Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works
Ms. Shaakira Calnick, Internal Auditor
Ms. Sandra Simeroth, Administrative Technician IV
Mr. Dan Schemm, President and CEO of Visit Norman
Ms. Kathryn Walker, Center for Economic Development Law

AGENDA ITEMS

1. REPORT ON SPECIAL EVENTS ATTENDANCE AND VISITORS.

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, informed the Council that staff will finalize and present comprehensive football game data in December, once all numbers are collected.

Fall Festival Attendance and Dwell Time

- The Fall Festival saw strong turnout with approximately 14,000 attendees throughout the day and 10,000 visitors after 5:00 PM.
- Average dwell time downtown:
 - Daytime: 96 minutes
 - After 5:00 PM: 103 minutes
- 58% of attendees were Norman residents.
- Historical attendance comparisons:
 - 2022: 11,600 (day), 7,500 (after 5:00 PM)
 - 2023: 14,000 (day), 9,900 (after 5:00 PM)

Council requested continued reporting on dwell time metrics during major events.

Mr. Olsen said park activity trends show Griffin Park experienced a noticeable spike in March 2024 with the start of soccer season, while Reaves Park saw increased activity due to baseball. Westwood Park and other locations showed decreased usage following the end of summer, with activity resuming as fall sports began.

Mr. Olsen noted soccer is currently the largest youth league in Norman with approximately 2,000 participants, compared to 1,700 in fall basketball. The Young Family Athletic Center (YFAC) has been collaborating with high schools to host scrimmages, attracting visitors from across Oklahoma. He said middle school scrimmages for 7th and 8th grade junior varsity and varsity teams have also been hosted at the YFAC.

Councilmember Holman inquired about collecting data from all city parks. Mr. Olsen explained the data is primarily sourced from cell phone tracking; therefore, accurate data is difficult to obtain from smaller neighborhood parks due to interference from nearby residential cell activity. He said reliable data is collected during major community events at larger parks. As of now, the YFAC has recorded 275,500 visitors year-to-date, exceeding expectations despite only hosting four tournaments in the previous month.

Mr. Olsen addressed previous inquiries regarding shopping districts and said University North Park is currently the most visited area in Norman. Campus Corner ranks second and is outperforming most entertainment districts in Oklahoma City, except for Bricktown.

Councilmember Holman asked about the increase in downtown visitors in August. Mr. Dan Schemm, President and CEO of Visit Norman, responded that the spike is attributed to parents visiting for freshman move-in events at the university, which consistently draws more traffic to the downtown area during those dates.

Item 1, continued

Mr. Olsen shared results from a review of surrounding cities' activity during football game days. He said Moore is the only nearby city experiencing increased business, due to overflow from Norman's game day traffic.

Mr. Olsen said Staff will wrap up all the numbers for the football games in December to have the final numbers for that report.

Mr. Schemm presented a data overview from Zartico, which tracks "quality visits" defined as individuals traveling 50 miles or more and staying at least two hours. The report covered September 2024 trends, year-to-date data, and detailed analysis surrounding recent game weekends.

September 2024 Key Metrics:

- Visitor Share: 34.7% of tracked devices were from qualifying visitors.
- Out-of-State Visitors: 62.9% of visitors were from out of state.
- Visitor Spending:
 - 24.3% of all spending came from visitors (noting conservative classification methods).
 - 43% of this visitor spend went to Norman's local businesses (gas stations excluded).
- Sector Spending:
 - Restaurants: Visitors accounted for 31% of revenue.
 - Retail:
 - 23% of spend came from visitors, with an average spend of \$86.
 - Total retail spend was high (68%) indicating that visitors, even when in town for other purposes, are actively shopping.
 - Attractions: 28% of spending was from visitors, with an average spend of \$77.
 - Local Resident Spending: Represented 43% of the total, with an average spend of \$66.

Year-to-Date Metrics (Through September 30, 2024):

- Visitor Share: 31.9% of tracked devices.
- Out-of-State Visitors: 62.5%.
- Visitor Spending: 17.9% of total spending.
- Local Business Share: 35% of visitor spending directed toward local establishments.

Lodging and Occupancy Trends:

- Hotel Metrics:
 - Length of stay: 1.8 days.
 - Occupancy: Up 12% year-over-year.
 - Stay value: Up 9%.
 - Demand: Slightly down but expected to increase by year-end.
- Short-Term Vacation Rentals:
 - Length of stay: 2.8 days.
 - Occupancy: Up 4%.
 - Average Daily Rate (ADR): Up 9%.
 - Stay value: Up 11%.
 - Demand: Up 24%.

Item 1, continued

Game Weekend Impact Analysis (Tennessee Game Example):

- **Visitor Spending Spike:**
 - Visitor spending increased 25.6% during the Tennessee game weekend compared to the average of the previous four weekends.
 - Visitors accounted for 34.5% of total spending that weekend.
 - 56% of visitor spending went to local businesses.

Sector Performance (Tennessee Weekend):

- **Restaurants:**
 - Total restaurant spending reached 45%, with a 61% increase over baseline.
- **Retail:**
 - 22% of weekend retail spend came from visitors.
 - Compared to August, overall retail spend decreased 41.3%, attributed to the back-to-school surge during that earlier period.
- **Nightlife:** Spend increased 18.6%.

Lodging Performance:

- Hotel stays increased by 188%.
- Short-term rentals increased by 97%.
- Hotel length of stay rose by 10%.
- Occupancy increased 70%.
- ADR (Average Daily Rate) surged by 185%.

Mr. Schemm said Oklahoma City's partnership with Zartico shows increased movement of city residents into Norman during events, particularly near game time. However, these individuals are not classified as visitors since they originate from within the 50-mile radius, though they still contribute to local economic activity.

2. CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING CREATION OF A TAX INCREMENT FINANCE (TIF) MASTER PLAN.

Ms. Kathryn Walker, Center for Economic Development Law, provided an update on efforts related to identifying and creating new Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts. Staff utilized GIS maps to help pinpoint potential areas for TIF designation. The focus included enterprise zones, underdeveloped parcels, and sites where development or redevelopment is hindered due to infrastructure or other limitations.

Council identified three priority areas from downtown northward. Ms. Walker reviewed each parcel's land use, zoning, and current utilization. Among these, the Griffin Area emerged as a top candidate for initial TIF implementation due to its ongoing redevelopment potential.

Item 2, continued

Key Considerations and Discussion Points:

- The TIF project area must align with legislative guidelines to ensure compliance and avoid disqualification.
- Project areas and increment districts were defined, including:
 - Griffin Park
 - Griffin Memorial Hospital property
 - Flood Avenue
 - Norman Regional Hospital
 - East Downtown

Project Area vs. Increment District:

- Project Area: Where revenue can be spent.
- Increment Districts: Where revenue is generated.

Ms. Walker noted that Griffin Park and Sutton Wilderness were included in the project area for potential acquisition and public improvement support, though they may not directly generate TIF revenue if owned by the City.

Councilmember Holman asked whether the East Side Walmart could be included in the Griffin Area TIF to capture sales tax from potential new residential development in Griffin. Ms. Walker said it is possible, but advised caution in diverting too much revenue from the General Fund. She said TIF funds could be used for infrastructure upgrades like sidewalks and street improvements rather than just new development.

Councilmember Grant asked about incorporating zoning changes in an existing TIF district. Ms. Walker said minor changes can be easily added under the Local Development Act, while larger changes require a formal amendment process. Councilmember Grant also asked about including affordable housing and Ms. Walker confirmed it can be prioritized through policy guidance under the Assistance and Development Financing category.

Councilmember Peacock asked if façade improvement programs could qualify. Ms. Walker said such enhancements could fall under Small Business Enhancements and referenced successful models like the City of Owasso's.

Increment District Designation:

- Increment District No. 7: East Downtown, including Porter Ave. and the hospital campus.
- Increment District No. 8: Focused on heavily redeveloped state property around Griffin, expected to generate substantial revenue.

South Norman TIF Discussion:

- Encompasses Lindsey to Classen, down to Cedar Lane, and east to 12th Avenue SE.
- Noted potential redevelopment of the Perfect Swing site and vacant lots in the Saxon Business Park.
- Possible inclusion of Target, surrounding retail, and new developments along West Lindsey and Ed Noble Parkway.
- Infrastructure needs such as the Cedar Lane Bridge and proposed developments at Highway 9 and Jenkins Avenue were discussed as potential drivers.

Item 2, continued

Ms. Walker asked whether Council preferred to proceed with drafting a project plan and revenue estimates for the Griffin TIF or adopt a broader Master Plan incorporating multiple areas. Council expressed interest in both strategies, suggesting naming TIFs (e.g., “Northeast” and “Southeast”) to clarify projected-revenue reinvestment. Council may consider including the mall and West Lindsey area if eligible under reinvestment criteria.

Council’s discussion included future considerations of the development of formal policy guidance for TIF funding allocations to include the inclusion of affordable housing initiatives; coordination with Norman Economic Development Coalition (NEDC) for employment recruitment incentives; possible combination of TIF funds with other revenue sources such as Capital Budget or General Obligation Bonds. Council directed Staff to continue the Griffin property negotiations with the State.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor