CITY OF NORMAN, OK

STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 11-05-2026

REQUESTER: Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation

PRESENTER: James Briggs, Park Development Manager

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT TO DESIGNATE THE HISTORIC LINDSEY STREET WATER TOWER, AND THE AREA BENEATH THE WATER TOWER AS A SPECIAL-USE PARK AND NAMING THE PARK THE "WATER TOWER PARK"

BACKGROUND:

Through the AIM Parks Masterplan, the plan recommended that the Norman Park System clarify its use of Parks. One of the recommendations was to add the classification for Special Use Parks. This classification is for parks that don't necessarily fit into the categories of Community Parks or Neighborhood Parks, but the Park would need a narrative describing its use and any unique rules that apply to the park.

Current parks that are categorized as Special Use Parks are Sutton Wilderness Park, Legacy Park, Creekside Bike Park, and soon-to-come online Bishop Creek Eco Park.

DISCUSSION:

The Lindsey Tower is an elevated water storage tank at the intersection of E. Lindsey Street and Classen Boulevard, originally built nearly 100 years ago to serve Norman's potable water system. However, as Norman's potable water system expanded over the years, the system also changed. In 2014, it was determined that Lindsey Tank no longer had the hydraulic characteristics necessary to function as a viable potable water storage for Norman's system. However, because of the potential for Lindsey Tower to be used as dedicated storage for a non-potable reuse system and stakeholders' desire to keep the structure, demolition was put on hold.

Ultimately, City Council and the Norman Utilities Authority decided to preserve the asset and paint the water tower by awarding a bid and approving contracts and bonds for the work on July 21, 2026. On July 28, 2026, Council approved a contract (Contract K-2627-26) with Dr Pepper/Seven Up, Inc. ("DPS") to offset much of the cost of repainting the tower and to create a unique opportunity for a long-term tourism, branding, and event activation partnership. Addendum No. 1 to Contract K-2627-26 is presented to Council in furtherance of this partnership.

As a further step to preserve the value of the Historical Water Tower and the corporate relationship with Dr Pepper, staff proposes that the Parks Department designate the water tower and the area beneath it as a special-use park. Staff recommends naming this park “Water Tower Park”. The park will be a small pocket park with placemaking and Dr Pepper selfie-taking spots, built-in benches, native landscaping, and short granite walking paths.

Narrative for the Park:

The Water Tower Park is envisioned as a unique community destination that celebrates Norman’s history while providing new recreational and gathering opportunities for residents and visitors. Centered around the historic water tower, the park would create a vibrant public space that combines recreation, open space, public art, and historic interpretation in a highly visible location. This site would also serve as a place-making opportunity that is both unique and beneficial for the Norman Parks Department and the City of Norman.

Special Rules for Water Tower Park:

Operating Hours: 6 am – 9 pm, with the exception of events at the OU Football stadium; park hours would be extended to midnight.

Do not climb or attempt to climb the water tower.

Stay in the designated park area and do not enter the City of Norman Maintenance area or the railroad easement.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Staff recommends that the Park Board accept the Historic Lindsey Street Water Tower and the area beneath it as a Special-Use Park.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Staff recommends that the Park Board accept naming the park “Water Tower Park”.