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: DISCUSSION REGARDING THE HISTORICAL PLAQUE LOCATED IN ADKINS CROSSING PARK.

BACKGROUND:

Adkins Crossing Park is located at 2136 24th Avenue SW. It is on the west side of the furthest south section of 24th Avenue—after which the road ends at a pair of driveways leading to a church property or a private access road to the land south of the park, leading down to the South Canadian River. There is a plaque in the park and an old wagon wheel mounted on a concrete pedestal to commemorate the park's naming after the river crossing operated at that location by the Pryor Adkins family at the time of Norman's founding during the land run of 1889. The plaque, placed in 1978, states that it was erected by the Cleveland County Historical Society (CCHS) and the Jack Black family at that time (see attached image).

Recently, Dr. Michael Givel has raised questions about the accuracy and/or completeness of the information on the plaque. He has contacted the city and the current membership of the CCHS to state his testimony regarding the larger story of the Land Run and the history of Norman (testimony attached).

DISCUSSION:

Parks & Recreation staff have also spoken with the CCHS about the plaque and its accuracy. They have responded with the attached statement, which, for several reasons, recommends that the plaque remain as-is to serve as a factual marker of the business and family name of those who once operated the business at or near the park site. They offer that any more detailed or in-depth discussion of historical events, policies, or consequences regarding the time period when the Adkins family was on that land be placed on another informational sign or signs.

The discussion may lead to further action at Adkins Crossing Park. It should be noted that possible changes are coming to the park—both physically and functionally, as the City of Norman is currently looking to acquire land along the river to create a Canadian River Park, with what is currently Adkins Crossing Park acting as a trailhead-type facility with major renovation that would come with it if the park and any additional land need to be redesigned. A renaming of the park may be included as the process unfolds. For now, the park will remain as-is.