

Norman Board of Parks Commissioners
March 6, 2025

The Norman Board of Parks Commissioners of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a Regular Session in the Development Center Conference Room A, on the 6th day of March 2025 at 5:36 p.m., and notice of the agenda of the meeting were posted at the Development Center Building at 225 N. Webster Avenue 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, and Wright

Absent: Commissioner Usry and Two Vacancies

City Officials

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

ITEM 1, being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 2, 2025, PARK BOARD REGULAR MEETING

Commissioner Isacksen made the motion, and Commissioner Sallee seconded to correct two clerical errors in the minutes and approve the amended Regular Park Board minutes of December 5, 2024. The vote was taken with the following results:

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

NAY: None

ITEM 2, being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, 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:

- Conveyance of titles for the Irving and Whittier Recreational Centers from the City to the Norman Public Schools and authorizing the City Manager to execute the Quit Claims Deeds.
- Contract K-2425-94: Service agreement with Norman Arts Council for the 2025 Artful Inlets Project.
- Contract K-2425-38: Lease Agreement with YFAC, LLC for the Trae Young Family Foundation to be the retail partner and operator and accept the improvements in the amount of \$288,368.00 to the retail space inside the YFAC
- Ordinance O-2425-10: Consider adding a section to the Zoning Ordinance putting restrictions on the location of tobacco or e-cigarette stores within 300 ft of any playground, school, or other facility when the facility is being used primarily by persons under 21 years old.
- Ordinance O-2425-11: Considering amending sections prohibiting smoking and/or vaping on all municipal property.

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- Ordinance O-2425-12: Consideration of an effort to protect youth from negative health effects of, prohibiting the sale or possession of tobacco, nicotine or vapor products for anyone under the age of twenty-one year old.
 - Ordinance O-2425-14: Consideration of amending some of the City's Boards, Commission and Committees, specifically, Repeal the Tree Board and authorizing the Board of Park Commissioners be the presiding authority over matters in NCC 16-1X, Tree Protection with review and oversight by City Council and Repeal the Greenbelt Commission.
 - Ordinance O-2425-21: Granting Special Use to Wildwood Community Church, to construct a new accessory building/gymnasium. This will not require a Park Board review for parkland dedication; however, on December 7, 2023, the Park Board approved Wildwood Community Church to construct a pedestrian bridge that will cross City parkland, allowing the Church direct access to their parking lots.
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ITEM 3, being:

CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF PARKLAND REQUIREMENTS FOR THE NORMAN NORTH VILLAGE PUD ADDITION

The Norman North Village PUD Addition is located in a part of Section 2, Township 9 North, Range 3 West of the Indian Meridian and, on the west side of the I-35 west frontage road and south of Indian Hills Road. The addition has a half mile of frontage along 36th Avenue NW and has been used as farmland for decades (See Map). The plat contains 1,500 RM-6 (apartment) zoning and 170 units R-1 (single-family housing) zoning units. When it develops, there will be a total required parkland dedication of 7.571 acres. This development will also yield \$125,250 in Neighborhood Park Development Fees and the same in Community Park Development fees once all building permits have been issued.

The City's ordinance requires a land decision for a development of this size, with no option for a fee-in-lieu of land. A private park would need to be twice as large as the public park, or 15.142 acres. This will create a large urban living type of neighborhood, with a mix of retail, office, and housing, as well as large parking areas and multi-story apartments included in the design. There are no other parks between I-35 and 36th Avenue NW until you get to Ruby Grant Park at Franklin Road. This area will have a large population, making a large park desirable.

The design proposed contains two large areas of flat parkland, along with a sizeable linear trail system along the southwest edge of the development and around the large detention pond. The pond cannot count as parkland, but the trail around it and the green space for the trail that connects to the parkland and over to an additional multi-modal path along the 36th Avenue street frontage does count. Besides the 7.5 acres of parkland, several private green recreation spaces are shown in and around the clustered multi-story apartment buildings in the center of the addition (see green space exhibit). As a result, a good variety of outdoor recreational opportunities will be available for residents in the Norman North Village from both the public park/trail system and the private spaces in the residential areas. All fees collected will be used to make improvements to the public parkland, as they are collected.

City Staff recommends that the Park Board accept a public parkland decision for the Norman North Village PUD Addition.

Commissioner Davison made the motion, and Commissioner Wright seconded to accept a public parkland decision for the Norman North Village PUD Addition. The vote was taken with the following results:

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

NAY: None

ITEM 4, being:

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSAL TO DISPLAY PUBLIC ART IN LIONS PARK

The Firehouse Art Center is located on the southeast corner of Lions Park, at the intersection of Flood Avenue and McNamee Street. It has served the Norman community for decades by offering high-quality, affordable classes, programs, and outreach aimed at all types of artist communities. Part of this work has recently involved re-connecting with a public art program at the University of Oklahoma. The idea came about in 2023 when the Norman Arts Council proposed working with the OU School of Visual Arts and the City of Norman (via the Firehouse) to bring back a project where an OU sculpture class has their students propose public art pieces to a committee of members from the partner organizations, who choose some for fabrication. This is a scaled-down version of how such works of art are selected in public settings outside of academia. The chosen pieces are then fabricated by students and placed on display in a public space for a set amount of time. OU has now received funding for the Spring 2025 semester project.

The park area around the Firehouse is already used to display some art pieces, which have been in place for several years. Some pieces have been removed over the years, and the concrete pads where they stood are still in the park. To prepare for the current project, the Firehouse Director, the OU sculpture professors, and the Parks and Recreation staff met at the park to discuss re-using any old concrete pads and adding a few more for the current number of sculptures being produced. The proposed pads are all located in the southern ¼ of the park and are mainly along the rock-lined stream channel that divides the park in that area (see map).

A total of five new pads and three re-used pads are proposed. The sculpture pieces will be displayed in late April and last through the end of the academic year. Future classes will be able to use the pads for other temporary displays, and when not being used, the pads will be blank 5'X5' concrete pads in the park in areas not commonly used for sports or events often hosted in Lions Park. The sculptures will also be reviewed to ensure they meet the same standards for public art used when selecting pieces for the various Norman Forward Projects, public murals, bike racks, and other public pieces. All installation dates and removals will be coordinated with the Parks and Recreation Department to ensure all other park uses and features are not disturbed or damaged during those times.

Staff recommends that the Park Commission allow the Director to approve the placement of temporary public art at Lions Park provided through the Firehouse, OU, and the Norman Art Council.

Commissioner Isacksen made the motion, and Commissioner Ross seconded to allow the Director of Parks and Recreation to approve the placement of temporary public art at Lions Park provided through the Firehouse, OU, and the Norman Art Council. The vote was taken with the following results:

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

NAY: None

ITEM 5, being:

CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF A NAME FOR TWO NEW PARKS IN NORMAN.

The Norman Board of Park Commissioners has several subcommittees appointed from its membership, including a Naming Sub-Committee, which is convened to help choose a name for a park or a facility. Often, park names are selected to be the same name as the neighborhood wherein the park exists. However, we have considered other names in cases where several neighborhoods have contributed to the parkland or when there is a request to name a park something different than the closest neighborhood. Two new parks are being

planned for the coming year, and staff wanted to get a recommendation from the Naming Sub-Committee for these two locations as we proceed.

New Park #1: Several years ago, a land decision was made to develop the South Norman apartment community called "The Links." This large residential property includes a golf course ("The Links at Norman") for its residents, and it generated a public parkland dedication of nearly 4 acres. The parkland has been undeveloped for several years, but it was identified as one of the new neighborhood park sites to be built as part of the Norman Forward program. We have now surveyed the residents in the area and created a park design, which was approved at a previous Park Board meeting. Now that we are starting construction, we want to make a name for the park. This will help avoid confusion associated with the sizeable recreational amenity provided by "The Links" golf course adjacent to the site.

New Park #2: Also, the City of Norman recently acquired property at the corner of Alameda Street and Carter Avenue, just east of Porter Avenue, from an individual who held the land for years but had asked for help in cleaning up the property, which had become a large homeless encampment and garbage dump. The City eventually acquired the property, as it would provide an opportunity to do a significant amount of stormwater control on the Bishop Creek watershed. A Landscape Architecture and Engineering team has designed the site to fulfill the water retention functions desired by the Public Works Department and provide a park setting for those areas not being re-designed for stormwater control. The Park Board has also reviewed this project, which is being bid for construction this year.

Before tonight's Park Board meeting, the Naming Sub-Committee met to consider a name for both parks based on a list of possible names presented by Parks and Recreation Staff and those on the Sub-Committee. After discussion, a name for each park was decided upon for recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION FOR THE NAME OF NEW PARK #1:

City Staff recommends that the Norman Board of Park Commissioners accept Bluestem Park as the new park name for the park adjacent to The Links golf course and apartment community.

Commissioner Wright made the motion, and Commissioner Sallee seconded to accept Bluestem Park as the new park name for the park adjacent to The Links golf course and apartment community. The vote was taken with the following results:

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

NAY: None

RECOMMENDATION FOR THE NAME OF NEW PARK #2:

City Staff recommends that the Norman Board of Park Commissioners accept Bishop Creek Eco Park as the new park name for the park at the intersection of Alameda Street and Carter Avenue.

Commissioner Ross made the motion, and Commissioner Davison seconded to accept Bishop Creek Eco Park as the new park name for the park at the intersection of Alameda Street and Carter Avenue. The vote was taken with the following results:

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

NAY: None

ITEM 6, being:

ANNUAL REPORT FROM WESTWOOD TENNIS

Mr. Marc Claude' Westwood (WW) tennis professional said WW Tennis Center had another great year in 2024 and continues to be one of the busiest tennis centers in the state. He said WW Tennis hosted 13 junior and high school tournaments, bringing in over 1,000 kids from the Missouri Valley region, hosted over 60 adult USTA league matches; practices for both Norman middle-school teams and will host practices in 2025 for CCS's new program.

Mr. Claude' explained how the tennis center operates and said the league and tournament fee structures for the events hosted at WW Tennis are set by USTA Oklahoma. This organization decides where the leagues and tournaments will be played. He said WW Tennis has to bid on the events every two years, as they run in a 2-year cycle. Mr. Claude' said highlighted the annual programs to include Junior Clinics, Junior Team Tennis, Cardio Tennis, Junior Cardio Tennis, Home School Clinics, Norman Middle School and Private School Tennis Practices, Tennis on Campus, Pickleball, Adult (and Senior) local leagues, social events and weekly adult drills. He said 75-80 kids and 50-60 adults participate in weekly programs on average.

Mr. Claude' thanked the Parks and Recreation Staff for all their help in growing WW Tennis. He said he is excited about 2025 plans for court resurfacing and landscaping.

The Board acknowledged the report.

ITEM 7, being:

ANNUAL REPORT FROM LITTLE AXE YOUTH SPORTS

Chair Sheriff said Tiffany Earhart, President of Little Axe Youth Sports (LAYS), has the flu and is unable to present the LAYS Annual Report. She requested the LAYS Annual Report be postponed to the June 5, 2025 Park Board meeting.

ITEM 8, being:

UPDATE ON GREENBELT COMMISSION AND TREE BOARD

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that over the past several years, the City Council has discussed several proposals to amend some of the City's Boards, Commissions, and Committees. At the December 17, 2024, Study Session, the City Council agreed to proceed with the proposals.

At the February 24, 2025, City Council meeting, the Council approved Ordinance O-2425-14, making amendments to several City Boards, Commissions, and Committees to include: 1) Repeal the Tree Board, authorizing the Board of Park Commissioners to be the presiding authority over matters contained in NCC 16-1X, Tree Protection, with review and oversight by City Council and 2) Repeal the Greenbelt Commission.

Mr. Olsen said two Tree Board members and two Greenbelt Commission members would move over to join five Park Board Commissioners. City Staff will notify those appointed by the Mayor and City Council, and the newly formed Board of Park Commissioners will begin meeting at the April 2025 meeting.

ITEM 9, being:

NORMAN FORWARD UPDATE

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said Multisports, LLC completed their work to construct the new 6-court outdoor pickleball facility on the east side of the Young Family Athletic Center (YFAC). Crews from Musco Sports Lighting continued installing the new lights on that side of the building to light the pickleball courts and the new sand volleyball and existing turf practice field at YFAC. Once all work is complete, we will finish grading the site and install all remaining concrete walkways, sod, and landscaping to make the site ready for use in the Spring. All work will be completed in time for spring league play at the YFAC.

Mr. Olsen said that not a lot has changed with the NF Saxon Park Master Plan and that staff will bring the Saxon Park Master Plan to a future Park Board meeting for review. He said construction is set to begin in Spring 2025. Mr. Olsen said new playground equipment is being installed at William Morgan Park, and the next playground renovation will be at Northeast Lions Park.

Mr. Olsen said the City continues to work with Norman Public School System (NPS) on the land swap the City owns adjacent to Adams and Eisenhower Elementary for NPS property adjacent to High Meadows Park. This land exchange will allow staff to install a new playground in High Meadows Park that is more visible and discourages vandalism.

Mr. Olsen said in April, Staff will bring an item for their consideration regarding the Silo Mural Project at Griffin Park. He said the Norman Art Council (NAC) has selected an artist who will paint a buffalo on one side and a scissortail flycatcher on the other. The budget for the project is \$40,000, with \$30,000 coming from the Norman Forward Griffin Park project and \$10,000 from the NAC murals in public places fund.

ITEM 10, being:

DIVISIONAL UPDATE

Mr. James Briggs, Park Development Manager, said Davey Resource Group would host an Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP) community/public meeting on March 8, 2025, at the Adult Wellness and Education Center (AWE). He said the meeting would help discover what residents want to see done by the City to preserve and expand our urban forest. It would also be followed by several stakeholder meetings with local groups affected by such a plan. Mr. Briggs said the Forester continues working on the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and met with the City's contractor, Choleta, to determine high-priority areas in Norman and then identify various structures within those high-priority areas. Once the CWPP is completed, the City can apply for grants to identify priority areas and projects. Mr. Briggs said we are also wrapping up our tree planting projects in several parks for this winter dormant period. At those sites, we will be adding irrigation systems and/or hose water sources to allow us to help the trees establish in the first years they spend in the park before we ween them off those systems as they put on a healthy canopy and robust root system that will support them for decades to come.

Mr. Wade Thompson, Parks Manager, said staff will soon be working on a controlled burn at Saxon Park and tree maintenance throughout city parks and property while there is no mowing at this time of year. He said staff has been applying pre-emergent for weed control and maintaining mowers for the upcoming mowing season.

Mr. Mitchell Richardson, Recreation Manager, invited the Park Board to come out to Ruby Grant Park dressed in their favorite green outfit and run the Shamrock 5K Run or 1-mile Fun Run on Saturday, March 15, 2025. He said two events are for all ages and is dog-friendly. Mr. Richardson said our Outdoor Movie Series will kick off on March 28, 2025, at Lions Park with the showing of A Goofy Movie. He said volleyball

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camp registrations are scheduled for March 17 & 18 at the YFAC. He said teams of 8 to 15 can register for the Co-Ed Adult Dodgeball League through March 14, and will start on March 27 at the 12th Avenue Recreation Center. Mr. Richardson said Lifeguard Training certification and recertification courses are scheduled for April 17-20 and will take place at Westwood Family Aquatic Center (WWFAC) or the Young Family Athletic Center (YFAC). He said classes are blended learning through the American Red Cross, and an online portion precedes the in-person session.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Chair Sheriff thanked staff for getting the actuators installed on the handicapped doors in the pool area at the Adult Wellness and Education Center (AWE).

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Sheriff adjourned the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

Passed and approved this _____ of _____ 2025

Sherrel Sheriff, Chair