

Norman Board of Parks Commissioners
February 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 February 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 Isacksen, Sallee, Usry, and Wright

Absent: Commissioners Davison and Ross and Two Vacancies

City Officials

Present: Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation
Bethany Grissom, Park Planner
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 DECEMBER 5, 2024 PARK BOARD REGULAR MEETING

Commissioner Isacksen made the motion, and Commissioner Wright seconded to approve the Regular Park Board minutes of December 5, 2024. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Isacksen, Sallee, Usry, and Wright

NAY: None

ITEM 2, being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDED 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:

- Easement E-2425-14: Permanent Utility Easement Granted by the City to OG&E at Reaves Park
- Contract K-2223-33: With L5 Construction LLC Increasing the Contract Amount by \$56,031 for Various Changes to the Project Design and Unforeseen Site Conditions at the North Base Phase 2 Vehicle Wash Facility Project.
- Contract K-2425-6: An Interlocal Agreement with the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COTPA) DBA Embark in the Amount of \$35,221.76 to Provide Security Services at the Norman Transit Center and Contract Language Modification Due to the Opening of the City's Vehicle Wash Facility.

ITEM 3, being:

ANNUAL PRESENTATION FROM THE SANTA FE DEPOT

Ms. Shari Jackson, Executive Director of The Depot, highlighted the annual presentation to the Board and provided financials to the Board before the meeting. She said this summer would be the 25th Anniversary of Summer Breeze concerts and that in 2024, 20,000 people would be in attendance. She said an additional 622

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attended various concerts at the Depot, and over 22,000 gallery guests attended new artist exhibits, receptions in conjunction with the 2nd Friday Art Walk, and/or art clinics, chats, and workshops. She said she could hire an office manager, which allowed her to expand the gallery hours in the morning and build cabinets to store and lock up supplies and gift shop items. Ms. Jackson said the annual funding received by the City helped The Depot continue to have volunteers open and host passengers boarding Amtrak's Heartland Flyer on evenings and weekends, including providing ticket and parking information and cleaning and stocking bathrooms.

Ms. Jackson highlighted the revenue sources as depot rentals (\$27,587), membership program (\$12,924), program partners/donors (\$37,716), and art and ticket sales (\$39,018). Ms. Jackson said she is working on having future street events and art markets and was thrilled to have the City move the annual Winterfest on Main to the downtown area near The Depot. She said she appreciates all the Park Staff's work at The Depot and with the Summer Breeze Concert Series at Lions Park.

Commissioner Isacksen said the grants listed on the Statement of Activity Report are significantly less than last year. Ms. Jackson said the grants/checks came in late; however, she has an account to track and help with the books in the future. Ms. Jackson said she is happy to report that this is the first time that. The Depot has a \$50,000 surplus in the bank! Chair Sheriff asked whether tickets are sold for comedy night and poetry shows, and Ms. Jackson said poetry shows are free, but tickets are sold for the comedy shows.

The Board acknowledged the presentation.

ITEM 4, being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE REQUEST FROM ALLYSON RINK TO INSTALL A "LITTLE LIBRARY" IN CHERRY CREEK PARK

Ms. Bethany Grissom, Park Planner, said in December 2023, the Board recommended the Parks and Recreation Department begin requiring citizens and local groups to submit applications for requests and/or proposed projects to be installed in City parks. She said Allyson Rink approached the Parks and Recreation Department with a project proposal to install a "Little Library" in November 2024. This installation would consist of a wooden box with an operable door on a wooden post installed in the ground with a metal bracket. The purpose of this installation is to provide a location for people to exchange books freely. Ms. Grissom said "Little Library" locations exist in other parks, including Rotary Park, Oakhurst Park, Lions Park, and Ruby Grant Park. She said staff will assist with determining the exact location in the park for placement and installation to ensure it meets departmental standards.

Ms. Rink said she lives in the Cherry Creek Addition and can check, stock, and re-stock the "Little Library." She said she had done a book drive, and most books have been donated.

It is recommended that the Park Board of Commissioners recommend the Director of Parks and Recreation approve the "Little Library" Project in Cherry Creek Park.

Commissioner Wright made the motion, and Commissioner Isacksen seconded to approve the "Little Library" Project in Cherry Creek Park. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Isacksen, Sallee, Usry, and Wright

NAY: None

ITEM 5, being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE SITE DESIGN FOR LINKS PARK

On October 13, 2015, Norman citizens passed the Norman Forward Initiative, which funds various projects through a ½ % sales tax increase over 15 years. The Norman Forward Initiative includes a project to construct new neighborhood parks. One of the new neighborhood parks designated in that initiative is Links Park. The overall NORMAN FORWARD Neighborhood Park Improvement Plan was presented to the Board of Park Commissioners in March 2017 and then to the City Council in May 2017 for approval.

Ms. Bethany Grissom, Park Planner, said in September 2024, surveys were sent out to all residents of the Links Apartment Complex. Residents were given 30 days to complete the survey and return it to the Parks and Recreation Department. Surveys were used to rank the desirability of 11 different park amenities. Park Development staff then spent two months designing a site plan that incorporated as many top-ranking amenities as possible based on the size of the site (approximately 3.6 acres) and overall budget. This neighborhood park will primarily serve the residents of the Links Apartment Complex. No other residential developments are planned or anticipated within the foreseeable future.

Ms. Grissom said on October 13, 2015, Norman citizens passed the Norman Forward Initiative, which funds various projects through a ½% sales tax increase over 15 years. The Norman Forward Initiative includes a project to construct new neighborhood parks. One of the new neighborhood parks designated in that initiative is Links Park. The overall NORMAN FORWARD Neighborhood Park Improvement Plan was presented to the Board of Park Commissioners in March 2017 and then to the City Council in May 2017 for approval. Ms. Grissom said funding for the construction of this park will come from sales tax collected through the Norman Forward Initiative and Park Development fees collected through the issuance of building permits for the Links Apartment Complex. Upon approval of a site design, this project will undergo a bidding process(es), and construction will begin within 10 days of awarded bids. The project is expected to be completed before the end of 2025. This park will also undergo a renaming process led by a sub-committee of Park Board Commissioners, which will occur at a future date.

Chair Sheriff asked what is located on the new park's south side, and staff said it is blank land. Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said he does not know the zoning for this property; however, if it is currently zoned residential or rezoned to residential in the future, more funding will be available when building permits are obtained. Chair Sheriff said a sidewalk would need to be constructed on the south side of the new proposed park if residential housing is built on this blank land. Commissioner Wright asked whether tables and/or benches would be installed around the proposed trails, and staff said yes. Commissioner Wright asked how many responded to the survey, and staff said 30 to 40 people.

It is recommended that the Park Board of Commissioners recommend the Director of Parks and Recreation approve the site design for a new neighborhood park near the Links Apartment complex.

Commissioner Sallee motioned, and Commissioner Usry seconded to approve the site design for a new neighborhood park near the Links Apartment Complex. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Isacksen, Sallee, Usry, and Wright

NAY: None

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ITEM 6, being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF ART RECEPTACLE INSTALLATION AT REAVES PARK

Mr. Mitchell Richardson, Recreation Manager, said a mural receptacle is proposed for Reaves Park to recognize Juneteenth. He introduced Nick Lillard to the Norman Arts Council. Mr. Lillard said the receptacle will serve both functional and artistic purposes, acting as a waste disposal unit while showcasing a mural designed by local artists.

Mr. Lillard said he created the artwork for the Juneteenth event and showed pictures depicting his creation. He said the total budget for the project is \$4,260 without solar lighting and \$7,460 with solar lighting. The project includes material costs, artist compensation, and fabrication, with some fabrication costs being donated by the Norman Art Council. Funding sources and potential sponsorships are being explored to support the addition of solar lighting.

Staff recommends that the Board of Park Commissioners approve the placement of the Juneteenth Mural Receptacle at Reaves Park, with the option to include solar lighting based on funding availability.

Commissioner Usry made the motion, and Commissioner Sallee seconded to approve the placement of the Juneteenth Mural Receptacle at Reaves Park, with the option to include solar lighting based on funding availability. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Isacksen, Sallee, Usry, and Wright

NAY: None

ITEM 7, being:

NORMAN FORWARD UPDATE

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said the NF Saxon Park Ad-hoc Committee met in December to review the project's 95% plans and cost estimate. He said staff will bring the Saxon Park Master Plan to the March Park Board meeting for review, and construction is set to begin in Spring 2025. Mr. Olsen said new playground equipment will be delivered and installed soon at William Morgan Park. He said the next playground renovation will be at Northeast Lions Park, and depending on the available budget, staff will also look at renovating either Springbrook or Kiwanis Parks in early 2025.

Mr. Olsen said that in 1975, the City purchased 3.2 acres from the Norman Public School System (NPS) and built recreational facilities at Irving Middle School and Whittier Middle School. The recreational facilities are entirely enclosed by NPS property. In February 2024, the City began using the YFAC for its youth sports programs, and the City's after-school programs and summer camps use only a small portion of the recreation facilities (Irving & Whittier). NPS has agreed to allow the City to continue using them for its after-school & summer camp programs for one dollar (\$1.00) a year. Additionally, the City owns property adjacent to Adams and Eisenhower Elementary, and NPS has agreed to a land exchange for property NPS owns 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.

ITEM 8, being:

DIVISIONAL UPDATE

Ms. Bethany Grissom, Park Planner, said concrete is being installed at the Westwood Golf Driving Range, and the bid for the Alameda stormwater park project is due on February 20, 2025. She said the City Forester

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continues working on the Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP) and has worked with the Steering Committee on a stakeholder list of businesses, community groups, and city government offices. Ms. Grissom said a community/public meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2025, and the UFMP should be completed by September 2025. The Forester continues working on the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and met with the City's contractor, Choleta, who is plugging in vegetative data to enter into a Weather and Climate model. Ms. Grissom said the data would also be entered into a Fire Behavioral Model to determine high-priority areas in Norman, and once identified, will be overlaid with GIS Maps to determine if various structures are located in the high-priority areas. Once the CWPP is completed, the City can apply for grants to identify priority areas and projects.

Mr. Mitchell Richardson, Recreation Manager, said the Daddy Daughter Dance was held on February 1, 2025, at the Young Family Athletic Facility (YFAC) and has received positive feedback regarding the location and the sensory dance. He said Family Game Nights have begun at the Irving and Whittier Rec Centers, and there is an out-of-school camp on February 17, 2025. Mr. Richardson said the 3-3 Basketball League registration has started and will run through the end of March; the Winter Basketball League post-season tournament had 1,300 participants, and the Spring Volleyball League will begin soon.

Mr. Wade Thompson, Parks Manager, said the staff was busy with the recent winter storms, beginning with pretreating City Hall sidewalks and parking lots and assisting other departments with the ice/snow removal on sidewalks and streets. Staff continues removing Christmas decorations and maintaining trees while there is no mowing at this time of year. Mr. Thompson said staff helped with the Daddy Daughter Dance set up and tear down at YFAC and the Reaves Playground repair. He said the staff has been applying pre-emergent for weed control and maintaining mowers for the upcoming mowing season.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Commissioner Sallee asked about the Council combining the Park Board with other Boards and/or Commissions, and Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said the first reading to combine the Park Board, Tree Board, and Greenbelt Commission will be on the February 9th Council agenda. He said the second reading will be on the February 25th Council agenda for consideration, and if approved, the newly formed Board of nine members will likely begin meeting in April.

Commissioner Isacksen said she saw the new Parks and Recreation logo at a recent OU game and thought it looked great! Mr. Olsen said P&R videos and promotions will be shown soon at OU games.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Sheriff adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

Passed and approved this _____ of _____ 2025

Sherrel Sheriff, Chair