



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

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

Thursday, March 6, 2025 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

The Business & Community Affairs Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building, on the 6th day of March 2025, at 4:00 PM, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Matt Peacock called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 2 Matthew Peacock - Chairman
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash
Councilmember Ward 6 Josh Hinkle
Councilmember Ward 8 Scott Dixon

ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Mr. Rick Knighton, City Attorney
Ms. Jeanne Snider, Assistant City Attorney II
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager
Ms. AshLynn Wilkerson, Assistant City Attorney I
Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation
Ms. Sara Kaplan, Business and Community Relations
Mr. Dan Schemm, Executive Director, Visit Norman
Ms. Kellee Robertson, Animal Shelter Manager
Ms. Shaakira Calnick, Internal Auditor
Ms. Kathy Hammans, Admin Tech III, City Clerk

AGENDA ITEMS

1. REPORT ON SPECIAL EVENTS ATTENDANCE AND VISITORS

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, presented the special events and visitor report to the committee.

The report is now being done quarterly in order to collect more accurate numbers for special events and the related visitors. Data is collected on a monthly basis from cell phone data on visitors in Norman for longer than 10 minutes and employees working inside the City of Norman's designated area.

2024 major events included in the data collection are listed below.

Medieval Fair – *Reaves Park* - (91,400 visitors – 26.8% from Norman)
Earth Day Festival – *Reaves Park* - (2,000 – 54% from Norman)
Norman Music Festival – *Downtown* - (42,700 – 45.9% from Norman)
Norman Pride Festival – *Andrews Park* - (2,600 – 52.6% from Norman)
May Fair Arts Festival – *Campus Corner* - (11,600 – 41.1% from Norman)
Jazz in June – *Andrews Park* - (6,300 – 57.8% from Norman)
Juneteenth Festival – *Reaves Park* - (2,300 – 50.5% from Norman)
4th Fest – *Reaves* - (8,300 - 63.0% from Norman)
Porch Fest – *Miller Historic District* - (1,000 – 74.8% from Norman)
Brewtober Fest – *Reaves Park* - (1,800 – 52.7% from Norman) Fall Fest
Downtown - (14,100 - 58.5% from Norman)
Winter Fest – *Downtown* - (1,800 – 72.3% from Norman)

In addition to the above events, people come to Norman Forward sites for other activities as below.

Westwood Aquatic Center, (113,600) (Opens in May)
Young Family Athletic Center, (385,200) – (basketball)
Griffin Park (298,500) (soccer – spring & fall season)
Reaves Park (419,800) (baseball games and tournaments)

More than a million visitors coming to Norman for the above events, to spend money and enjoy all Norman has to offer.

Mr. Olsen said the FYE 25-26 Budget includes requests for additional equipment at Westwood to keep the pool updated and for installing something new each year. Former City Manager Steve Lewis, had the facility plumbed when it was built, to accommodate the installation of future new items. A surf machine planned to be added to the north side of the lap pool, will draw many visitors to Westwood while generating additional revenue.

Councilmember Holman asked why Oklahoma City is not opening their pools this year. Mr. Olsen said they have older pools, are having trouble getting staff and with budget restraints have chosen to cut some programs for the upcoming year.

1. (continued) REPORT ON SPECIAL EVENTS ATTENDANCE AND VISITORS

Councilmember Grant asked about adult swim at Westwood and Mr. Olsen said staff tries to schedule at least one a month, for a three-hour time frame. It is a very popular event enjoyed by many, with an attendance of 500-700 people, coming from all over to participate. Councilmember Grant wanted to know if this exceeds the pool capacity, to which Mr. Olsen said they are licensed for 720.

Mr. Olsen moved on to discuss the data for Shopping Districts. Staff use “*Placer AI*”, which covers ten district locations, to collect reportable data. The University Town Center hosted the most visitors (1,031,160) and Brookhaven Village the least at 72,630, (with other districts ranging in between) for an approximate 2.3 million shoppers in December 2024.

The 2024 Oklahoma Football season, which covers August 30, 2024 thru November 23, 2024, showed the highest number of visitors hosted was 100,000 on September 14th (*OU parents weekend*).

Councilmember Holman asked if staff could provide a comparison chart with data from the last two seasons and then start looking at hotel stays and money spent during the OU parents weekend to calculate revenue generated in Norman for the event. Mr. Olsen said staff is working on numbers and will forward to Council when completed.

Ms. Sara Kaplan, Business and Community Relations, said staff can pull data for the region, but will need to consider what other functions are going on at the same time. Councilmember Peacock asked if it is possible to calculate the number of people lost to OKC, Moore, etc. on game days and/or weekend.

Councilmember Grant asked how “*Placer AI*” works and is it possible to get the requested data out of it. Ms. Kaplan said they will not be able to track the whole data in Placer, but have partnered with Starburst for game data and Starburst may work with staff on a game by game basis.

Councilmember Grant asked if there is a way to work with hotels to get data on people who stay with them. Mr. Dan Schemm, Executive Director, Visit Norman, said the data would be difficult to obtain due to confidentiality. Councilmember Nash said there does not appear to be spikes in visitors in surrounding areas. Mr. Schemm said Moore has 300–400 rooms, but do not seem to be increasing quest lodging on game day/weekend.

Councilmember Holman asked if people walking from home to the game area are captured in the report. Ms. Kaplan said they need to be in the designated area to be counted and since it counts each phone, there could be possible duplicates. The game numbers cover the number of people in the stadium area.

Mr. Schemm said staff looked at the October 1st to December 1st 2024 time-frame to track visitors within 50 miles outside the Norman area and found that the YFAC venue is increasing the influx of visitors.

1. (continued) REPORT ON SPECIAL EVENTS ATTENDANCE AND VISITORS

Based on research, the following statistics show;

- 54% of Norman visitors are age 25-54,
- 43% have an average income of 100,000 plus
- 43% have children.
- 60.9 % are from out-of-state markets

Visitors from the Dallas, Texas market visit the Campus region 45% more than the average visitor, are very affluent and spend money on nightlife and food.

Councilmember Holman said he recently visited with a deli owner from the City of Ada, who mentioned a lot of his regulars visit Campus Corner. Councilmember Peacock asked about the correlation of visitors from the City of Ada, to which Mr. Schemm said, Ada is on the southern boundary of the 50-mile pull radius and has limited venues and activities there.

2. DISCUSSION REGARDING POTENTIALLY BECOMING A PET FRIENDLY CITY.

Ms. Kellee Robertson, Animal Shelter Manager, presented a program on Pet Friendly City designation through the Mars "BETTER CITIES FOR PETS" organization.

66% of US households include a pet, making it more important than ever for cities to offer pet-friendly programs and policies that help people and pets be together.

Norman currently has several dog parks and multiple businesses that either serve the needs of pets and their owners or cater to owners and their pets.

Dr. Amy Tyler, DVM, a local Veterinarian, founded St. Francis Animal Resource Center, a non-profit organization, offering pet services and resources to help keep pets in their loving homes, as they are a vital part of the family. St. Francis also serves as a place for pet drop off and provides rehoming, fostering services to help reduce the burden of animals at the local shelters.

Ms. Robertson said Metro Transit services would need to participate to make Norman a Pet Friendly City. Councilmember Grant asked how EMBARK handles animals in the transit system, to which Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager, said the animals must be placed in a carrier for their safety and cannot block the aisle. Mr. Johnson said he does not believe Norman On-Demand allows pets, but will check.

The 12 traits of Pet Friendly Cities include the following.

- Have one to three shelters....
- Partners collaborate to end pet homelessness
- Shelters are warm and welcoming to encourage adoption
- Community cat programs humanely address overpopulation

2. (cont.) DISCUSSION REGARDING POTENTIALLY BECOMING A PET FRIENDLY CITY.

Have four to six homes for....

- Pet friendly housing options for all families and pets
- Support exists to keep pets in homes in tough times
- Pet owners have support to make responsible choices for their pets.

Have seven to nine Parks and....

- Pet needs are considered in City, Park and Green Space Planning
- Public Pet Amenities support good health for all
- People know the expectations for pets in public places.

Have 10 to 12 Businesses that....

- make it easy to be out with your pet
- make traveling with dogs and cats accessible and affordable
- have workplaces that know and support the benefits of pets at work

An assessment must be completed by City staff and receive Mayor affirmation of the submission. Certification is awarded for five-year periods, with a recertification assessment update to capture pet friendly progress made over the previous certification time period.

Councilmember Peacock asked if there are grant opportunities for being a Pet Friendly City. Ms. Robertson said there is no funding award that goes with the designation, but there would be assistance with certification and signage.

Future grant opportunities are available to assist cities with programs that have a lasting impact on keeping pets and pet parents together and making communities pet friendly.

Councilmember Grant, Councilmember Holman and Chairman Peacock agreed with seeking the designation and to let the Animal Welfare Oversight Committee work on the plan and bring back up in July.

Councilmember Hinkle asked, since Norman is looking to promote itself as a Pet Friendly City, what about promoting Norman as the most "Grandparent Friendly City".

Councilmember Grant asked if "Aging in Place" could be included in a future Oversight meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 pm.

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK

MAYOR