NORTH LITTLE ROCK PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES
October 20, 2025

The North Little Rock Parks and Recreation commission meeting was called to order by Mrs. Vicki Stephens at 5:03 p.m. on October 20, 2025 at the North Little Rock Community Center.

Mrs. Stephens stated that on September 26th, 2025 Commissioner Don Skrivanos passed away. She stated that Mr. Skrivanos was devoted to his family, his religion, this community, and our commission. He will be greatly missed.

Mrs. Stephens stated that since the department budget was on this month's agenda, she invited Stephen Bentley to attend as a guest. Mrs. Stephens informed the commission that Mr. Bentley will be presented at the October 27th, 2025 City Council meeting to fill Mr. Skrivanos' position. Mrs. Stephens presented information about Mr. Bentley. She stated that he is 69 years of age, and resides in North Little Rock in Tennyson Court. She also mentioned Mr. Bentley has been a Red Cross Board Member for 14 years. He is the founder of CARTI's Tour De Rock 100 Mile Bike Ride Fundraiser and chaired that from 2024 to 2028. He is also the chair of the Arkansas River Trail Close the Loop Committee. He is a biker, hiker, golfer, an Arkansas Razorback fan, and is more than qualified to serve on the Parks and Recreation Commission. Mrs. Stephens stated the commission will officially welcome Mr. Bentley at the next meeting. Mr. Bentley stated he will be out of town October 27th so he will not be able to attend the City Council meeting. He mentioned that he will talk to Mayor Terry Hartwick about having to miss the meeting. Mrs. Stephens thanked Mr. Bentley for joining the commission.

Commission Members Present: Randall Bradley, Toby Burkett, Laura Juels, Otistene Smith, and Vicki Stephens.

Vote for Excused or Unexcused Absences: Mrs. Stephens asked for Neil Bryant to be excused.

Mrs. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Burkett to excuse Neil Bryant from the October 20th, 2025 commission meeting. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

Staff Members Present: Kenny Stephens, Jennifer Fields, Patrick Isbell, Joe Ralston, Jamie Pettit, Greg Zonner, Jeff Caplinger, Katrina Wilbon, Tina Worrell, and Daniel Cornelison.

Others Present: Officer James Neeley, Robert Jolly Sr. and Stephen Bentley.

Disposition of Minutes: Mrs. Stephens presented the September 15, 2025 minutes to be approved.

Mr. Burkett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley, to approve all of the presented minutes. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

Bonzai BMX Requirement Update: Jamie Pettit, Special Events Coordinator, updated the commission on the Bonzai BMX proposal. Mrs. Pettit stated she has spoken with Shelby Morris, Senior Manager of Sales and Partnerships at North Little Rock Tourism, the week before and shared the Bonzai BMX proposal with them. Mrs. Pettit informed the commission Ms. Morris is going to be reviewing it with her staff and find out if they would be interested in funding Bonzai BMX proposal.

Bonzai BMX Requirement Update Continued: Mrs. Pettit stated there is not much else to update right now concerning Bonzai BMX and should have more information at the next meeting.

Mr. Burkett asked if Bonzai BMX finds a way to get the money from other sources, will the City still have to have some sort of agreement. Mrs. Pettit answered and said that was correct.

Mrs. Stephens stated that North Little Rock Tourism conducted a survey and presented the findings on September 23rd, 2025 at the Argenta Theater. Mrs. Stephens explained one of the findings was to work in unison with the surrounding cities. This way there will be less duplication of programs and events that are already occurring nearby.

Mrs. Stephens stated all the parks are funded through the Hamburger and Lodging Tax. She informed the commission the city of Cabot has invested $130,000 in their BMX track. This is where the tournaments are currently being held. Mrs. Stephens stated before next month's meeting, Mrs. Pettit is going to be receiving a letter from North Little Rock Tourism stating what they are willing to do concerning funding for Bonzai BMX. She explained during next month's meeting, Mrs. Pettit is going to present information on finding a bid for the dirt work at the BMX track. Mrs. Stephens stated Dave Larson is still expecting 500 yards of dirt from the City. Mrs. Pettit is also going to present what Cabot recommends concerning the Bonzai BMX proposal.

Conversion of the Red Ball Courts: Daniel Cornelison, Tennis Director, updated the commission on the conversion of Red Ball courts at the Burns Park Tennis Center. He stated that they are still getting bids on the red ball courts. He explained they had gotten one bid and are still needing a couple more.

Mrs. Stephens asked if the bids were still in the $600,000 range. Director Kenny Stephens answered and said yes. Mrs. Smith asked if they were still using the co-op to help with bids. Mr. Cornelison asked Mrs. Smith if she was referring to Sourcewell. Mrs. Smith answered and said yes. Mr. Cornelison stated the bids they were receiving were around $750,000 using them, so they decided to go back and look. Mr. Burkett sought clarification and asked if they were going back to the bid process, now. Mr. Cornelison stated yes and the last bid was $630,000. Mr. Cornelison informed the commission the price would be around $500,000 if they only get the slab done. Mrs. Smith asked if the bid for $630,000 includes everything they would need. Mr. Cornelison responded and said yes it would. Mrs. Stephens thanked him for the update.

St. Joseph Farmstead Burns Park RV Campground Proposal: Mrs. Stephens stated City Attorney, Amy Fields, sent a summary through email to Scott Shellabarger, which was included in the commission packet. Mrs. Stephens informed the commission at 3:46pm today, Mr. Shellabarger sent a letter to City Attorney, Amy Fields, which was then forwarded to Director Kenny Stephens. She explained the summary stated that the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism confirmed the proposed St. Joseph Farmstead project cannot be located in Burns Park, due to Land and Water Conservation Fund grant restrictions. The City will not proceed with the proposal.

Mrs. Stephens informed the commission Mr. Shellabarger stated in his letter that St. Joseph Farmstead continues to believe creating an educational farm and large community at Burns Park is a wonderful idea. They are going to continue to work with City Council and community leaders to

St. Joseph Farmstead Burns Park RV Campground Proposal Continued: move forward. The letter continues to say that St. Joseph Farmstead is confident that an agreement can be reached that includes a 40 acre transfer if required. Mrs. Stephens informed the commission that this matter will have to stay on the agenda under the unfinished business portion until City Attorney, Amy Fields, is back in town to give her final recommendation.

Steve Ralston Contract Approval: Mrs. Stephens stated the commission would like to approve Steve's contract. Director Kenny Stephens stated Steve Ralston does a good job at the Burns Park Golf Course. He brings in a lot of tournaments and had a record year in 2024. Director Kenny Stephens also stated Joe Ralston and Steve Ralston work well together and if Steve Ralston would like to stay another year, then he does not see a reason to reject the request.

Mrs. Juels made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley to approve Steve Ralston's contract for another year.

Mrs. Smith asked if Steve Ralston is bound to the 3% credit card fee because the contract states the credit card fee is 2.5%. Mr. Steve Ralston stated that he noticed the 2.5%. Mrs. Stephens stated that all City Attorney, Amy Fields, did was change the dates. Mr. Steve Ralston stated that the change from 2.5% to 3% will have to be initialed on the contract because it falls in line with city changes.

Mrs. Smith stated on Exhibit A page 7 the contract says November 13, 2020 instead of 2025. She asked if the prices were from 2025 or from 2020. Mr. Steve Ralston asked if she had the contract from November 15, 2024. Mrs. Smith informed Mr. Steve Ralston, the contract the commissioners received was from 2020. Mr. Ralston stated there were price changes and updates on the contract from 2024.

Mrs. Smith asked if City Attorney, Amy Fields, will give the commissioners an updated contract. Mr. Steve Ralston stated yes and the updated list will come to a total of around $19,550. Mrs. Smith informed the commission the contract needs to be updated from 2.5% to 3%. Mrs. Stephens asked Ms. Juels if she would like to amend her motion to include those two changes in the new contract. Ms. Juels and Mr. Bradley agreed to amend their motions. Mrs. Smith we need to update the list and change from 2.5% to 3%. Mrs. Stephens asked the commission if they needed to see the contract again when City Attorney, Amy Fields makes the changes. Mrs. Smith stated she was okay with the two changes and to include the contract in the next commission packet.

Ms. Juels made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley to approve Steve Ralston's contract after the 2.5% credit card fee is changed to 3% and the Exhibit A page 7 list. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bentley stated that in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette this past Sunday, Best of Arkansas recognized Burns Park Golf Course, Pleasant Valley Country Club, and Chenal Country Club as the best golf courses in Arkansas. Mr. Steve Ralston stated that Pleasant Valley Country Club is having the Senior Tournament this week and it is a major event for them.

Department Budget: Director Kenny Stephens referred to the budget packet and stated on the left hand side of the budget, it will state what department the budget represents. Director Kenny

Department Budget Continued: Stephens asked the commission to turn to Administration portion of the budget packet, it is categorized by 2025 Amended Budget, 2025 Activity, and 2026 Department Budget Request. Director Kenny Stephens stated that every department section is in this same format.

Mrs. Stephens asked Director Kenny Stephens if there were any particular sections of the budget he would like to speak on. Director Kenny Stephens voiced concern about the 3% credit card fee still not covering the cost, even after being raised recently. He informed the commission $55,000 was budget and $203,000 has been spent. Director Kenny Stephens noted the credit card fee cannot go higher than 3%. Mrs. Smith asked who was responsible for paying it. Director Kenny Stephens answered and said we pay it. He explained that they were paying $40,000 for credit cards until we started charging for credit card use.

Director Kenny Stephens stated golf uses the credit card fee a lot. They are averaging $150,000 a month and are a big factor in the total amount. Director Kenny Stephens stated that the budget has not been approved and these are just figures. Mrs. Smith asked if our share would possibly be $50,000. Director Kenny Stephens stated he would not know until the end of the year.

Director Kenny Stephens informed the commission that insurance on buildings have increased in price. He stated the budgeted amount was $35,000 and $31,000 has been spent. They have also budgeted $35,000 again for 2026.

Mrs. Smith asked about computer expenses, referencing the computer labs in community centers. Director Stephens stated that all IT related expenses, including software, computers, and upgrades are handled through the City's IT Department budget.

Mr. Burkett referred to the budget and stated if you go to appropriations for Administration the totals of the amended budget for 2025 is almost $650,000 and the requested amount is $540,000. He informed the commission that is $107,000 less. Mr. Burkett then referred to Parks Maintenance's budget and stated the amended budget for this year is $4.618 million and the budget for next year is $4.55 million, which is $70,000 less. Mr. Burkett stated that we are around $180,000 in the hole. He further stated that Recreation picks up about $220,000, so the total overall budget increases by approximately $20,000, with the rest of the departments remaining relatively flat.

Mr. Burkett commented that it seems the department is taking money out of one area and putting it in another. Director Kenny Stephens confirmed that this is typically how the process works. Director Kenny Stephens mentioned Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, had planned to attend the meeting, but was unable to do so. Mr. Burkett indicated that he was aware of her absence at the meeting. Director Kenny Stephens stated Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, had agreed to meet with the commission before the November commission meeting to go over the budget in detail. He also mentioned it would be beneficial for her to attend a commission meeting to provide clarification on financial issues.

Mr. Burkett referred to the Parks Capital section in the budget packet and the paper that included the want list for the department. He stated the parks capital has $200,000 in funding. Director Kenny

Department Budget Continued: Stephens invited Parks Superintendent, Patrick (Pat) Isbell up to the podium. Director Kenny Stephens stated that the maintenance department is in need of a new dump truck. The old dump truck is broken down and is going to cost about $5,300 to get it running once again. He also informed the commission mowers are also needed. Director Kenny Stephens stated they received one (1) mower last year, but $200,000 is not enough, especially when purchasing equipment. He informed the commission there are more wants the department is needing that is not listed on the list.

Mr. Burkett that the want list totals out to $1.6 million and we are only getting $200,000 in capital funding. He stated that the roof of the community center was not added. Director Kenny Stephens stated the new roof is coming out of sales tax money. Mr. Burkett pointed out that the red ball courts had not been added in the amount, nor has the cost of train repairs. Mrs. Stephens informed the commission no amount of money was to be spent on the train.

Mr. Burkett stated that he could not follow the minutes but gathered there was some expense for golf carts. Mr. Burkett explained the department has $1.6 million worth of projects and equipment needs, yet the budget is only increasing $20,000 and are receiving $200,000 with $500,000 in sales tax money. He informed the commission that even with those funds, it is not enough to cover all the department needs. Mr. Burkett asked Director Kenny Stephens what budget has been proposed back to the City that included all of these needs.

Director Kenny Stephens explained that there had not been any discussion with the parks and recreation directors regarding capital allocations. He stated that he had just received the information that day about the $200,000 capital. He mentioned that he had spoken with Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, about the financial situation. He informed the commission the department cannot continue to patch and repair old equipment. Director Kenny Stephens stated the department has $200,000 in capital funding last year and the same amount was being proposed again. He explained the want list had even been reduced to make it more manageable. He explained to the commission that he may even be able to get by without a new truck, but some of the other wants are not negotiable.

Mr. Burkett asked Director Kenny Stephens if the budget that was submitted included all of the department's needs. Director Kenny Stephens stated that at that time he did not know what the capital was going to be and he gave finance a want list. Mr. Isbell stated that park maintenance is in desperate need of new equipment. He stated they are punishing the equipment that they do have because they are not able to rotate. He also informed the commission that they have one tractor. Mr. Isbell explained that it is important to rotate because it helps the equipment last longer. Director Kenny Stephens explained that the equipment has not been updated in years.

Mrs. Stephens stated that she wanted to run something by Mr. Burkett because he has knowledge in the area. She stated that in the commission packet, there is a financial statement from North Little Rock Tourism. City Attorney, Amy Fields, looked at last month's numbers and stated that it was incorrect. Mrs. Stephens explained the financial statement shows that through the month of September, they have ran over $4 million through our account. She then stated it is $5.8 million that

Department Budget Continued: Tourism ran through the parks and recreation department's account through the month of September. Mrs. Stephens informed the commission she pulled some information and came across the financial statement that was given to the City Council for the 2025 proposed budget. She explained that it shows that $7,275,000 was going to come from tourism into our general fund. Then above that, there was going to be $200,000 capital improvement and $275,000 was going to come from general fund. Mrs. Stephens stated that $2.3 million was to be generated in revenue from our department's programs. This brought the total projected funding to $10,270,000 to support operations and the general fund.

Mrs. Stephens explained when City Attorney, Amy Fields, noticed North Little Rock Tourism had already put in $5.8 million of the $7.2 million, she believed that the total amount should exceed the $7.2 million estimate by the end of the fiscal year. She questioned why the department could not use a portion of those funds to purchase much needed equipment to keep the department operational. Mrs. Stephens explained when she learned that Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, would not be attending the meeting, Director Kenny had called her to clarify some of these financial issues. Mrs. Stephens stated she believed the department was receiving an additional $200,000 in capital funds and $500,000 in sales tax funds. Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, informed her that the projected tourism funding had been changed from $7.2 million to $7.7125 million for 2026 due to a 20% increase in insurance costs and a planned 2.5% pay raise for city employees. Mrs. Stephens stated that according to Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, the additional funds were being allocated to cover those expenses, meaning the department would not be receiving the expected increase for capital improvements. Mrs. Stephens expressed frustration, stating that the department was losing capital funding to cover other city expenses and she did not know how they would be able to fund the many projects and needs concerning the parks and recreation department.

Director Kenny Stephens stated the concession stand is going to be built at Funland with a $100,000 grant, but the total cost will be around $250,000. Mrs. Stephens stated in March, during the commission meeting with Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, they had discussed several projects that Mayor Terry Hartwick wanted completed, including yurts, additional shade structures, and the archery range. At that time it was stated, the money for those projects would come from a $750,000 fund that had been discussed. Mrs. Stephens stated it remains uncertain as to where the department's money is going and why it is not being used for its intended purposes.

Ms. Juels stated it would be helpful to hear directly from Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, again. Mrs. Stephens agreed with Ms. Juels, stating that Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, will attend the next meeting or meet with the commissioners beforehand if that is what they prefer. Mrs. Stephens informed the commission that Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, is supposed to be meeting with Mayor Terry Hartwick in the morning and they will be deciding on the final budget. Mrs. Stephens stated it has become apparent that the money is supposed to be for the parks and recreation department, is being utilized by the city for other wants and needs. We are not getting to keep what we thought was supposed to be ours. Mrs. Stephens explained that Karen Trevino, North Little Rock Tourism President, has realized that the funds she believed were going to be used to capital improvements were instead going toward the department's operating budget. Because of

Department Budget Continued: this, Mrs. Trevino has stopped pressing the department about fixing the tennis courts and other facilities, recognizing that the funds to address those issues were not actually available. Mrs. Smith noted that during the Sports Feasibility Study meeting, the new archery range does not meet tournament standards. She asked if there is a way to fix it. Director Kenny Stephens responded and said he and Mr. Isbell looked at the archery range and can be modified into an L shape and make the distance 60 yards. There is a way to modify the archery range and meet the tournament standards. Mrs. Smith stated it would still take money to complete the work. Mrs. Stephens stated she believes fixing the archery range is something we need to pursue because there is a high demand for tournaments. She explained the people who would participate in the archery tournaments would stay in North Little Rock hotels and eat at restaurants in the city. Mrs. Stephens informed the commission that North Little Rock Tourism thought the archery range was going to be a big selling point for tournaments only to find out the range does not meet the requirements. Director Kenny Stephens stated the cost to fix the archery range is not very expensive. Mr. Isbell agreed with Director Kenny Stephens about the cost not being too expensive.

Mrs. Stephens said the meeting with North Little Rock Tourism turned out to be very interesting and stated if anyone was interested, Jennifer Fields, Executive Secretary, could provide access to the software used during the meeting. Miss Fields could either print or email the materials for review. Mrs. Stephens stated the discussion provided value because it highlighted the importance of the cities working together and how all departments could benefit from greater collaboration.

Mrs. Stephens stated in response to Mr. Burkett's question earlier in the meeting, she does not know where the department's funds are going. She believed North Little Rock Tourism was going to be able to fund extra money to buy the equipment that is needed, especially since sales tax revenue cannot be used for rolling stock. Mrs. Stephens stated according to Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, she has already determined where to spend the money. Director Kenny Stephens added that $141,000 is currently being allocated for electric golf carts. Mr. Burkett commented that $550,000 for the North Little Rock Community Center roof can be sales tax money. Director Kenny Stephens explained it is going to cost around $277,000 for the new roof. Mrs. Stephens explained Director Kenny Stephens had found out that part of the roof had already been done over the gym and cardio rooms. This will reduce the cost. Mr. Burkett sought clarification that the price for the roof had been changed from $550,000 to $277,000. Director Kenny Stephens stated this was correct. Mrs. Stephens commented they were going to try and get the roof done this year so next year we will have the full $550,000. Director Kenny Stephens informed the commission he is waiting on the final contract from legal. He stated that everything has been documented and legal has approved it.

Mrs. Smith asked whether the floors at the North Heights Community Center would be replaced. Director Stephens responded the department intends to replace the floors and, if there are remaining funds this year, may begin work soon. He noted that the North Heights Community Center has already been painted but clarified only the classrooms and other smaller areas will be addressed at this time, not the gym floor. He added the only community center where no work is planned is the Rose City Community Center.

Department Budget Continued: Mr. Burkett then stated, as he understands it, the commission will not receive any additional insight into the budget and will simply be presented with the finalized version. Director Kenny Stephens explained all City departments were required to submit their budgets by a certain deadline, and the Parks and Recreation Department has no control over or input in determining its capital allocation. He reiterated that he learned about the capital amount at the same time the commissioners did, through the same email that Mr. Burkett had received. Mr. Burkett asked whether City officials had seen the department's $1.6 million list of capital needs. Director Stephens confirmed that they had.

Mrs. Smith asked for clarification of the budgeting process, stating her understanding was that division directors submit their requests, which are then prioritized before being finalized. Director Kenny Stephens replied while that may be the intent, at this point it is less about priorities and more about necessity, as much of the department's equipment is so old that it must be replaced. Mrs. Stephens added that last year, she, Director Kenny Stephens, and City Attorney, Amy Fields, met with Mayor Terry Hartwick and Chief of Staff, Mike Davis, to review the statutory law that established the Parks and Recreation Commission. Mrs. Stephens reminded the mayor, when he served as Parks Director, the commission had been actively involved in the budget process. At that time, staff would meet with the commission to discuss their needs and together they would prepare a proposed budget that was then submitted to the Director and the Chief Financial Officer. Although they understood not all requests would be approved, they at least played a role in shaping the budget and had a clear understanding of priorities.

Mrs. Stephens explained after former Director Bob Sisson retired, this process changed. Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, who came from Little Rock, operates under a different model where the Parks Department functions in an advisory capacity rather than under statutory authority. Mrs. Stephens reminded them that the North Little Rock Parks and Recreation Commission is established by state law and is meant to play an active role in the budgeting process. She emphasized that once again, the commission is finding itself involved only at the end of the process, rather than at the beginning where its input would be most valuable.

Mrs. Stephens recommended for the next budget cycle, beginning early in the summer, the commission should take an active role in preparing and submitting its own proposed budget, even if the City does not approve all items. At least then, the commission will have a record of its priorities and a basis for future discussion. She stated it is extremely frustrating to continually face needs that cannot be met due to lack of funding. The commission must find a way to advocate for its role in determining how funds are spent. Mrs. Stephens concluded by reminding the commission that Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, and Mayor Terry Hartwick are meeting the following morning to make final decisions on the budget. At this point, Director Kenny Stephens is set to receive $200,000 for capital improvements and $500,000 from sales tax revenue. Mrs. Stephens added that once Director Kenny Stephens has more information from that meeting, the commission can decide whether to schedule a separate meeting with Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, for further discussion.

Director Reports: Patrick Isbell, Parks Superintendent, reported for Maintenance. Mr. Isbell stated that at the last commission meeting, there were concerns regarding the dog park, including not enough seating. He informed the commission that this issue has been resolved and additional seating has been installed inside the dog park. The Electric Department came out and installed a pole in the middle between the two dog parks, and LED lights have been added. Mr. Isbell stated a trench was dug, and conduit was placed underground. The Electric Department will return tomorrow to pull the wire to complete the project. He reported most of the lights at the soccer complex are working well, allowing staff to rotate fields and give them time to rest. The next focus will be on the girls' softball complex, which has old lighting. Many lights have been taken down because they were beyond repair. Staff will fix what they can until replacement funding becomes available. Mr. Isbell noted the lighting at the girls' softball fields is a frequent source of complaints. The Electric Department will assist in repairing and improving as many lights as possible.

Mr. Isbell also reported the police substation is closed, and Lieutenant Evans and his officers are now operating out of the building at Eldor Johnson Park in the downstairs treehouse area. The Park Police have one office upstairs dedicated to report writing. The old park ranger building at the softball complex has been converted into a break room and supply area for the athletics department. Mr. Isbell explained athletic workers previously had no designated area for breaks or meals and often ate in the shop around equipment. This conversion provides them with a proper space.

Mr. Isbell stated preparations are underway for the Christmas season. The Christmas tree goes in front of the main office will be installed the Monday of Thanksgiving week, while the tree dedicated to Dr. Anessa Bennett on Main Street will be set up the Friday before Thanksgiving week. The main city tree on Main Street is handled by contractors; however, the Parks Department provides and delivers all materials. He also reported work will begin soon on the archery range and he expects no issues completing that project. Director Kenny Stephens added large round tables have been installed at the dog park. Mr. Isbell explained visitors had been requesting tables and frequently moved benches to create gathering areas. The new tables have been concreted into the ground to prevent tipping. Commissioner Juels commented she had observed the recent improvements while at Burns Park.

Jamie Pettit, Special Events Coordinator, reported for Special Projects. Mrs. Pettit stated two major soccer tournaments were held on September 27th and 28th. The Arkansas Rising Girls' Capitol City Classic hosted about 30 teams, which was a smaller turnout than in previous years. The boys' tournament the following weekend saw participation from 75 teams, which was considered a successful turnout. Organizers are considering combining both tournaments into one weekend next year. The city took a gate for the event but did not charge a field rental fee. Two additional soccer tournaments are scheduled for November. Mrs. Pettit also met with representatives from Arkansas Rising to discuss potentially hosting a regional tournament in 2027. A site visit is scheduled for October 29th, and a meeting will be held to finalize a bid proposal. She expressed optimism that North Little Rock could secure the event and will provide updates at the next meeting.

Greg Zonner, Museum Director, reported for the Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum (AIMM). Mr. Zonner stated the past few weeks have been busy. AIMM recently hosted a Navy baptism

Director Reports Continued: ceremony, where the ship's bell was used in accordance with naval tradition. One of the USS Arkansas sailors participated in the ceremony, which took place aboard the USS Razorback. Mr. Zonner reported that the new USS Arkansas submarine has been launched, and its crew will visit on November 12th. The crew plans to visit local businesses and community members to promote awareness of the submarine. He advised commissioners to contact Derrell Hartwick, President of Chamber of Commerce, if they would like a visit coordinated. Mr. Zonner added that AIMM has been welcoming numerous school groups recently.

Daniel Cornelison, Tennis Director, reported for Burns Park Tennis Center. Mr. Cornelison stated the tennis center has been busy with the conclusion of high school tennis season. The center hosted the 6A, 3A, and 4A conference championships. The State Combo Tournament was scheduled at Burns Park Tennis Center, but was held at Rebsamen Tennis Center due to low registration. The state Overalls tournament, featuring state champions and runners-up, is currently underway, with two Burns Park players. Caroline (Ms. Juels' granddaughter) and Georgia, advancing to the semifinals and potentially meeting in the finals. He also reported that the upcoming Combo II Tournament will feature a strong local showing.

Mrs. Stephens stated Mr. Cornelison provided her with a report showing an increase in total revenue of approximately $6,500 compared to this time last year. Total revenue for September was $30,400, with $11,662 allocated for operational expenses. She thanked Mr. Cornelison and the tennis staff for their progress and continued growth.

Tina Worrell, Recreation Superintendent, and Katrina Wilbon, Community Center Director, reported for Recreation. Mrs. Worrell recognized Ms. Wilbon as a breast cancer survivor who has been in remission for ten years. Ms. Wilbon reported that the Tiny Tots program began last weekend and features six teams of children aged three to four years, with seven (7) to eight (8) players per team and 12 cheerleaders participating. Glenview Community Center is hosting a "Pink Out" event in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, where guests are encouraged to wear pink and enjoy refreshments during three scheduled games. The annual Fall Festival will be held on October 31st and will include Trunk or Treat, indoor activity stations, bounce houses, and face painting.

Mrs. Stephens praised Koppers Inc for their continued community support, and Ms. Wilbon added that Koppers Inc, Roberts- McNutt, and Tenenbaum Recycling Group LLC, have all been generous sponsors. Mrs. Stephens stated she would like the commission to begin recognizing businesses and organizations that go above and beyond to support community events, noting formal gratitude has not always been extended. Ms. Wilbon explained community centers send thank-you videos featuring participating children to sponsors but agreed broader citywide recognition could be improved. She also noted a long time Glenview volunteer, who led exercise classes twice a week for 25 years, recently retired and deserves acknowledgment. Mrs. Stephens suggested presenting a plaque in his honor, and Director Kenny Stephens proposed featuring him in Proud Magazine. Mrs. Stephens also recommended utilizing the digital billboard at the North Little Rock Community Center to publicly recognize such contributors. She further mentioned Pilgrim Progress Church, which recently donated shoes for a Sherman Park event, as another example of organizations deserving appreciation.

Director Reports Continued: Mrs. Worrell stated community center Halloween events attract thousands of attendees each year, yet each center only receives $600 in funding to host them. She emphasized without strong community partnerships, these events would not be as successful. Ms. Wilbon agreed with Mrs. Worrell's statement, noting how challenging it is to host large events with limited city funding. Mrs. Stephens acknowledged the concern and reiterated her commitment to recognizing those who assist the centers. Mrs. Smith shared she recently visited North Heights Community Center and enjoyed watching the K3 basketball program and cheerleaders, noting the strong community turnout. Mrs. Worrell agreed the younger age groups draw the largest crowds.

Mrs. Worrell further reported the splash pad and train have been closed for the season. She stated Pink Out events are underway and all four centers will host Halloween events on Friday night. Because schools will be closed that day, children will also be in attendance during daytime hours. She mentioned the ASPIRE program recognizes weekly "stars" among participants and also highlights outstanding employees, with their photos displayed in front of each community center. Both soccer tournaments were successful for concessions. Mrs. Worrell also shared that the Junior League donated Kindles and provides food for the North Heights Food Bank. She referred the commission to her written report included in the meeting packet for additional information.

Mrs. Worrell referenced a question Mr. Burkett had brought up about what recreation encompasses. Mrs. Worrell stated the community centers and programs are what is considered to be recreation. She added the $2 million dollars is going toward what we are doing for our kids and communities. Mrs. Stephens expressed appreciation for the financial breakdowns provided in the director's report. She then requested a more detailed analysis at a future meeting. Mrs. Worrell stated Jennie Cunningham, Program Supervisor, will attend the next meeting to provide additional information on recreational programs.

Joe Ralston, Golf Director, reported for Burns Park Golf Course. Mr. Ralston stated September revenue was up approximately $24,000, bringing the total increase to about $100,000 for the year. He stated the golf course has been extremely busy, completing nearly three months' worth of tournaments, including weekly Hot Dog Scrambles, Falcon Jet events twice a week, and various high school tournaments. Director Kenny Stephens noted the final golf cart payment of $40,000 has been completed, and future plans include rotating carts and increasing rental fees by $2, which could generate an additional $50,000 to $60,000 annually. Mrs. Smith asked if the carts were electric, and Director Kenny Stephens confirmed they were. Mrs. Stephens remarked the carts pay for themselves over time, and Mr. Ralston agreed, stating that they are a primary revenue source.

Jeff Caplinger, Special Projects Coordinator, reported new directional signs for unpaved trails are being printed, as some trails have been rerouted. He has also been producing updated videos for the city's five clubhouses, AIMM, and pavilion facilities. Mr. Caplinger hopes to present the completed videos at the next commission meeting. A new promotional video highlighting Burns Park and all city parks is currently in production and expected to be completed by mid-November. Mrs. Stephens stated that outdated policies on the city website need to be reviewed and corrected. Mr. Caplinger

Director Reports Continued: confirmed he will coordinate with Ms. Fields and Director Kenny Stephens to update policies and suggested reviewing one or two policies each month at upcoming meetings. Director Stephens noted city-made signs have helped save costs, as outsourcing is expensive. Mr. Caplinger added that the sign-making department does excellent work with quick turnaround times.

Director Kenny Stephens stated signs are really expensive. He stated the city is making all the signs and is saving us a lot of money. Director Kenny Stephens stated they made all the signs located at the splash pad and trails. Mr. Caplinger stated they do a great job making the signs and the turnaround time is very timely and works well.

Calendar of Events: Mrs. Stephens stated the agenda deadline for the next meeting is Tuesday, November 4, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. The November commission meeting will be held Monday, November 17, 2025. The November meeting will take place at 5:00 p.m. at the North Little Rock Community Center.

Adjournment: Mrs. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley, to adjourn the meeting at 6:12 p.m. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments/Visitors: Mrs. Stephens opened the meeting for public comments. There were none.

APPROVED BY: Vicki Stephens
Chair, Vicki Stephens

SUBMITTED BY: Otistene Smith
Secretary, Otistene Smith