NORTH LITTLE ROCK PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES
November 17, 2025

The North Little Rock Parks and Recreation commission meeting was called to order by Mrs. Vicki Stephens at 5:00 p.m. on November 17, 2025 at the North Little Rock Community Center.

Commission Members Present: Randall Bradley, Toby Burkett, Stephen Bentley, Neil Bryant, and Vicki Stephens.

Vote for Excused or Unexcused Absences: Mrs. Stephens asked for Otistene Smith and Laura Juels to be excused.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Burkett to excuse Otistene Smith and Laura Juels from the November 17th, 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, Jennie Cunningham, Tony Pate, and Daniel Cornelison.

Others Present: Officer James Neeley, Preston Cowell, Shelby Hunter, Scott Shellabarger, and Michelle Shellabarger.

Disposition of Minutes: Mrs. Stephens presented the October 20, 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, provided an update on the Bonzai BMX proposal. Mrs. Pettit stated she met with Shelbey Morris, North Little Rock Tourism Senior Manager of Sales and Partnerships, on Friday.

Mrs. Pettit reported she has spoken with Dave Larson, President of Bonzai BMX, and Shelbey Morris to explore whether North Little Rock Tourism might assist with funding the project; however, no definitive response has been given at this time.

Mrs. Pettit also contacted the City of Cabot regarding their BMX track, noting it is currently the only operating BMX track in Arkansas. She stated Cabot's Advertising and Promotion Commission funds track rebuilds approximately every other year at a cost of around $30,000. According to Cabot's Parks and Recreation Director, their events typically draw about 150 participants, with approximately 30 being local riders, and the director does not believe the track provides a significant economic impact for the city.

Mrs. Pettit further explained Bonzai BMX averages 45 events annually, with only 18 to 22 riders per event. Entry fees range from $10 to $20 per participant, and the program does not generate substantial revenue.

Mrs. Pettit stated Shelbey Morris recently met with USA BMX, the governing body for local BMX programs. USA BMX indicated the current facility is intended for local events only, while Cabot's track is suited for more regional competitions. USA BMX is expected to provide additional information,

Bonzai BMX Requirement Update Continued: including cost estimates for building a track capable of hosting regional or stadium-level events and clarification of the roles parks departments typically play in operating BMX facilities. Mrs. Pettit stated she will report back to the commission once this information is received.

Mrs. Stephens referenced a report indicating that tourism and the City of Cabot had spent approximately $130,000 on their BMX track. Mrs. Pettit clarified the Cabot Parks and Recreation Director later stated this figure was inaccurate and reiterated the $30,000 every-other-year rebuild cost. Mrs. Stephens asked whether Cabot invested $100,000 to originally build the track; Mrs. Pettit responded she was unsure and only had information regarding rebuild costs.

Mrs. Stephens commented that $30,000 would likely be insufficient to build a new track. Mrs. Pettit responded that $30,000 annually is still a significant expense.

Mrs. Stephens stated the item would remain on the agenda under Unfinished Business. She requested that future updates include cost estimates for different levels of BMX facilities capable of hosting state and regional events, as well as information on the operational roles of parks departments. Mrs. Stephens also raised the question of whether the track's purpose should be limited to practice, with riders traveling elsewhere for competitions.

Mr. Bryant asked whether there had previously been issues with unsupervised use of the track. Director Kenny Stephens stated he was not aware of any issues. Mr. Bryant noted prior to Director Stephens' tenure, riders frequently practiced at the track during the week while the city continued to bear maintenance costs, and riders competed elsewhere.

Mrs. Stephens stated this scenario would mirror the current discussion and expressed concern about missing funds, questioning the need to turn the facility over to a third party. She indicated the track could be removed if necessary.

Director Kenny Stephens stated asphalt repairs alone would likely cost at least $25,000. Mrs. Pettit confirmed the most recent quote exceeded $25,000 and did not include dirt costs. Director Stephens added that 25–30 loads of dirt had already been provided beyond the original agreement.

Mr. Bryant asked if there was additional information the commission needed. Mrs. Stephens replied she was waiting to review the information from North Little Rock Tourism. Mr. Bryant requested the item remain on the agenda.

Conversion of the Red Ball Courts: Daniel Cornelison, Tennis Director, updated the commission on the proposed conversion of the Red Ball courts at the Burns Park Tennis Center. Mr. Cornelison stated two cost estimates had been received. The quote for a post-tension concrete overlay was approximately $498,000, while the asphalt overlay option was approximately $298,000.

Director Kenny Stephens explained the mayor and the city engineer had met to discuss the project. The mayor initially believed the asphalt option could cost around $170,000, but the engineer advised that the cost would be significantly higher due to the need to remove poles and complete additional preparatory work.

Conversion of the Red Ball Courts Continued: Mr. Bryant asked what the purpose of the project was. Mr. Cornelison explained once the work is completed, the surface could be resurfaced and converted into a flexible-use space. The plan would allow for twelve pickleball courts or three tennis courts, using roll-away nets that could be installed or removed as needed. He stated the space could also be used as a large open slab for other activities.

Mr. Bryant asked whether the courts were wide enough for pickleball, and Mr. Cornelison confirmed they were. He explained four pickleball courts can typically be placed on one tennis court. Mr. Burkett stated regardless of the configuration, the courts will need to be resurfaced.

Mr. Burkett asked whether funds from a recently approved budget modification could be used for this project. City Attorney Amy Fields stated that City Council has not approved the full budget and that she did not recall any amendment that included funding for the tennis courts.

Mr. Burkett then asked about the $1.254 million figure. Director Kenny Stephens stated $277,000 was allocated for the roof replacement at the North Little Rock Community Center and remaining funds could be used for capital items, excluding rolling stock.

City Attorney Fields clarified Director Stephens was referring to a budget amendment approved for the 2025 fiscal year, which listed specific projects such as the archery range, shade structures at Funland, and the train track. She stated those funds were restricted to the listed projects and was unsure whether the $1.25 million referenced applied to the 2026 fiscal year.

Director Stephens stated he had been told the $1.25 million applied to the current year and would carry over. He explained his capital budget increased from $200,000 to $500,000, followed by additional funding of $750,000 and $1.25 million, though he stated there had been little discussion clarifying those amounts.

Mrs. Stephens expressed concern, stating she believed the $1.25 million was intended for equipment purchases. She referenced a list of equipment needs previously provided by Director Stephens and questioned whether the funds were sales tax or capital improvement funds, noting that rolling stock purchases are restricted under certain funding sources.

Director Stephens explained following discussions with Mr. Burkett and Mr. Bentley, approximately $500,000 was allocated toward equipment purchases, including mowers, athletic equipment, field lighting repairs, and a utility vehicle, which would leave approximately $200,000 remaining.

Mr. Burkett stated $500,000 would be sufficient to resurface the courts properly and questioned whether the recently added budget funds could be used for the tennis court overlay. He acknowledged this might not be resolved that evening but requested clarification in the future.

Director Stephens stated the matter would require further discussion with the mayor. City Attorney Fields reiterated the most recent budget amendment, approved within the last month, contained specific project allocations and did not include tennis courts. She stated she was unsure whether other funds might be available.

Conversion of the Red Ball Courts Continued: Mrs. Stephens stated she was concerned that projects appeared to be moving forward without first being brought before the commission and expressed a desire for commission review prior to decisions being made.

Director Kenny Stephens stated he had not heard of any specific amounts designated for the train or track and believed the tennis court project was still in the planning stage. He emphasized the need for further clarification with the mayor, particularly regarding the asphalt-only estimate of $170,000.

Mr. Cornelison clarified the $298,000 estimate was for the asphalt overlay option and approximately $495,000 was for a turnkey concrete solution.

Mr. Bentley asked about the pickleball tournaments held that week. Mr. Cornelison stated the tournaments went well overall, noting one issue on Friday when a match ran long and the lights turned off during the final championship match. He stated the lights were restored immediately.

Steve Ralston Contract Approval: Mrs. Stephens stated the only reason Steve Ralston's contract remained on the agenda was due to the need for a few minor adjustments, specifically regarding the credit card fee and the number of days outlined in the agreement. She stated the contract has now been approved, the proper contract has been submitted, and the commission thanked staff for completing the revisions.

North Little Rock Police Athletic League (PAL) 2025 Report: Jamie Pettit, Special Events Coordinator, stated under the agreement, the North Little Rock Police Athletic League (PAL) is required to submit an annual report. She noted Shelbey Hunter of PAL was present if the commission had any questions. Mrs. Pettit explained the current agreement does not expire until June 2028, as it is a five-year agreement.

Mrs. Stephens stated she noticed PAL is planning to expand volleyball programming. Mr. Hunter explained volleyball was added in an effort to bring girls back into the program, noting participation has been shifting away from softball in favor of volleyball. Mrs. Stephens commended PAL for its work and stated the commission appreciates the improvements made to the Rose City ball fields.

Mr. Burkett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to approve the North Little Rock Police Athletic League 2025 report. All voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

Teeboxx Agreement: Jamie Pettit, Special Events Coordinator, presented the Teeboxx agreement. She explained Teeboxx is a vending machine that dispenses discs for disc golf and both the pavilion and the machine were damaged during the tornado. She stated the pavilion has since been repaired and staff is requesting approval of the agreement to return the machine to service.

City Attorney Amy Fields stated she reviewed the agreement and there were initially a few provisions the city did not agree with. Those provisions were revised, and the agreement was updated to match the terms in place prior to the tornado.

Teeboxx Agreement Continued: Mr. Burkett stated the agreement was acceptable. Mrs. Pettit added that Preston Cowell, a volunteer, manages the operation of the machine by ordering discs, coordinating delivery, obtaining access to the machine, stocking it, and checking on it regularly.

Mr. Burkett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bentley, to approve the Teeboxx Agreement. All voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

2026 Frisbee Rate Proposal: Casey Canady, Parks Generalist, presented the 2026 Frisbee rate proposal. Mr. Canady stated after reviewing current fees, staff determined the Frisbee rates were due for an increase. He explained standard games with no lights and no painted lines would increase from $20 to $30. He also noted a discounted practice rate is offered, with a $5 reduction per practice when 20 or more practices are booked.

Mr. Canady explained during the spring season, teams typically play three days per week and often book many games in advance. He stated most of the time Frisbee groups use standard fields without lights and pay soccer field rates only when lights are needed, such as during certain times of the year.

Mr. Bryant asked for clarification on the phrase "no lights and no painted lines" included in the proposal. Mr. Canady explained while groups occasionally request painted lines, approximately 90 percent of the time they use existing fields and set their own cones without requiring staff assistance. He confirmed when lines are requested, the soccer rate is charged for line painting.

Mr. Burkett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to accept the 2026 Frisbee Rate Proposal. All voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

Arkansas Central Soccer Assoiciation 2026 Facility Use Agreement: Casey Canady, Parks Generalist, presented the Arkansas Central Soccer Association 2026 Facility Use Agreement. He stated the primary change from previous agreements was a rate increase. Mrs. Stephens asked whether the association had been informed of the increase. Mr. Canady responded they were notified earlier in the year that rates would likely increase and had been reminded, and the association did not express any concerns.

Mr. Canady explained the rate for 77 games without lights would increase from $10.50 to $12 per game, and the rate for 77 games with lights would increase from $15 to $17. He stated during favorable weather conditions, the association may host approximately 100 games per month, making the rate adjustment significant.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley, to approve the Arkansas Central Soccer Association 2026 Facility Use Agreement. All voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

Central Arkansas Indian Cricket Association (CAICA) 2026 Facility Use Agreement: Casey Canady, Parks Generalist, presented the Central Arkansas Indian Cricket Association (CAICA) 2026 Facility Use Agreement. He stated no substantive changes were made other than updated dates and noted fees had been increased in the prior year. Mrs. Stephens stated the director recommended approval.

Central Arkansas Indian Cricket Association (CAICA) 2026 Facility Use Agreement Continued: Mr. Burkett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bentley, to approve the Central Arkansas Indian Cricket Association 2026 Facility Use Agreement. All voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

Central Arkansas Tennis-ball Cricketers Hub Sports, Inc. (CATCH Sports, Inc.) 2026 Facility Use Agreement: Casey Canady, Parks Generalist, presented the Central Arkansas Tennis-ball Cricketers Hub Sports, Inc. (CATCH Sports, Inc.) 2026 Facility Use Agreement. Mr. Canady stated no changes were made to the agreement other than updated dates and noted fees were increased last year.

Mr. Burkett asked about the level of activity generated by the two cricket organizations. Mr. Canady explained CATCH Sports, Inc. practices every weekend and hosts three to four tournaments annually, drawing significant attendance. He stated CAICA operates one primary season but hosts a large Labor Day tournament and books facilities at both Burns Park and Stone Links Clubhouse, also drawing large crowds.

Mr. Bryant stated he had not realized the level of interest in cricket prior to these groups. Mr. Burkett agreed, stating the sport has grown significantly. Mr. Canady added several smaller groups within the Indian community coordinate with CAICA and participate in major events.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley, to approve the Central Arkansas Tennis-ball Cricketers Hub Sports, Inc. (CATCH Sports, Inc.) 2026 Facility Use Agreement. All voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

Price Increase of Golf Cart Rentals: Joe Ralston, Golf Director, presented a proposal to increase golf cart rental rates, stating staff has discussed the need to begin rotating golf carts at the golf course due to increased usage and accelerated wear. He explained golf carts are expensive and reliability is critical to operations. Mr. Ralston recommended implementing a 15 percent increase in golf cart rental rates beginning January 1st, 2026. The proposed increase would equal one (1) dollar per person for every nine (9) holes, two (2) dollars per person for every eighteen holes, and a ten (10) dollar increase to the golf cart portion of monthly memberships.

Mr. Ralston stated based on approximately $500,000 in annual golf cart revenue, the increase would generate an estimated additional $75,000 per year. After sales tax, the net increase would be approximately $67,500 annually. He stated staff would like these funds placed in a separate fund dedicated solely to golf cart purchases and replacements and emphasized the funds should be used by the end of each year. Mr. Bentley asked whether the proposed increase would be sufficient to cover the cost of replacing golf carts. Mr. Ralston responded he believed it would and noted that the course recently spent $57,000 to purchase ten (10) golf carts. He stated with the proposed increase, the course could likely purchase approximately 11 to 12 carts per year.

Steve Ralston addressed the commission and explained that, based on his experience owning golf carts, he rotated carts every four (4) years to keep them under warranty or within one (1) year of warranty coverage. He stated that this year he incurred significant repair costs on approximately 25 carts that were out of warranty. He noted that the course currently operates 90 golf carts, which he stated is an ideal number given current operations. He explained that to maintain a proper rotation

Price Increase of Golf Cart Rentals: schedule, the course would need to purchase at least 20 carts over the next two (2) years and 25 carts over the following two (2) years.

Mr. Ralston stated the carts being purchased now use lithium batteries, which staff hopes will extend their lifespan to a fifth year after completing the initial four (4) year rotation. He stated each cart costs approximately $8,200. When trading in older carts, the course receives approximately $2,500 per cart, resulting in a net cost of approximately $5,700 per replacement. He stated the current plan is to replace ten (10) carts using available trade-in funds.

Mrs. Stephens stated she hoped the course was receiving as much value as possible for the traded-in carts. Mr. Ralston responded staff negotiated the price as low as possible and reiterated that increased play and cart usage have made reliability critical, noting nothing frustrates golfers more than having play interrupted due to cart breakdowns. Mrs. Stephens stated additional carts had previously been purchased due to demand and that they paid for themselves. She stated staff put significant thought and effort into the proposal and expressed her appreciation, adding that establishing a rotation cycle for golf carts is necessary.

Mr. Ralston stated the course could potentially sell some of the remaining 15 carts that are out of warranty rather than trading them in. He stated if those carts could be sold for approximately $3,500 each instead of receiving a $2,500 trade-in value, the additional funds could be set aside to help purchase new carts and improve overall cart quality. Mr. Bentley asked whether $3,500 would be a reasonable price. Mr. Ralston stated it would and explained the retail price of these carts exceeds $12,000. He added through vendor partnerships, the course is able to purchase carts for $8,200 per unit, which is below cost, before applying trade-in credits.

Director Kenny Stephens asked whether selling the carts would require an auction or reserve process. Mr. Ralston stated staff had discussed cleaning one (1) cart and offering it for sale at $3,500 or best offer for a specified period of time. Director Kenny Stephens stated a bid process may be appropriate. Mrs. Stephens stated the matter could be revisited at a later date. Mr. Burkett stated to his understanding, the department does not maintain reserved funds and from a budget standpoint, the golf cart expense line item should reflect the additional $75,000 if the rate increase is approved, as there is no separate account to hold the funds.

Director Kenny Stephens stated ten (10) golf carts were scheduled to arrive that week. Mrs. Stephens asked how those carts were paid for, and Director Kenny Stephens stated he would need to consult with Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, for clarification.

Mr. Burkett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bentley, to approve the golf cart rental price increase. All voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

Credit Card Convenience Fee Increase: Mrs. Stephens informed the commission that City Attorney, Amy Fields, submitted a motion that differed from what was written on the agenda and in the agenda summary. She stated the commission did not want to present the motion as written but instead as it was intended to be presented by City Attorney, Amy Fields,.

Credit Card Convenience Fee Increase Continued: City Attorney, Amy Fields, stated she would read the agenda summary as it was intended. She read in July 2025, the Parks Commission increased credit card fees from two and one half (2.5) percent to three (3) percent. She stated the increase does not cover the actual costs incurred by the Parks and Recreation Department to process credit card transactions. She noted Arkansas law provides municipalities shall assess a transaction fee equal to the amount charged to the municipality by the credit card or debit card company. The Director recommended increasing the credit card fee to an amount equal to the actual cost incurred, with the fee automatically adjusted to reflect any changes in fees charged to the Parks and Recreation Department. She further stated all locations where credit cards are accepted would post signage reflecting the current fee and notifying customers that the fee would be passed on to the customer, and notification of the credit card fee would also be posted on the Parks and Recreation Department's page on the City's website.

City Attorney, Amy Fields, stated the motion being requested was to impose a credit card fee equal to the actual cost incurred, to allow the fee to be automatically adjusted as costs change, and to require posting of signage at all locations that accept credit cards.

Mrs. Stephens asked whether the department's software was capable of making those automatic adjustments, noting different card types such as Visa and American Express have different fee structures and questioning how accuracy would be ensured. City Attorney, Amy Fields, stated she had reviewed the proposal with the Finance Department but was not familiar with the technical operation of the software.

Tony Pate, North Little Rock Community Center Director, explained while the software could be configured to do this, it would be complex. He stated it would be more efficient to have the fee passed through directly by the merchant processor, Global, rather than calculating it internally through CivicRec. He explained CivicRec currently applies a flat three (3) percent fee automatically. To calculate actual costs internally, staff would need to account for different card types, per-transaction fees, merchant agreements, locations, and types of transactions, including online reservations and purchases. He stated this could require breaking fees down by individual facilities and payment types. Mr. Pate explained last year staff calculated a flat percentage by dividing the total merchant fees charged by Global into the approximately $3 million processed through the system.

City Attorney, Amy Fields, stated she wished she had known the software limitations before making the recommendation and confirmed she had worked with Finance in developing the proposal.

Mr. Pate stated he would need to consult with Global to determine whether fees could be automatically passed through before transactions reach CivicRec, noting that CivicRec functions primarily as a payment gateway between the customer and the merchant processor.

Mr. Bryant stated he is currently dealing with similar issues in his business and explained the percentage charged should come from the Finance Department. He noted American Express charges significantly higher fees and stated in his experience, businesses often average fees across card types. He stated when the commission moved to three (3) percent, he believed it was

Credit Card Convenience Fee Increase Continued: reasonable based on the information available at that time. He added without clear data from Finance, it is difficult to know the true cost.

Mr. Bentley asked whether the department was losing approximately $800,000. Mrs. Stephens clarified the cost of credit card processing to the department was approximately $200,000 last year.

Mr. Bryant stated this issue should be reviewed annually and reiterated the current three (3) percent rate was likely based on Finance's prior guidance. City Attorney, Amy Fields, stated Finance had indicated the three (3) percent fee no longer covers the actual costs and she could no longer recommend the proposal as read without better understanding of the software and cost structure.

Mr. Burkett asked where the six (6) percent figure referenced in the agenda summary originated. Mrs. Stephens asked Mr. Bentley whether he had discussed the matter with the mayor. Mr. Bentley stated he had not discussed a six (6) percent rate and agreed that continuing to lose money was not ideal.

Director Kenny Stephens stated he has been discussing the issue with Chief of Staff Mike Davis and planned to speak with the mayor. He stated he believed the mayor was agreeable to a six (6) percent rate but acknowledged that Finance would need to review and confirm the actual numbers.

City Attorney, Amy Fields, stated she had spoken with Finance and could justify a fee only if it was based on documented averages or actual costs. She stated she could not support a figure that was not tied to real data, noting that state law requires the fee assessed to equal the amount charged to the municipality by the credit card company.

Mr. Burkett stated the fee should be reviewed annually. Mr. Bryant stated the original three (3) percent rate came from Finance. City Attorney, Amy Fields, reiterated the department is currently losing money and that three (3) percent is no longer sufficient.

Mrs. Stephens stated some businesses choose not to accept American Express due to high processing fees and suggested this might be an option worth considering. She stated the department cannot continue accepting credit cards while losing money and suggested that maintaining a three (3) percent fee without accepting American Express could be an alternative.

Mr. Bryant asked when the fee was increased to three (3) percent. Mrs. Stephens stated it had been increased from two and one half (2.5) percent. City Attorney, Amy Fields, clarified the increase to three (3) percent occurred in July of this year.

Mr. Burkett asked whether the commission could table the item until guidance from Finance is received. Mr. Pate stated some of the costs may be outside the transaction percentage itself, such as rental fees for nearly forty credit card machines at approximately then ten (10) dollars per month each, and suggested those costs may not have been fully considered previously.

Mrs. Stephens stated was a valid point and noted the issue may involve more than just a pass through percentage. She stated Finance needs to be aware of the equipment rental costs as well.

Mrs. Stephens asked who would speak with Chief Financial Officer, Ember Strange, regarding the matter. Director Kenny Stephens stated he would have that conversation. City Attorney, Amy Fields, stated she needs to be included in that

Credit Card Convenience Fee Increase Continued: discussion. Mrs. Stephens requested that the credit card machine rental fees also be addressed so the correct percentage can be determined.

Request for Proposals (RFP) approval for lease of 47 acres where site of Burns Park RV Park was located: Mr. Burkett presented a request for proposals for the lease of approximately forty-seven acres located at the former site of the Burns Park RV Park. Mr. Burkett stated several months earlier, St. Joseph Farmstead approached the City regarding interest in leasing the former RV park site. He explained that St. Joseph Farmstead is seeking a new location after the Catholic Diocese terminated their lease following a fire. He noted that the Burns Park RV Park was destroyed during the tornado and that both sites are currently nonfunctional.

Mr. Burkett stated as of several months ago, the City had not identified any plans to repurpose the acreage where the RV park was located and had no intention of reopening it as an RV park. He explained while the City does not have funding to repair or repurpose the site as an RV park or for other uses, there is existing infrastructure that could potentially be utilized. He stated there may be entities, such as St. Joseph Farmstead or others, that could enhance the park and provide additional recreational opportunities for the City.

Mr. Burkett informed the commission that state law does not allow park property to be leased to another entity without public advertisement and the acceptance of bids or proposals. He stated although the City cannot lease the property directly to St. Joseph Farmstead, their inquiry prompted broader discussion regarding potential repurposing of the site. He proposed that Parks staff and City Attorney, Amy Fields, develop a formal request for proposals to solicit interest from potential tenants for public recreational purposes.

Mr. Burkett stated any proposal must comply with existing grant restrictions on the property, noting that funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund had been received for the site. He explained that the request for proposals (RFP) would require public notice for a period of four weeks, with advertisements published once per week. He stated after proposals are received, the commission would review them and make recommendations regarding repurposing options and any associated terms and conditions. He stated that his recommendation was to begin the RFP process as soon as possible.

City Attorney, Amy Fields, stated she and Jeff Caplinger, Special Projects Coordinator, had already discussed the process and noted that Mr. Caplinger has prior experience managing similar requests. She stated her office does not typically manage RFPs but staff has discussed placing this request on a fast track.

Mr. Caplinger stated staff could likely have the request for proposals issued by the first week of December. City Attorney, Amy Fields, stated staff would like to move quickly if the commission approved moving forward with the process.

Mrs. Stephens thanked Mr. Burkett for the time and effort he devoted to the proposal.

Request for Proposals (RFP) approval for lease of 47 acres where site of Burns Park RV Park was located Continued: Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bentley, to approve moving forward with the request for proposals for the lease of the forty-seven acres located at the former Burns Park RV Park site. All voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bentley asked about the timeline for St. Joseph Farmstead. Mr. Burkett stated their current lease expires in January and they are seeking some level of certainty, which is why they are attempting to move quickly. Mr. Bentley stated this would be a positive opportunity for the City of North Little Rock.

City Attorney, Amy Fields, stated the process must remain open and competitive and all proposals must be considered fairly.

Director Reports: Jennie Cunningham, Program Supervisor, reported for Recreation and reviewed several programming highlights from the year. Ms. Cunningham stated after school programs have been very successful overall. Glenview Community Center and North Heights Community Center were fully enrolled, as they typically are. Sherman Park Community Center has experienced some challenges, particularly since the Six School program became operational, which reduced the need for after-school services at that location. She stated staff continues to evaluate options for that site while other locations remain strong.

Ms. Cunningham reported the after-school program fee increase from $60 to $75 did not generate complaints and continues to be a good value for families for a full semester. She stated the summer program also performed well, with capacity for 240 students and enrollment of 185, consistent with participation levels over the past five years. Rose City Community Center had the lowest enrollment, as it houses the middle school program, which tends to fluctuate more than younger age groups.

Ms. Cunningham stated specialty summer camps, including sports, chess, and dance, were well attended and received strong participation. She reported the spring break camp was successful and in October the department hosted its first out-of-school days event, which had strong participation across all sites, with each location serving at least ten children.

Ms. Cunningham reported the youth basketball program had 23 teams. She stated the department is currently running youth ball and has begun offering more than one league per year. Due to high demand, staff focused the fall league on younger grades, resulting in six teams, and reported the program is going well. She stated that youth cheerleading participation has declined, which corresponds with schools offering similar programs. Staff is working to adjust programming to maintain participation.

Ms. Cunningham reported STEMfest was recently held at North Heights Community Center in partnership with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and featured multiple vendors and interactive STEM stations. She also reported on the Lights After School Rally,

which focused on bullying prevention and included student-created posters as part of an anti-bullying campaign.

Director Reports Continued Ms. Cunningham stated Recreation Therapy hosted the annual Halloween "Booball" dance, which included a costume contest and had approximately 75 participants. She noted a significant increase in middle school volunteers assisting with programming. She stated staffing shortages continue, but volunteers help fill the gap. She reported that ten volunteers collectively contributed approximately 380 to 400 service hours over the summer and noted the department is now listed as an approved site for state-required community service hours.

Ms. Cunningham reported North Little Rock High School launched an internship program for juniors and seniors and that several students applied to work with Parks and Recreation. She stated there are currently four paid interns working approximately fifteen hours per week and that they are allowed to leave school early to fulfill their internship responsibilities.

Ms. Cunningham stated the fall break camp begins next week and is offered free of charge, while the winter break camp will require a fee. She reported the final event of the year will be a Family, Finance, and Fitness Fair hosted by the Healthy Recreation programming area. She also noted Recreation Therapy has two remaining events planned, including a karaoke event titled "Turkey Tunes" and a bingo event.

Mrs. Stephens thanked Ms. Cunningham for the report and expressed appreciation for the work being done through the Recreation programming area.

Patrick Isbell, Parks Superintendent, reported for Parks Maintenance. He stated that the dog park lighting project has been completed. He reported that staff has begun winterizing facilities and removing shade structures. Shade structures have been removed from all athletic areas and from within Funland, with the exception of pavilion rentals, which will remain in place until December.

Mr. Isbell reported staff has started installing tile flooring in the pantry at Sherman Park Community Center and that installation of LED lighting inside the facility has been completed. He stated rye grass has established well on the Wildcat Field and that additional rye grass seed has been planted at the Hospitality House location. He reported installation of the Christmas tree was delayed due to weather and is now planned for Wednesday morning.

Mrs. Stephens thanked Mr. Isbell for researching archery programming options and stated that tournaments could be held at the soccer fields, where adequate parking and space are available.

Jamie Pettit, Special Events Coordinator, reported for Special Events. She stated the site visit from U.S. Soccer Club representatives went very well. Two representatives toured the fields, had lunch with staff, and were shown around North Little Rock by the tourism department. She stated the group also attended dinner and has since submitted its bid packet.

Ms. Pettit reported the tourism department is proposing an incentive of $40,000 per year to attract the tournament to North Little Rock. She stated a final decision is expected in the spring.

Mr. Bentley asked whether there were any facility deficiencies that needed to be addressed. Ms. Pettit stated staff is unsure which other locations are being considered but reported that local soccer club representative Mark Gibbs, who currently participates in a tournament near Tulsa, Oklahoma,

Director Reports Continued stated that Burns Park far exceeds that facility. She stated the U.S. Soccer Club representatives were very impressed with Burns Park and the overall facilities.

Greg Zonner, Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum (AIMM), Director, reported for the Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum. He stated they have been receiving more school groups in the fall months, rather than only in the spring. Mr. Zonner added the museum will be open over the holidays. Mrs. Stephens stated the museum had a very busy month and noted she was very moved by the baptisms held there. Mr. Zonner stated they had not realized using a bell for a baptism was a common practice. He explained after researching, they found it is done across the United States at many Navy bases. He added it was a moving ceremony, and quite a few people attended.

Daniel Cornelison, Tennis Director, reported for the Burns Park Tennis Center. He stated they had combo events two (2) weekends ago, with 350 to 400 players participating. This past weekend, they held three (3) and four (4) day events. This includes their pickleball tournament, which is in its third year. Mr. Cornelison added that leagues have moved indoors and will remain inside until March 2026. United States Tennis Association tennis is winding down and will resume in February and March. Mrs. Stephens noted while a significant amount of money flows through the Parks Tennis account, not all of it is retained. She stated that although $26,000 ran through the account, only $10,523 is kept to cover operating expenses.

Joe Ralston, Golf Director, reported for the Burns Park Golf Course. He stated activity is finally starting to slow down, though it has been a record year. He noted there are no events scheduled this month, but many people are still coming out to the course. Mrs. Stephens congratulated Mr. Ralston on receiving the Arkansas Best of the Best Award, noting that placing second out of three (3) is an impressive achievement.

Jeff Caplinger, Special Projects Coordinator, reported for Special Projects. He stated the videos he is making for the Parks and Recreation Department's facilities are coming along well. They are just about done with the overall parks video and are now starting on the community center's video. As City Attorney, Amy Fields, has already alluded to, they have been working with St. Joseph Farmstead to explore options for the Burns Park RV Park property. He added the Friends of the Old Mill group is following a trend of moving away from physical brochures to QR codes that can be scanned to provide information, which will be posted around the park.

Director Kenny Stephens stated the Funland concession stand is still a work in progress. They have not received final numbers yet but had one meeting where $500,000 was mentioned, and negotiations are ongoing. They are exploring ways to cut costs and have secured a $100,000 grant. The hope is to reduce the total cost to around $300,000, though final numbers are not yet available, and he may have those at the next meeting.

He added three (3) tennis fans have arrived and will be installed soon. He also informed the commission that they plan to fix the roof of the North Little Rock Community Center in about four (4) weeks.

Calendar of Events: Mrs. Stephens stated the agenda deadline for the next meeting is Tuesday, January 6th, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. She stated there are usually no commission meetings in the month of

December. The January commission meeting will be held Tuesday, January 20, 2026. The January meeting will take place at 5:00 p.m. at the North Little Rock Community Center.

Adjournment: Mr. Burkett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to adjourn the meeting at 6:19 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