

## **NORTH LITTLE ROCK PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES** **February 17, 2026**

The North Little Rock Parks and Recreation commission meeting was called to order by Mrs. Vicki Stephens at 5:00 p.m. on February 17, 2026 at the North Little Rock Community Center.

**Commission Members Present:** Toby Burkett, Laura Juels, Stephen Bentley, Otistene Smith and Vicki Stephens.

**Vote for Excused or Unexcused Absences:** Mrs. Stephens asked for Randal Bradley and Neil Bryant to be excused. Ms. Juels made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Smith, to excuse Mr. Bradley and Mr. Bryant from the February commission meeting. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

**Staff Members Present:** Kenny Stephens, Jennifer Fields, Betty Perkins, Greg Zonner, Amy Fields, Jamie Pettit, Katrina Wilbon, Jenifer Holland, and Daniel Cornelison.

**Others Present:** Sandy Decoursey, Scott Shellabarger, Michelle Shellabarger, Adam Nash, Jonathan Wardlaw, Clint Albright, Marla Albright, Dan Scott, Hannah Cheek, and Sam Jackson

**Disposition of Minutes:** Mrs. Stephens presented minutes from the January 20, 2026 Parks and Recreation commission meeting. Ms. Juels made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Smith, to accept and file the minutes. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

**Conversion of Red Ball Courts at Burns Park Tennis Center:** Mrs. Stephens asked Daniel Cornelison, Tennis Director, if he had any new updates on the conversion of the red ball courts. Mr. Cornelison stated the conversion of the red ball courts are still in progress.

**Trail Committee Update:** Commissioner Stephens Bentley presented the Trail Committee update. He reported the committee held its first meeting on February 3, with full attendance. The committee expressed a desire to create a focal point in downtown Argenta for the North Little Rock River Trail and to repair portions of the River Trail from downtown North Little Rock to Big Quarry Park. Joe Jacobs, Vice President of Bicycle Advocacy of Central Arkansas (BACA), photographed several areas along the River Trail in need of improvement. Director Kenny Stephens and Parks Superintendent Pat Isbell met with him to review the sites in person. Mr. Bentley informed the commission a plan is in place to complete repairs near the railroad bridge. This includes removal of deteriorating structures, pending approval from the railroad company. Mr. Bentley stated the committee also plans to pursue installation of a fence near the Rockwater apartment complex and to request Lisa Ferrell, developer of Rockwater Village, relocate her property fence closer to the trail and complete landscaping. Director Kenny Stephens indicated an additional fence may be constructed in the area if needed and stated a gate will not be installed until the fence extension is complete.

Mr. Bentley discussed a road adjacent to the Mill Apartment Complex, explaining the road is approximately three quarters paved and could provide access to the River Trail for walkers and cyclists. Director Kenny Stephens reported funds are available for completion and Chief Engineer, David Cook, is reviewing the matter. Mr. Bentley informed the commission trail committee member, Scott Shellabarger, was in attendance of the meeting. Mr. Bentley noted the potential of having

**Trail Committee Update Continued:** volunteers work on a hiking and mountain bike trail in Big Quarry Park. He stated they were interested in cleaning the trail and creating a hiking or mountain bike trail from Kierre Road to Remount Road. From Remount Road, it would continue to the orphanage. The City of North Little Rocks owns that area. Mr. Bentley emphasized the scenic value of the area and requested approval to move forward. Director Kenny Stephens stated the matter involves communication rather than formal approval and he will visit with the Mayor.

Mr. Bentley reported the committee provided the City of North Little Rock with approximately five (5) pages of potential grant opportunities available in 2026. The trail committee plans to work with the City to secure funding. He noted committee members have presented professional ideas and expressed a goal of making the River Trail in North Little Rock one of the best in the state. Diane Whitbey, City Clerk and Treasurer, contacted Mr. Bentley regarding inclusion of a representative from the equestrian community and plans to follow up. Mrs. Smith reported outreach to various groups to encourage female representation on the trail committee. Meg Gholson with Recycle Bikes for Kids, expressed interest. Contact has also been made with Nicki Thomas of UAMS and Charles Ross of the Mello Velos Cycling Group. Discussion also included regional trail coordination efforts involving BACA and the Close the Loop Committee. Mr. Bentley explained an approved plan exists for approximately two (2) to two and one-half (2.5) miles of trail in Little Rock, although funding has not been secured. Mrs. Stephens stated Trail Committee updates will remain on the agenda.

Mrs. Smith asked where Kierre trail starts. She asked if the trail started on John F. Kennedy Boulevard and came down or is it just along Kierre Road. Mr. Bentley stated the Levy Trail ends there and continues on Remount Road.

Mrs. Stephens stated trail committee updates will continue to stay on the agenda.

**Bonzai BMX Requirements:** Jamie Pettit, Special Events Coordinator, presented updates on the Bonzai BMX Requirements. Mrs. Pettit reported Justin Travis with USA BMX, has been communicating with Mr. Larson. They are continuing to explore options to secure funding. Mrs. Pettit referred to an email included in the commissioners' packet. Mrs. Pettit indicated the group still expects the City to contribute toward the cost of the BMX track. Mrs. Pettit noted there is little additional progress to report at this time.

Director Kenny Stephens asked Mr. Isbell whether he is collaborating with Mrs. Pettit on this matter. Mr. Isbell confirmed he is collaborating. He has contacted one of the contractors who previously worked on the pump track. Mr. Isbell stated the contractor is expected to visit the site and provide a quote for restoring the BMX track. Mr. Isbell added he will present the quote to the commission once received.

Mrs. Stephens requested Bonzai BMX Requirements remain on the agenda for future meetings.

**Baring Cross Community Garden 2025 Report and 2026 Agreement:** Jamie Pettit, Special Events Coordinator, presented the Baring Cross Community Garden 2025 report and 2026 agreement. Mrs. Pettit stated the representatives of Baring Cross Community Garden were not at the meeting. Mrs. Pettit asked if the commission wanted to table it until they are able to attend. Ms. Juels asked if they had signed their agreement. Mrs. Pettit answered no. Mrs. Stephens stated she had questions about

**Baring Cross Community Garden 2025 Report and 2026 Agreement:** the funding and Baring Cross Community Garden 2025 report and 2026 agreement needs to stay on the agenda.

**Approval of the Hatcher Agency Busch Softball Classic at Burns Park Softball Complex:** Jamie Pettit, Special Events Coordinator, presented the approval request for the Hatcher Agency Busch Softball Classic at Burns Park Softball Complex. Mrs. Pettit introduced Clint and Marla Albright, owners of the Hatcher Agency Busch Softball Classic Program. Mrs. Pettit informed the commission the Albrights are requesting to host their event at Burns Park over the Fourth of July weekend. Mrs. Pettit noted they have held the tournament at Burns Park for many years in the past and wish to return this year. Mrs. Pettit reported Mr. Albright had spoken with Mayor Terry Hartwick, and the mayor asked him to present the request to the commission.

Mrs. Stephens noted she reviewed the agreement and observed Appendix A. She could not find an attached fee schedule. Mrs. Pettit explained it refers to the City's current field rental fee list. The event pays \$150 per field per day. Mrs. Stephens asked if they plan to use the fields Friday and Saturday, where play would occur on Sunday. Mr. Albright replied by Sunday, the number of teams decreases significantly, so all remaining games would take place in one complex.

Mr. Bentley asked about the expected number of teams. Mr. Albright reported they will have 110 teams from approximately 16 states. This is consistent with recent years. He added this marks the 47th year he and his wife have organized the tournament. He mentioned three (3) or four (4) generations of participants have played in this tournament with attitudes and changes over time. Mr. Albright explained the event began as a fundraiser for his team during the first ten (10) or 12 years. The tournament has since grown and remains enjoyable. Mr. Albright highlighted personal milestones among participants, including marriages, proposals, and memorial services held at the event. The Arkansas Hall of Fame Ceremony has occurred there 12 times, a wounded warrior softball team participated one (1) year and drew a large crowd, and the US Armed Forces team has competed three (3) or four (4) times. He emphasized the tournament holds special meaning for many people, which has motivated him and his wife to continue for so long.

Mr. Albright reported they feel proud to affiliate with United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA), the largest amateur softball association in the country. It is part of their World Series Tours. He explained Only 14 tournaments nationwide qualify as World Series qualifiers. This event has earned the distinction for several years. Mr. Albright noted this status attracts top teams that book hotel rooms, and spend time in the City.

Mr. Albright stated they introduced a new element this year. An indigenous association of Native American teams. A contact in Oklahoma, who previously brought teams to the Busch tournament, launched his own series about five (5) years ago. It is within USSSA. His organization now includes about 200 Native American teams. 190 competed in his Las Vegas championship. Mr. Albright noted the significance of honoring Native American teams during the 250th year of the country.

Mr. Albright explained tournament site selection involves input beyond their own decision. USSSA and the indigenous organization both send representatives to administer divisions, inspect fields for safety, appearance, surrounding conditions, and related factors.

**Approval of the Hatcher Agency Busch Softball Classic at Burns Park Softball Complex**

**Continued:** Mr. Albright acknowledged the challenges cities face in maintaining facilities due to finances. He stated upgrading lights, repairing fences and scoreboards, and ensuring safe conditions require a big investment. Mr. Albright expressed a strong desire to continue at Burns Park. Mr. Albright stated he has an excellent relationship with local hotels. He stressed the importance of addressing safety concerns to keep fields competitive. Mr. Albright offered to connect the City with Chris Walker, owner of a large fencing company and Ronnie Smith with Curtis Stout Inc. This could lead to potential deals or temporary repairs. Mr. Albright expressed willingness to assist through Mrs. Pettit, Director Kenny Stephens, or others.

Mrs. Stephens reported plans to restore lights on field two (2). The Electric Department will also be looking at the lights. Director Kenny Stephens added they are focusing on repurposing existing lights when possible.

Mr. Albright recalled past discussions on Dickey Stephens Park and how they repurposed lights instead of discarding them. Director Kenny Stephens agreed to investigate that possibility. Mrs. Pettit believed it went through North Little Rock Police Athletic League (PAL).

Mr. Albright stated lighting is a critical and costly component. He suggested Ronnie Smith from Curtis Stout could discuss their "Lighting as a Service" program. They install LED lights and structure a payment system. Mr. Albright informed the commission Mayor Terry Hartwick knows Mr. Smith well, and may have explored similar options. Mrs. Stephens recommended directing funding discussions to the mayor's office. It falls outside their department's control. She encouraged Mr. Albright to meet with Kenny Stephens and the mayor. Mrs. Stephens added she has asked Mrs. Pettit to consult Shelby Morris, Senior Manager of Sales and Partnerships, about potential support. Mr. Albright estimated the last six (6) to eight (8) years produced around \$10 million in economic impact.

Mr. Burkett suggested collaborating with Mrs. Pettit and Director Kenny Stephens to document the economic impact ways to fund improvements. He noted revenue returns to the City through economic development. Mr. Albright agreed it may require several years but would generate ongoing benefits. Mr. Burkett noted the City needs a partnership rather than one time use of economic development funds. Mr. Albright reiterated his willingness to help improve the fields and connect helpful resources.

Ms. Juels made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bentley, to approve the Hatcher Agency Busch Softball Classic at Burns Park. All commissioners voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Natural State Backyard High School Ultramarathon Championship:** Casey Canady, Program Coordinator, presented the approval of the Natural State Backyard High School Ultramarathon Championship. Mr. Canady stated the event was held last year at Burns Park. He noted the special event application said it was for high school but wasn't sure if it was hosted by the American Automobile Association (AAA). or some other organization. Mr. Canady informed the commission it is a last man standing race and has potential to continue after park hours.

**Natural State Backyard High School Ultramarathon Championship Continued:** Mr. Canady reported he spoke with Sergeant Thomas of the North Little Rock Police Department. The department will provide an officer if the event extends beyond regular hours. Mr. Canady added the event took place last year without any issues.

Mr. Burkett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bentley, to approve the Natural State Backyard High School Ultramarathon Championship at Burns Park. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

**Little Rock Rangers Permission to Practice on Lit Soccer Fields:** Casey Canady, Program Coordinator, presented the proposal to allow the Little Rock Rangers to practice on lit soccer fields. Mr. Canady introduced Adam Nash and Jonathan Wardlaw as representatives of the Little Rock Rangers Soccer Club. They have requested use of the lit fields for practices.

Mr. Canady noted the commissioners should have a copy of park policies. Mrs. Stephens confirmed they do. Mrs. Stephens recalled the group appeared before the commission one (1) time previously with the same request, which the commission denied due to policy. Mrs. Stephens explained staff and the director oppose allowing practices on lit fields. She noted Seven (7) of 17 fields are lit. Permitting an unaffiliated group to use them would accelerate wear and tear, preventing the fields from remaining in top condition for games and tournaments.

Adam Nash, Manager for Little Rock Rangers, reported several clubs currently practice at Burns Park on a weekly basis and typically provide their own lights. Mr. Nash continued only a handful of teams practice there. He noted those teams hold contracts with the City and use some of the lights. Mr. Nash added some fields remain available and open. He indicated he knows of no tournaments currently scheduled there. Mr. Nash explained the club host several games at Burns Park and also use their own facilities.

Mr. Nash informed the commission the World Cup is coming to the United States this year. He explained soccer is the number two (2) sport in growth and popularity. More children will become involved, increasing demand for space. He stated the Little Rock Rangers is seeking an opportunity to practice on lit fields.

Mr. Bentley asked which nights the Little Rock Rangers practice at Burns Park. Mr. Nash replied Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday nights currently, with the schedule continuing through summer. The club maintains a regular presence compared to other groups. Mr. Nash serves on the board of the Arkansas Central Soccer Association (ARCSA). He added ARCSA plays games Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday nights, with breaks as needed. Wednesday and Thursday night leagues will not resume for a few more weeks until the time change. Mr. Nash noted lights will not be needed after the time change. He added practices begin at 5:45pm or 7:00pm for 11 and 12 year old children. Mr. Nash emphasized minimal potential damage compared to adult use. Mr. Nash stated their request covers the next two (2) to three (3) weeks only, with the option to revisit after the season. Mr. Nash explained autumn will require more lights as the program grows and ranks among the largest clubs in the state.

**Little Rock Rangers Permission to Practice on Lit Soccer Fields Continued:** Mrs. Smith acknowledged the positive growth in youth participation. She asked whether the concern involves maintenance costs if fields open for the next three (3) weeks.

Mr. Canady explained staff rotates lit fields between groups. Currently, fields two (2) and three (3) are in use. Any damage sustained now will not recover until spring, as grass remains dormant. Mr. Canady explained fields rest during this period for maintenance. This includes filling holes with sand and allowing regrowth in spring and summer. Mr. Canady continued when fields wear from heavy use, staff shifts groups to other fields for rotation. Mr. Canady informed the commission another concern involves contracts. Mr. Canady asked if we let one group use the lit fields, should we allow others to use them to. City Attorney, Amy Fields, stated if we go contrary to our policy for one (1) organization, we open ourselves up to claims of unfair treatment.

Mr. Nash asked if other kids clubs have contracts such as the Arkansas Rising Soccer Club. Mr. Canady stated Arkansas Rising Soccer Club is the youth soccer club that runs the league out there. Arkansas Soccer Association, which is the governing body, plays games out there. Mr. Canady explained the adult league, which Mr. Nash is on the board of also has a contract. City Attorney, Amy Fields, stated this request has come up before. The department is consistently going to enforce the policy against letting unaffiliated clubs practice on lit fields.

Mrs. Stephens emphasized wear and tear and field maintenance as primary concerns. Grass requires time to recover. Mr. Isbell noted fields remain dormant and will not grow now. Mr. Canady added park maintenance applies 10 to 12 bags of fertilizer and sprays the fields in spring to aid recovery from winter. He added staff minimizes damage whenever possible.

Mr. Nash stated the Little Rock Rangers are already practicing on fields and there are other clubs out there as well. Mr. Nash added we are requesting fields with lights. Mrs. Stephens stated she was not in favor of using the fields. She stated she understands where they are coming from, but they are the City's fields. We have to take care of everyone in the City and everyone that wants to use it.

Mr. Wardlaw asked whether the Arkansas Rising Soccer Club contract renews annually or requires procurement office involvement. Mr. Canady replied the Arkansas Rising Soccer Club contract renews every two (2) years and expires in 2026. City Attorney, Amy Fields, explained procurement handles purchasing, not field use agreements. Recreational and club contracts receive commission approval. She explained interested parties may submit proposals to the parks department when the current contract nears renewal. City Attorney, Amy Fields stated staff analyzes proposals, notifies others, evaluates competitors, and recommends to the commission for final decision.

Mr. Burkett asked how many of the seven (7) lit fields are currently in use. Mr. Burkett stated there is a set schedule and a field rotation system. He asked how many fields are offline at any given time and how many remain available. He also asked how many of the available fields are actively being used.

**Little Rock Rangers Permission to Practice on Lit Soccer Fields Continued:** Mr. Canady stated last year, when ARCSA was running a full schedule, they were only using half fields. They were using two (2) whole fields divided in half, resulting in four (4) fields. He continued they use three (3) time slots and 12 games on Wednesdays.

On Thursday nights, they use two (2) fields and four (4) games. On Sunday night, they use three (3) half fields at 5:00pm. They were using eight (8) half fields, with four (4) at 6:15 and five (5) half fields at 7:30pm. They are on fields two (2), three (3), and four (4), identified as 2AB, 3AB, and so forth. One (1) additional game requires use of field 12. It gets limited use, but primarily fields two (2), three (3), and four (4) are used for a few weeks and then rotated. When those fields experience wear, they move to fields ten (10), 11, and 12. Field 11 is the stadium field and remains in pristine condition for high schools. It is not used outside scheduled games.

Mr. Burkett asked if the fields in rotation are available being used. Mr. Canady stated Arkansas Rising Soccer Club practices on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 5:00pm to 9:00pm. He stated any field not active for games is assigned to Arkansas Rising Soccer Club on those nights. Mr. Canady explained Wednesday nights are typically reserved for ARCSA. On Monday nights, the Little Rock Rangers are the only group present. No activities are scheduled on Friday nights.

Mr. Burkett stated if capacity exists within the available fields and there is an opportunity to utilize them, we should remain open to doing so. He explained if the rotation is necessary to preserve the fields and no capacity exists, then a bid for the two (2) year contract would be appropriate. He stated he is not opposed to declining the request but wants clarification on current utilization of the fields.

Mr. Canady stated when play is scheduled on the quad fields, the remaining quad sections are at rest except for Tuesday and Thursday nights. Saturdays are at rest during the spring season. He stated he has received multiple game requests from the Arkansas Soccer Association and has scheduled on those fields. He attempts to schedule them on the same fields used by Arkansas Rising Soccer Club, although it is not always possible.

Mr. Burkett stated if capacity is confirmed, a temporary arrangement could be considered for the Little Rock Rangers. Mr. Burkett explained a policy modification could be made if necessary. He noted this would not establish a precedent because certain fields are currently unused and available. He added an agreement would likely include a field use fee.

Mr. Nash stated they currently use bulk pricing due to scheduling and payment in advance. Mr. Canady stated no set rate has been approved by the commission for practice on lit fields.

Mr. Burkett asked what other contracts require to practice on lit fields. Mrs. Pettit stated practices are not generally permitted, except for associated groups running leagues on behalf of the City. Mr. Burkett stated practices do occur on lit fields. Mrs. Pettit clarified only affiliated groups operating under contract are permitted to practice.

Mr. Canady stated their contract includes a spring and fall player fee, and a portion of the fee provides access to lit fields for practice. This is separate from game fees.

**Little Rock Rangers Permission to Practice on Lit Soccer Fields Continued:** Mrs. Stephens stated the matter relates back to the contract. Mr. Nash stated they pay more than other clubs and are willing to continue doing so. Mr. Burkett commented although practice on lit fields is described as restricted, affiliated groups currently utilize them through contracts. He stated if the affiliated group is not using the fields, he sees no reason they cannot be utilized at a reasonable rate.

City Attorney, Amy Fields, stated the discussion appears limited to the next two (2) to three (3) weeks when Daylight Saving Time ends. She stated an accommodation could be made during that period, followed by further review. Mr. Burkett stated the next few weeks could serve as a trial run to inform potential policy adjustments. Ms. Juels agreed with Mr. Burkett. Mr. Burkett noted the rental rate should be more than the non-lit fields. A short-term solution could be identified.

Mrs. Smith asked whether Tuesday and Thursday availability would allow use of a lit field for two (2) to three (3) weeks. Mr. Canady stated Tuesday availability exists because it is only Arkansas Rising Soccer Club on the fields. He stated only one (1) field is used on Thursday nights until spring.

Mrs. Stephens announced the Commission must determine whether the period would be two (2) or three (3) weeks. Mr. Burkett recommended extending the arrangement until the time change. City Attorney, Amy Fields, stated three (3) weeks would align with the timeframe. Mr. Nash stated the matter could be revisited following the trial run. He added a formal contract could be presented during the summer.

City Attorney Amy Fields, asked the current rate for unlit practice fields. Mr. Canady stated the rate is \$45 for one (1) hour and a half. She asked whether staff should determine the lit field rate. Mr. Canady stated the game rate is \$105 for two (2) hours. Mr. Burkett asked the time difference between practices and games. Mr. Canady stated practices are one (1) hour and a half and games are two (2) hours. Mr. Burkett asked whether \$60 would be an appropriate practice rental rate.

Mr. Burkett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Juels, to approve a three (3) week agreement allowing the Little Rock Rangers to use lit fields at a rate of \$60 per one (1) hour and a half. Staff must provide a report at the end of the period regarding field conditions and overall impact for Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings from 5:30pm to 7:00pm. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Canady asked whether the arrangement should be limited specifically to the Little Rock Rangers. Mr. Burkett stated the trial run is based on current availability within the rotation. He stated if another group makes a similar request, staff should refer to existing policy and field capacity.

Mr. Canady asked about potential requests for Friday or Saturday nights, noting occasional inquiries. City Attorney, Amy Fields, stated the current action is a unique accommodation and future requests should be evaluated separately.

Mrs. Stephens informed the commission staff would be able to provide a report at the next meeting. Mr. Burkett commented he welcomes competition among clubs for field use. Mr. Nash stated their club continues to grow and anticipates a 15 to 20 percent increase next year, resulting in a need for additional fields each season.

**Alcohol Distribution at Aces for Edi Tennis Tournament:** Daniel Cornelison, Tennis Director, introduced Samuel Jackson, Tournament Director for Aces for Edi Tennis Tournament. Mr. Cornelison shared Mr. Jackson organizes the tournament each year in honor of his niece.

Mr. Jackson noted this will be the third year of the tournament. He shared his sister is Edi's mother and explained the family created the event after Edi became ill in an effort to bring something positive from a difficult time. He described how Edi's brother was born prematurely and required care in the NICU. He explained the Ronald McDonald House Charities provided meaningful support to his sister and her husband. He expressed the family's desire to give back in response to that experience.

Mr. Jackson commented his family has long been involved in tennis. The tournament began at Rebsamen Tennis Center and later moved to Burns Park due to being larger than expected. He reported the event was classified as a Level six (6) tournament last year and will advance to a Level five (5) this year. This offers increased value for players. Mr. Jackson mentioned the tournament received the 2025 Tournament of the Year award. He emphasized his family dedicates significant time and effort to hosting a quality event.

Mr. Jackson described the tournament as fun, family friendly, and relaxed while still featuring high-level competition. He informed the commission the first year, approximately \$15,000 was raised for the Ronald McDonald House Charities. Last year, more than \$20,000 was raised with most proceeds benefiting that organization. This year, the majority of funds raised will again support the Ronald McDonald House Charities, with remaining funds distributed to other local organizations serving the community.

Mr. Jackson indicated the tournament is an adult event with generally responsible participants. He expressed interest in offering beer and wine during the tournament and welcomed any questions regarding the event or the request for approval.

Mrs. Stephens commented the Commission packet appears to include the necessary information. Mrs. Smith inquired whether security arrangements, police coordination, and volunteers have been finalized. Mr. Jackson responded a large group of volunteers will assist with the tournament, including support for security. He added coordination with the North Little Rock Police Department is pending but no issues are anticipated. Mrs. Stephens confirmed the Police Department has approved the request.

Ms. Juels made a motion, seconded by Mr. Burkett, to accept alcohol distribution at the Aces for Edi Tennis Tournament. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

**Director Reports:** Greg Zonner, Museum Director, reported for the Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum (AIMM). Mr. Zonner stated AIMM lost two (2) weeks of business in January because of the weather. They had to reschedule overnights booked during the winter weather. Mr. Zonner informed the commission it was difficult finding dates to reschedule because they are booked so far out. Mr. Zonner confirmed there was little damage during the winter weather to the submarine. The only damage done was a broken pipe. Mr. Zonner noted submarines do not handle winter weather well. Mr. Zonner stated AIMM is back on track now and a little busy.

**Director Reports Continued:** Betty Perkins, Recreation Superintendent, reported for Recreation. Director Kenny Stephens introduced Ms. Perkins as the new Recreation Superintendent. Ms. Perkins stated all the Recreation Directors are doing very well and helping her adjust. Ms. Perkins stated youth basketball is occurring at all of the Community Centers, with about 145 students playing in these facilities. Kindergarten through second grade are at Glenview Community Center on Saturdays. North Heights Community Center has third and fourth graders on Tuesday nights. Rose City Community Center has fifth and sixth graders on Thursday nights. Ms. Perkins stated North Heights had a Basketball Jamboree in January. The North Little Rock Community Center is getting ready to start a 40 years and up basketball program around the first of March. Ms. Perkins stated the pickleball program at the North Little Rock Community Center is going well. Ms. Perkins stated they also had a warming center.

Jamie Pettit, Special Events Coordinator, reported for Special Events. Mrs. Pettit stated they are in the process of getting the contract finalized for the new lights on softball field two (2). College and high school have started senior baseball. Mrs. Pettit informed the commission she and Mr. Isbell are working with trail maintenance volunteer Bert Turner to perform a controlled burn in the park, hopefully this month. It will be about 250 acres. Mrs. Pettit stated it will be from North Arlene Laman Drive up to Interstate 40 (I-40). Mrs. Pettit informed the commission Arkansas Hunger Alliance, who grew watermelons at Stone Links, is not renewing its contract with North Little Rock. Dan Cook, Neighborhood Services Director, informed her another group wants to come out and grow food to donate to food banks. Mrs. Pettit stated she will work with him on getting an agreement.

Daniel Cornelison, Tennis Director, reported for Burns Park Tennis Center. He stated they lost a week and a half due to the snow. Mr. Cornelison informed the commission leagues will be moving outside in another month. They are starting the pickleball league sign up.

Pat Isbell, Parks Superintendent, reported for Parks Maintenance. Mr. Isbell stated at the last meeting there was a request to check the Sherman Park Community Center football field lights. He stated the electrician replaced the 60 Amp Cartridge fuse and left the lights on for three (3) hours with no issues. Informed the commission him and Director Kenny Stephens ordered new equipment for the maintenance shop today. A total of four (4) Grasshoppers were ordered at a total cost of \$83,461. A new reel mower for the athletics field was ordered at a cost of \$136,000. A new bunker rake for athletics was ordered at a cost of \$38,000. He explained it will be paid out of the capital budget. Mr. Isbell stated they are in the process of installing a new electric panel inside the Riverfront under the bridge by the boat dock. This will allow events to be held under the bridge with a secondary power source. They also purchased a motor for the stump grinder for landscaping at a cost of \$4,000. The bathrooms in Funland were opened due to fair weather after being closed for the winter. He noted the drinking fountain was reinstalled in the pickleball area. Quotes were received for a new floor at North Heights Community Center. The lobby, meeting rooms, office area, bathrooms, and kitchen areas will be addressed. They will be contracting out to refinish the wooden floors for the community centers. Quotes were also received for a new canopy for the metal slide inside Funland.

**Director Reports Continued:** Mr. Bentley announced he noticed trail work being done on the Camp Robinson Trail. Mr. Isbell stated David Cook, City Engineer, is overseeing work taking place at Burns Park near the Mayor's Gate and the golf course, around the curve at Victory Lake leading to the bridge.

Director Kenny Stephens stated they are putting a new roof on the North Little Rock Community Center. They allocated \$550,000 for the roof, and the quote came in at \$277,000. He stated with the effort Mr. Bentley and Mr. Burkett made when the department was struggling with capital funds, they were able to purchase everything needed after the capital was raised. He expressed appreciation for the team effort. Director Kenny Stephens stated he is proud of what is being accomplished at Burns Park. They are purchasing new equipment and finding ways to repair older equipment, and everything is going well.

Mrs. Stephens thanked the directors for the reports they give the commission each month. Mrs. Smith asked if there is a progress report on the concession stand. Director Kenny Stephens stated he spoke with Deputy City Attorney Marie Miller. She is going to get the contract finished, send it to JCon Inc, and have it signed. Director Kenny Stephens informed the commission once the contract is signed within the next two (2) weeks, they should start the concession stand project.

Mrs. Smith asked if the location of the concession stand was still on the other side of the train track and whether there will be another way to access it. She stated the train might not be working because of the cost.

Director Kenny Stephens stated he went to the Finance Department and asked about the percentage on the credit cards. He stated it stayed the same. Director Kenny Stephens informed the commission he spoke with John Barber and Billy McClurdey, and the best option is to keep the same software but change the merchant. They pay \$11,000 a year for the software, and it is working well.

Mrs. Smith asked if it stayed the same at three and seventy-five hundredths (3.75) percent. Mrs. Stephens responded it stayed at the current percentage of three (3) percent. City Attorney Amy Fields stated the company is still charging three and seventy-five hundredths (3.75) percent. Director Kenny Stephens restated he would like to change merchants and keep the same software. Mrs. Stephens stated they need to be kept aware of what is going on.

**Calendar of Events:** Mrs. Stephens stated the agenda deadline for the next meeting is Tuesday, March 3, 2026 at 2:00 pm. The March Commission Meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 16, 2026 at 5:00 pm at the North Little Rock Community Center.

**Adjournment:** Mrs. Smith made a motion, seconded by Ms. Juels, to adjourn at 6:11 p.m. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comments/Visitors:** Mrs. Stephens opened the meeting for public comments, but there were none.

**APPROVED BY:** Vicki Stephens  
Chair, Vicki Stephens

**SUBMITTED BY:** Otistene Smith  
Secretary, Otistene Smith