

NORTH LITTLE ROCK PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

JULY 20, 2015

The North Little Rock Parks and Recreation Commission meeting was called to order by Mrs. Vicki Stephens at 5:00 p.m., on July 20, 2015, at the North Little Rock Community Center.

Commission Members Present: Randall Bradley, Neil Bryant, Charles Jones, Otistene Smith, Vicki Stephens and Bruce Waller. Tom Davis was sick.

Staff Members Present: Bob Rhoads, Jan Eberle-Wilkins, Jason Rhodes, Tina Worrell, Jeff Caplinger, Steve Ralston and Paula Jones.

Others Present: Brad Shock, Shelly Shock, Phil Duerr, Gayle Smith, Terry Hartwick, Danny Bradley and Bill Trousdale.

Disposition of Minutes: Mrs. Stephens presented minutes of the May 18, 2015, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting and May 18, 2015, Parks and Recreation Commission public hearing.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley, to accept these minutes as presented. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Vote for Excused or Unexcused Absentees: Mrs. Stephens asked that a motion be made to excuse Mr. Davis from this meeting.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Waller, to excuse Mr. Davis. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Election of Officers: Mrs. Stephens opened the floor for election of commission officers consisting of Chair (Vicki Stephens), Vice-Chair (Neil Bryant), Secretary (Otistene Smith) and Treasurer (Bruce Waller).

Mr. Jones made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to keep the current slate of officers. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Arkansas Soccer Club Agreement 2015-2016: Mr. Caplinger reported that staff is asking permission to execute a 2015-2016 agreement with the Arkansas Soccer Club. This agreement will now coincide with the soccer program season. Department staff has met with club members and discussed the proposed agreement.

Mr. Brad Shock asked if the participant fees could be based on a sliding scale.

Mr. Caplinger stated that the Arkansas Soccer Club fee amounts match the other association's fees.

Mrs. Stephens asked Mr. Shock to discuss this with Mr. Caplinger next year, but every association needs to be consistent and equal.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley, to execute this agreement with the Arkansas Soccer Club for 2015-2016. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Arkansas State Soccer Association Agreement for 2015-2016: Mr. Caplinger stated that staff is asking permission to execute an agreement for 2015-2016 with the Arkansas State Soccer Association.

Approval of Arkansas State Soccer Association Agreement for 2015-2016 (continued): The overall agreement has stayed the same but dates have been changed. Staff has reviewed the agreement with the association members.

Phil Duerr with the Arkansas State Soccer Association, thanked the department and commission for their hard work and support at the 2015 US Youth Soccer Southern Regional Championships tournament. Bob Rhoads and Jason Rhodes were at the tournament every day, doing everything they could for the association. Mr. Bryant came out one (1) day. The staff was absolutely wonderful. The association and staff got a lot of compliments on the complex and hospitality. Department staff was available before and during the tournament.

Mr. Bryant stated that other city departments worked with the parks and recreation staff and all did a fantastic job.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Waller, to accept this agreement for 2015-2016. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Report on Disc Golf: Mr. Caplinger reported that he and Mr. Rhoads discussed a couple of options in getting the disc golf community involved in the Burns Park course. One option was to develop a committee made up of known group representatives that play at Burns Park. The additional option was to hold an outreach meeting similar to those done prior to the public hearings for capital needs.

A meeting was held with Doug Trantham and Bill Trousdale to discuss disc golf and organization of users. They were made aware that others in the disc golf community needed to get involved in the basket recommendation and other general disc golf recommendations as well. They discussed the option of an advisory committee. Mr. Trantham and Mr. Trousdale do not believe representatives from each group coming together would work. A couple of the smaller/splinter groups formed because either they did not like the way the larger groups operated, or there were personality conflicts. They thought these groups may not play well as a committee.

They did like the option of an outreach meeting and recommend doing an online survey. It was discussed to combine these two (2) this year. Mr. Trantham had already posted a simple survey which has proved useful. A follow up survey will be available and a meeting set at a disc golf tournament scheduled for August 1, 2015, which will draw both local and statewide players.

Mr. Trantham's survey was posted to the local North Central Arkansas Disc Golf Club, Mid-South Disc Golf Association, Diamond State Disc Golf Association, Del Fuego Disc Golf and other Facebook pages. Many responses and good comments were received.

Since this meeting, more online reviewing of the local disc golf Facebook groups has been done. There is a desire from some to have an all-inclusive committee/group, but others do not agree. However, there is dialogue about overall disc golf needs and the best way to present those needs to municipalities, not only in North Little Rock, but around the area as well.

Starting with Mr. Trantham's survey, a follow up survey and meeting on August 1, 2015, will be a good first step.

At this event, plans are to recruit a minimum of five (5) players with at least three (3) being North Little Rock residents, to serve on a disc golf advisory committee.

Report on Disc Golf (continued): After numerous meetings, staff is recommending implementing an online survey and a five (5) to seven (7) member Disc Golf Advisory Committee to advise staff on the disc golf course and participant needs.

Mr. Caplinger said that his (Mr. Caplinger's) survey will be detailed to get the information needed.

Staff will advertise and host a public meeting prior to the next disc golf tournament to be held in August 2015. At the meeting, needs will be discussed and five (5) individuals will be sought and elected to be on the committee. Ideally, all five (5) should reside in North Little Rock, but a minimum of three (3) must be residents.

Mrs. Stephens said she feels that five (5) to seven (7) interested players could be found to commit to these meetings, so this could be worked through.

Mr. Bryant asked if this was going to be a fee tournament and was the tournament director going to pay fees to Parks and Recreation for holding an August 1, 2015, tournament at the disc golf course. Are licensed concessions going to be there?

Tina Worrell stated that this is a fee tournament. Fees received by this organization will be returned back into that tournament, as it is associated with their national non-profit organization

Mr. Rhoads said they will pay the Parks and Recreation Department \$125.00 to put on this tournament, as they are a non-profit group. This fee was approved by the commission at an earlier date.

Mrs. Stephens said she wants details and financial statements from this group about the August 1, 2015, tournament at the September 2015 commission meeting. They should submit these reports and pay fees like the other groups.

Mr. Rhoads said that this \$125.00 fee is based on the proposed size of the tournament regarding the numbers of participants.

Mrs. Stephens said she feels that these tournaments need to be looked at individually.

Mr. Waller stated that he wants them to pay and have an agreement with the commission like the other groups. They should not be running for-profit tournaments and paying such a low rate.

Mrs. Smith asked if the group is refusing to become an association like the other groups that use parks and recreation facilities.

Mr. Caplinger said yes, that is his understanding. They do not want to become a non-profit group.

Mrs. Smith stated that the disc golf course was set up for the public to play. Tournaments have changed the whole faction resulting in more work for the department. The commission needs to look at this again. Department expenses need to be covered.

Mr. Caplinger said that some events cause more work for the department, and they are charged accordingly.

Report on Disc Golf (continued): Mrs. Worrell stated that this group did fill out a special event application, and submitted the required 501 (c)3 proof.

Mr. Rhoads this group has four (4) to six (6) tournaments per year, and fees need to be looked at again.

Mrs. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jones, to approve the concept for a disc golf advisory committee. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Endorsement Request for Terry Hartwick as Parks and Recreation Director: Mrs. Stephens stated that Bob Rhoads will be retiring as Parks and Recreation Director in March of 2016. Mayor Joe Smith would like to appoint Terry Hartwick as Parks and Recreation Director beginning around January 1, 2016. She feels that Mr. Hartwick will do a good job, just as Mr. Rhoads has.

Mr. Hartwick thanked Mrs. Stephens for her service as chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission. He looks forward to the challenge and serving as Director of Parks and Recreation. Several things he plans to implement are marketing of the department, and working to make things look clean and better. It takes a team to get things done and he is looking forward to working with everyone. He will be working closely with Mr. Rhoads, Mayor and other city department heads.

Mr. Waller asked him if he had a plan to generate more revenue.

Mr. Hartwick replied that he needs to first find out what the general revenue is. He plans to work with the Mayor on some ideas he already has.

Mrs. Smith asked him if he saw outside revenue resources coming in, and did he have a background with grants.

Mr. Hartwick replied yes, he will do both local and national marketing as well as get sponsors as a means of obtaining revenue. He has experience with grants and will look at local and national grants.

Mr. Bryant stated that Mr. Hartwick was very aggressive as the Mayor of North Little Rock. It is challenging to implement capital items without a bond issue. He thanked Mr. Rhoads for his work as Director, and looks forward to working with Mr. Hartwick.

Danny Bradley stated that the parks are a great asset and can be greater. Marketing will lead to good things as it will bring people in.

Mrs. Smith stated that she hopes the department will get an increase in the percent of the penny from Advertising and Promotion.

Mr. Rhoads reported that Mr. Hartwick has a great staff, and marketing the department will be great.

Mrs. Stephens said Mr. Rhoads has made it easy for Mr. Hartwick to step in because of the good staff that helps run the day-to-day operations. She feels that Mr. Hartwick will do a good job of marketing and getting sponsors.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jones, to endorse Mr. Hartwick as the Director of Parks and Recreation upon Mr. Rhoads retirement. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Capital Needs for 2016: Mr. Rhoads presented proposed 2016 capital projects and equipment totaling \$1,088,584. Annually, \$1,095,000 is expected to be collected from taxes related to capital for Parks and Recreation. Currently, \$75,000 is held in reserve in case of short falls or overages in the budget.

Once approved by the commission, the capital list will be incorporated as part of the 2016 budget request and forwarded for final approval to the Mayor and City Council.

Mrs. Smith stated that the Sherman Park pool liners have to be done in 2016. She would not let her child use the Sherman Park pool house. The Sherman Park and Glenview pool houses need to be renovated also. Sherman Park is a priority over Glenview.

Mr. Bryant asked Jason Rhodes to look at the Sherman Park pool house and see if it could be renovated within the budget this year.

Mr. Waller said he would like to adopt the 2016 capital budget as presented, and see if the staff can get something done this year for Sherman Park out of the current maintenance budget.

Mr. Rhodes said he would look at this project to see if something can be done this year.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Waller, to approve this 2016 capital needs list at this time, and see if something can be done this year to help the Sherman Park pool house. If the staff cannot make the renovations, get bids for this project and amend this 2016 capital budget to include these renovations before submitting to the Mayor and city council. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Rhoads said if any renovations could be made to the Sherman Park, it would be after the season.

Mr. Bryant stated that the Arkansas Tennis Association is paying \$45,000 out of their budget for court resurfacing.

Capital Five-Year Plan for 2016 – 2020: Mr. Rhoads presented the staff's proposed capital improvement plan for 2016-2020. Areas of greatest need are shown in 2016 and are prioritized by year. This plan is reviewed each year for needed changes. Vehicles are included to replace old ones worn out. Once approved, it will be forwarded to the Mayor for City Council approval. A five-year plan is needed to help support and hopefully obtain state grants.

Mrs. Smith asked if Russellville Tech could be contacted to do the needs assessment.

Mr. Rhoads stated that they were contacted last year but did not seem to be interested in doing a needs assessment. The University of Arkansas at Little Rock is willing to do a city-wide assessment for \$14,000. This money would need to be included in the operations budget. A needs assessment will count toward grant points.

Quotes for the tennis center roof have been received and this work is progressing.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jones, to approve the Capital Five-Year Plan for 2016-2020 as presented, and forward to the Mayor and city council. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Director Reports: Mr. Rhoads presented director reports for May and June 2015, and reported:

- Just for the commission's information, a citizen sent an email asking that the North Little Rock Community Center fitness club minimum age policy be lowered. When the Hay's Senior Center was built, the minimum age limit there was 50 years old. The city gave \$750,000 toward renovating the North Little Rock Community Center fitness side and wanted center and fitness area users to be adults. The Parks and Recreation Commission voted to approve the minimum age limit of 18 years.
- Due to the flood, staff had a lot of cleaning to do at the restrooms and concessions. Pulaski County staff is checking to see if North Little Rock and other cities will be reimbursed through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. One (1) boat dock was destroyed and another one was damaged. Estimated cost to the Parks and Recreation Department is \$91,000 to date. Mr. Rhodes is checking to see what it would cost to rebuild the docks.
- Tina Worrell stated that a recreation department employee died last week.

Calendar of Events: Mrs. Stephens stated that the next commission agenda deadline is Tuesday, August 4, 2015, at 2:00 p.m. Any items need to be called in by that date and time to the Parks and Recreation Administration Office.

The next regularly scheduled commission meeting is Monday, August 17, 2015, at 5:00 p.m. in the North Little Rock Community Center.

Adjournment: Mrs. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to adjourn at 6:18 p.m. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Submitted by,

Otistene Smith, Secretary