

NORTH LITTLE ROCK PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

MARCH 16, 2015

The North Little Rock Parks and Recreation Commission meeting was called to order by Mrs. Vicki Stephens at 5:00 p.m., on March 16, 2015, at the North Little Rock Community Center.

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

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

Others Present: Deanna Garretson, Bernard Bracely and Robin West.

Vote for Excused or Unexcused Absentees: Mrs. Stephens asked that a motion be made to excuse Mrs. Smith because she was working and Mr. Waller because he was sick, from this meeting.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jones, to excuse these members. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Disposition of Minutes: Mrs. Stephens presented minutes of the February 19, 2015, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

Mr. Jones made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to accept the minutes as presented. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Arkansas Tennis Association Annual Report for 2014 and 2016 Capital Needs: Mr. Rhoads introduced Deanna Garretson, Director of the Arkansas Tennis Association. The Arkansas Tennis Association has a long-term agreement with the Parks and Recreation Department and will give their annual year-end report as required.

Mrs. Garretson reported that business is good and they are looking for a Burns Park tennis center manager that can get the youth interested in tennis. They finished the 2014 year with a \$1,135.00 balance.

She also stated that their capital needs include:

- Burns Park tennis pro shop roof
- Resurfacing/rebuilding of courts 4, 5 and 6
- Major boiler work or new heating source for indoor courts

Cost for the court repair will be \$30,000 to \$50,000 for all three (3) courts.

She said the Arkansas Tennis Association appreciates the department working with them to get new lights purchased and installed.

Mr. Bryant said the Arkansas Tennis Association has done a good job.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, to accept and file the annual report, and accept her 2016 capital needs requests. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Stephens asked her to keep the commission informed on the boiler.

Approval of Association Annual Reports for 2014: Mr. Caplinger presented 2014 annual reports for the North Little Rock Wildcats and North Little Rock Optimist Club. As a part of their agreement, they are to provide a report at the beginning of each year, including selected copies of their bank statements.

Mr. Bernard Bracely with the North Little Rock Wildcats Association, said there are 90 youth from low-income neighborhoods that participate in this program. Not all of the youth are paying their fees, so he is working on a plan to collect all of the fees due this year.

Approval of Association Annual Reports for 2014 (continued): Mr. Bracely thanked the commission for the new scoreboard, fence, lights, grass and irrigation at the Sherman Park field.

Mrs. Stephens said that Mr. Bracely has gone above and beyond with this program, by paying for these fees himself. She asked the commission to waive the \$1,350 balance owed to the department.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley, to waive this \$1,350 balance. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Jones made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, to accept and file their report. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Caplinger introduced Mr. Robin West with the North Little Rock Optimist Club.

Mr. West said their organization had 714 participants that came through the summer program and tournaments. Participants in the American Legion were down.

Mr. Rhoads asked how many players were on their two (2) teams, and Mr. West indicated there were 33.

Mr. Bryant asked what the \$15,000 tournament fees were for, paid to the American Legion League.

Mr. West said that payment was for player hotel expenses, meal per-diem, umpires and baseballs.

Mrs. Stephens noted that their report stated that the DeJanis infield needs to be leveled and new sod laid as it is in poor shape. She asked if the Optimist Club was going to help monetarily with this.

Mr. West said their group has sodded the area twice and will not do it again. The infield holds water in several places, and he does not like the type of sod that is on the field.

Jason Rhodes stated that park maintenance sodded behind the home plate last year. Even with all of the recent rain and snow, the fields doing remarkably well and are ready for play tonight.

Mrs. Stephens asked why they were only paying the department \$1,320 to use the facility, after they generated quite a bit of money last year. They collected \$23,000 in gate receipts.

Mr. Rhoads said it is the way the agreement is set up. Each association pays \$15 for each unique player. There are extra fees paid to the department for tournaments and field preparation. The department ran the concessions. All of their tournaments qualified for economic impact.

Mr. Jones asked Mr. West if they charge by teams or players for the tournaments.

Mr. West said that it depends on the type of tournament.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, to accept this report and file. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Association Agreements for 2015: Mr. Caplinger stated that staff is asking permission to execute 2015 association agreements with the North Little Rock Wildcats and North Little Rock Optimist associations. Each of these new agreements reflects changes to dates needed for scheduling purposes. Department staff has meet with the association members and discussed the proposed agreements.

Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to execute association agreements for 2015 with the North Little Rock Optimist Association and North Little Rock Wildcats. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Kaboom Playground Grant Contract: Mr. Rhoads reported that staff from Habitat for Humanity wrote a grant for playground equipment to be utilized at Vestal Park. It was determined to be an ineligible park since playground equipment was already located at Boone Park Elementary School and the Jim Roberts Park nearby. The grant site was allowed to be moved to Witkowski Park where the playground equipment is old and in need of replacement.

As a side note, there are currently 100 students from three (3) out of state colleges already working on site with Habitat for Humanity staff to renovate Vestal Park. More will arrive to clean up the area and build a pavilion.

The Kaboom grant is worth approximately \$85,000, with 10% to be raised by Habitat for Humanity and the Baring Cross Neighborhood Association. The project is more than putting a playground in the park. The process to build the playground is a neighborhood team-building program. The neighbors help raise money for the project, children draw pictures of their dream playground, neighborhood adults take the pictures and select playground equipment components, and finally everyone comes together and builds the playground and its amenities.

The contract would be an agreement between Kaboom, Baring Cross Neighborhood Association, Habitat for Humanity and Parks and Recreation. Specifically, Parks and Recreation would be responsible for providing the property, site preparation, removing existing equipment, performing utility checks, performing a soil test, using wood fiber for a safe surface, accepting liability for and maintaining the playground once completed. Other areas of the contract would be performed by the Baring Cross Neighborhood Association and Habitat for Humanity.

For the city and Parks and Recreation, all areas are easily handled except for wording of the liability insurance and the indemnification clause within the contract. Legal department staff are reviewing the clauses and working with Parks and Recreation and Kaboom staff for acceptable wording. If this cannot be worked out, the grant would not be accepted by the city. Habitat for Humanity and the Baring Cross Neighborhood Association are still working to see if possibly a sponsor could agree to accept these insurance and indemnity requirements. This grant will help the community, but the issues on the insurance and indemnity is a big issue.

Mrs. Stephens asked if the Baring Cross neighbors were in agreement for this playground to be placed in Witkowski Park instead of Vestal Park.

Mr. Rhoads stated that the neighbors are in agreement to have the playground built at Witkowski Park. The Baring Cross Neighborhood Association will probably come before the Parks and Recreation Commission at the upcoming public hearing, asking for a playground for Vestal Park out of the department's funds.

Mrs. Paula Jones said that Habitat for Humanity should be responsible for the indemnity clause.

Mr. Jones made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley, to approve this contract contingent only if acceptable wording can be agreed upon between the city's legal staff and Kaboom representatives. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Director Reports: Mr. Rhoads presented director reports for February 2015 and reported:

- **Advertising and Promotion Fund Breakdown with Hotel/Restaurant Taxes Analysis:** The three (3) Hamburger Tax pennies generate approximately \$5,600,000 per year. The Parks Advertising and Promotion Department receives approximately \$260,000 per year of this revenue. Advertising and Promotion uses this revenue for tourism.

Director Reports (continued):

- **Advertising and Promotion Fund Breakdown with Hotel/Restaurant Taxes Analysis (continued):** The Hamburger Tax revenue funds most of the Parks and Recreation Department's budget. No division in the Parks and Recreation Department receives enough revenue to totally fund their division. The tennis center is the only one that pays totally for their programs and utilities.

- **Stonelinks Golf Course Update:** The auctioned Stonelinks golf course will not continue to be a golf course when the new buyer gives the land to the city. This property may be offered to the city by the owner with no stipulations on what the city can do with it. Plans for this property will be discussed sometime in the future if this offer is given to and accepted by the city.

- **Lodge in Burns Park:** The proposal to re-zone the Exit 150 property to possibly build a lodge has been placed on hold by Mayor Joe Smith. Request for Proposals will be sent to see if anyone is interested in building this lodge concept.

- **Adding Parks and Recreation logo to the new Idlewild, Fearneyhough and Crestview park signs:** Mr. Caplinger said he is still waiting to get costs from the Parkhill Neighborhood Association to add the Parks and Recreation logo to the new Idlewild, Fearneyhough and Crestview Park signs. Because of this delay, the department decided to proceed on their own. He presented examples of plaques that could be bought and placed on either the pole or column holding the association signs, identifying the parks as parks and recreation facilities. The cost ranged from \$50 to \$300 per sign. The department and commission preferred the sign costing approximately \$150 each.

Mrs. Stephens asked Mr. Caplinger to make sure the Parkhill Neighborhood Association agrees with the proposed Parks and Recreation Department signs before buying and installing. Mr. Caplinger agreed.

Mrs. Stephens stated that the Sertoma Club collected **gate fees** for the department several years ago and there were problems. The department decided to collect the gate fees themselves to alleviate those issues and it is working much better now. The Sertoma Club asked again to collect the fees but since things have improved, collection by the department will stay in place.

Calendar of Events: Mrs. Stephens stated that the next commission agenda deadline is Tuesday, April 7, 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 Tuesday, April 20, 2015, at 5:00 p.m. in the North Little Rock Community Center.

There will be a public hearing for Parks and Recreation priorities at 5:15 p.m. or directly after the commission meeting.

Adjournment: Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley, to adjourn at 5:55 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,

Jan Eberle-Wilkins for Otistene Smith
Secretary