

NORTH LITTLE ROCK PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

MARCH 15, 2010

The North Little Rock Parks and Recreation Commission meeting was called to order by Ms. Vicki Stephens at 5:00 p.m., March 15, 2010, at the North Little Rock Community Center.

Commission Members Present: Tom Davis, Jeanne Hyde, Charles Jones, Chandra Martin, Otistene Smith, Vicki Stephens and Bruce Waller.

Staff Members Present: Willie Elizandro, Jan Eberle-Wilkins, Jeff Caplinger, John Crow and Renee Henson.

Others Present: David Holsted, Jill McIlroy, Alderman Debi Ross, Alderman Beth White, Cindy Doramus, Ms. Jasper, Iona Willis, Braylon Covington, Maurice Cooper, Doug Trantham, Belinda Sykes Burney, Paula Jones and Shannon Harris

Minutes: Ms. Stephens presented the February 16, 2010, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting minutes.

Mrs. Martin made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, to adopt the minutes as presented. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

CARTI Request to Serve Beer at Tour de Rock: John Crow introduced David Holsted and Jill McIlroy with CARTI. He said they are requesting permission to serve beer after the Tour de Rock event in June 2010, to adult participants only. Beer was served last year and there were no problems. A copy of their security plan is submitted.

Mr. Holsted said he appreciated the opportunity to come before the commission, and appreciated their consideration.

Mrs. Hyde made a motion, seconded by Mr. Waller to accept their request to serve beer after the Tour de Rock event in June 2010, to adult participants only. The vote was:

Tom Davis:	No	Otistene Smith:	No
Jeanne Hyde:	Aye	Vicki Stephens:	Aye
Charles Jones:	Aye	Bruce Waller:	Aye
Chandra Martin:	No		

The motion passed.

Ms. Stephens thanked them for their work in the community.

Boys and Girls Club Annual Report for 2009: Mr. Elizandro introduced Cindy Doramus, Director of the Boys and Girls Club. She reported that their organization had a good year in 2009, and were approved to by the State Department of Education to be Supplemental Education Services Providers. This program helps the children bring up their Benchmark score.

Boys and Girls Club Annual Report for 2009 (continued): Mrs. Doramus introduced Ms. Jasper, who is the Education Services Provider teacher, at the Rose City Boys and Girls Club. She is a teacher at the Lynch Drive Elementary School.

Ms. Jasper introduced Iona Willis, Braylon Covington and Maurice Cooper, who are participants in the Supplemental Education Services Program. This program gives the children the opportunity to have structured time to work on homework with a certified one-on-one teacher. The program also teaches leadership and socialization skills. Great expectations are set and met in this program. She has a close relationship with all of the parents, and the achievement gap is being closed. She said she appreciated the commission allowing the Boys and Girls Club to have a program at Rose City.

Mrs. Hyde asked how many children are in the program.

Ms. Jasper replied that there are 25 participants in the program.

Mrs. Doramus stated that the parents choose the provider location. Schools then qualify the children to attend this program location. Every teacher is certified.

Ms. Stephens thanked Mrs. Doramus and Ms. Jasper for making this a program a success.

Mrs. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jones, to accept these reports as presented. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Disc Golf Agreement: Mr. Crow said the disc golf association has reorganized and is now the Diamond State Disc Golf Association. They elected officers, developed by-laws, and are in the process of incorporating as a non-profit organization and getting Articles of Incorporation.

Mr. Waller asked if the reorganization was going to affect the proposed new additional disc course.

Mr. Crow said Mr. Rhoads had told the association that before this new course would be considered for funding or land use, they would have to reorganize.

Mrs. Smith asked if they had appointed someone to serve as the secretary-treasurer.

Doug Trantham, President of the Diamond State Disc Golf Association, said their organization has appointed a President, Vice-President, and the remaining three (3) officers serve as Event Coordinators and take minutes at the meetings.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Hyde, to accept the facility agreement and file to get a 501(3) c status. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Stephens said they appreciate what all the Diamond State Disc Golf Association is doing.

15th Street Triangle Park Request: Mr. Elizandro introduced Ms. Belinda Sykes Burney and Alderman Beth White. He stated that the Dark Hollow Community Development Corporation would like to develop and beautify the 15th Street Park by adding a walkway, bench type monument and memorial wall. It would also serve as a way for the Dark Hollow Community Development Corporation to have a fundraiser for upgrading and beautifying the neighborhood by selling memorial bricks.

Permission is being sought to give the Dark Hollow Community Development Corporation the opportunity to proceed on the fund raising program. Ms. Burney has indicated the memorial garden would be designed by an architect based on the money raised. The design of the memorial would be brought back for the Parks and Recreation Commission's approval before any construction is done.

Ms. Burney, President of the Dark Hollow Community Development Corporation, said their organization wants to revitalize and unify the Dark Hollow area. They are requesting permission to beautify the 15th Street Park entrance. She reported that Union Pacific Railroad would work with them on a sign. The proposed construction and all costs will be under the close supervision of the Dark Hollow Community Development Corporation and the City of North Little Rock. Future funding of certain aspects of the project will need a plan. These costs include the purchase and upkeep of grounds to be used for parking, periodic upkeep of the grounds, and additional pedestrian walkways.

Alderman Beth White said there is no safety issue with placement of a wall, and parking is sufficient. She thinks this idea is a good one for the community.

Mr. Elizandro said he favors this project and agrees with this idea. He said the conception needs to be approved now, and they will come back with a plan later. He said this will beautify the area.

Mrs. Hyde asked if the money will go only into the park.

Ms. Burney said money raised will go into the Dark Hollow Community to beautify homes, purchase lots to rebuild and build new homes, provide assistance in remodeling/renovation of homes, and funding for recreation and library facilities.

Mr. Jones made a motion, seconded by Mr. Waller, to give the Dark Hollow Community Development Corporation approval to proceed with fundraising plans. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Stephens wished her the best and look forward to seeing her in the future.

Parks and Recreation 2010 Bond Program: Mr. Elizandro stated that Mayor Hays would like to proceed on a \$2,000,000 Parks and Recreation Bond Program. The proposed projects address most items that were in the first year or two of the Parks and Recreation Capital Program, approved at the September 2009 commission meeting.

Input has been received from staff about current capital and equipment needs. He reported that \$1,000,000 of the \$2,000,000 is dedicated to the Burns Park Athletic Complex construction. The previously approved five-year plan, bond summary, detailed capital list and bond pay-off have been included for the commission's review and consideration.

Mr. Waller asked when this commission's approval had to be made.

Mr. Elizandro stated that the Mayor would be proposing this bond to the City Council in a week, and needed a response.

Mr. Waller asked how much of what the complex needs will the \$1,000,000 cover.

Mr. Elizandro said the \$1,000,000 is dedicated to the concession and restroom buildings, and will hopefully cover what will be needed. Purchase of bleachers is not included in this amount.

Mr. Crow said there would still be two (2) fields and one (1) restroom not complete.

Mrs. Martin asked what a replacement vehicle is, vs. new vehicle.

Mr. Elizandro said the Park Maintenance Department uses vehicles much more than the recreation centers, and there is not enough money to fund both departments. Therefore, the Park Maintenance Department gets the new vehicles.

Mr. Davis noted that there was no money requested by Funland.

Mr. Elizandro said no funds were asked for by the Funland staff.

Mr. Waller stated that under the 2007 Bond Program, \$250,000 was requested for Funland.

Mrs. Hyde stated that there were some upgrades and other things done for Funland previously.

Mr. Elizandro reported that new displays were purchased for the Holiday Lights event, and this project is run by Funland.

Mr. Jones asked what the Burns Park Baseball Complex will need after \$1,000,000 is spent on it.

Mr. Elizandro said there are separate funds allocated for other projects within the complex, other than the concession and restrooms. There is litigation involved due to problems with compaction of the complex foundation. The company doing this work has now gone out of business and sold its assets. Money appropriated for fields, bleachers and lights comes from another fund and will be available for these.

Parks and Recreation 2010 Bond Program (continued): Paula Jones said the cost involved to repair these damages is still being figured, as well as seeing how much the contractor can help, if any. If an agreement cannot be reached, it will probably have to be mediated, which could take up to six (6) months at the least. If mediation does not produce an agreement, then the case could go into litigation. There is a bond.

Mr. Elizandro said they are still negotiating because there is bond money involved.

Mr. Jones stated that there is a lot of money being spent at this baseball complex, and hopes the facility will be utilized.

Mr. Elizandro said he feels that the complex will definitely be busy.

Mr. Waller said a recommendation could be sent to the Mayor and City Council on whatever the commission body wants to pass. What the City Council approves for the Bond issue does not have to follow the commission recommendation. What he likes about this Bond Issue, is that Mr. Rhoads and staff had input from every part of the operation. He feels that the staff should be backed up with what they have come up for a realistic way to play by the rules and still get the things they believe should be high on the list. He is not fond of the process.

Mr. Jones said he does not want the baseball association coming back to the commission next year, asking for more money.

Mr. Waller reminded the commission that the Burns Park Athletic Association had stated that if the commission would agree to do certain things regarding the new complex, they (Burns Park Athletic Association) would work to raise a large sum of money themselves to contribute. They need to be reminded of this commitment.

Mr. Elizandro stated that there are a lot of needs for the parks, recreation, golf and athletics that are not being met, but the department has to deal with the resources available to make it all work. Also, sometimes other entities get involved.

Mrs. Smith stated that she hopes this does not become a repeat of the soccer complex.

Mr. Elizandro said the recreation centers looks a lot better than they have in a long time. They look nice on the inside and exterior, more professional. This type of environment is needed to attract the youth.

Ms. Stephens said the recreation programs always need more money.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Hyde, to adopt staff recommendations of the proposed 2010 Bond Program as shown on the Capital Improvement Program Summary, and forward to City Council for Bond action. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously. See attached.

Ms. Stephens said the council members could always be contacted by commission members to let them (council members) know how the commission members feel about things.

Director Reports:

Old Mill: Mr. Waller asked if the upper dam gate in Lakewood had to be open during the heavy rain.

Mr. Elizandro said yes. There was some question about the integrity of the dam itself. If water went over the road, it could cause erosion and collapse of the dam, which would have been a catastrophe, because the water level is higher than the Old Mill. The rain did a lot of damage at the Old Mill, but most repairs have been made. Money is being sought through the City Beautiful Commission to replace flowerbeds that were washed away. Funds in the amount of \$5,000 are also being sought through the Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA) for stones washed away.

Donation and Plaque: Mr. Waller noted that the Arkansas Running Klub has donated money for either the second or third time, for trail and restroom improvements in Burns Park.

Mr. Elizandro said previously they had donated money for a water fountain on the Burns Park trail. This time the donation is for restroom benches and hooks to make changing clothes easier.

Ms. Stephens thought a plaque would be nice to present to them.

Mrs. Hyde agreed that a plaque would be a good idea.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Smith, to formally recognize the Arkansas Running Klub for their donations and contributions to the department and community, by asking the Mayor to publicly present the plaque at one of the City Council meetings. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Elizandro said he also agreed with this action.

Vandalism: Mr. Jones asked if restrooms vandalized at Riverfront Park had been repaired.

Mr. Elizandro said what happened was that during the cold weather, individuals would go into the restrooms and build fires to keep warm. Because it was a safety hazard, the fire and police departments determined that the restrooms should be locked during the night.

Budget and Bond Issue (Athletic Fields and Recreation Centers): Mr. Waller said that when the commission was discussing the Bond business, there may have been a feeling that the Burns Park Athletic Complex got a large and unfair part of the budget. This needs to be remembered when the next budget is discussed, and the Burns Park Athletic Association comes back requesting additional money.

Mr. Elizandro said the baseball program was initially at Burns Park. They then moved to Vestal Park under the idea that Parks and Recreation was going to provide them with a baseball complex. They were at Vestal Park a long time, and there were a lot of safety issues that occurred at that location. The Mayor made a commitment to the Burns Park Athletic Association to build them a new complex at Burns Park.

Director Reports (continued):

Mr. Jones said he understands the commitment made to that group, but there is a perception to the citizens of North Little Rock. The soccer fields look great now and brings in revenue with tournaments, but it was a long process to get there. But looking at them on a daily basis, the fields do not serve as many youth as those that go to the recreation centers. The recreation centers are nice now and have computer labs, but it took a long time and process to get there.

When talking about perception, some people's perception is their reality. There are millions and millions of dollars spent on the fields, and when people talk about recreation centers, they are talking about programs. Talking about perception, some people perceive that other people can walk in and get what they want, and others have to scrape, beg, borrow or steal to get what they need.

He said he does not have a problem with the Bond issue, but he will remember next time what the department will be on the hook for. Soccer fields keep on and on needing things, so meanwhile the money has to come from somewhere, which means that someone is losing something, or someone is not getting something. Perception is that some parts of the city are being taken care of better than other parts.

Mr. Elizandro said that the commission has done a good job in making the recreation centers what they are. He thinks the quality of life in North Little Rock is much better than anything in central Arkansas. There is not the same number of recreation centers in this size town, anywhere else in Arkansas. Other cities in Arkansas have recreation facilities that have really deteriorated. The commission has made the quality of life good in North Little Rock, which makes people come and reside here.

Ms. Stephens said she appreciated the comments. The commission cares about everyone and wishes there was more money. The commission has fought long and hard to get the recreation centers where they are now. There is not enough yet, but the commission will keep trying. There are some things that are out of the commission's control. All of this needs to be remembered when it is time to do a budget next year.

Calendar of Events: Ms. Stephens stated that the next commission agenda deadline is Tuesday, April 6, 2010, 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, April 19, 2010, at 5:00 p.m., in the North Little Rock Community Center.

Adjournment: Mrs. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Hyde, to adjourn at 4:44 p.m. All voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Submitted by,

Otistene Smith, Secretary