

## NORTH LITTLE ROCK PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

JUNE 23, 2014

The North Little Rock Parks and Recreation Commission meeting was called to order by Mr. Neil Bryant, at 5:00 p.m., on June 23, 2014, at the North Little Rock Community Center.

**Commission Members Present:** Neil Bryant, Tom Davis, Charles Jones, Otistene Smith and Bruce Waller. Randall Bradley was absent. Vicki Stephens had another appointment.

**Staff Members Present:** Bob Rhoads, Jan Eberle-Wilkins, Tina Worrell, Jeff Caplinger, Steve Ralston, Jennie Cunningham, Paula Jones, Ian Hope and Shep.

**Others Present:** Doris Allen, Harry Hamlin, James Fletcher, Deanna Garretson and Wesley Holt.

**Disposition of Minutes:** Mr. Bryant presented minutes of the May 19, 2014, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

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

**Vote for Excused or Unexcused Absentees:** Mrs. Stephens had another appointment and was absent. Mr. Jones made a motion, seconded by Mr. Waller, to count this as an excused absence. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bradley did not call to state why he was absent. The commission will vote at the next regularly scheduled commission meeting to count this absence as either excused or unexcused.

**Conley Park - Dixie Addition Memorial Wall Request:** Jeff Caplinger stated that Doris Allen and the Dixie Addition community wants to develop and beautify a portion of Conley Park by adding a walkway and memorial wall (similar to the wall at Dark Hollow Memorial Park). It would serve as a way for the Dixie Addition community to remember their loved ones and members of the community, which have passed on.

Staff has met with Doris Allen to determine their needs, location, project design, budget, etc. Mrs. Allen and her group have already sold over 300 memorial bricks and wants to have the project complete by Dixie Days, scheduled on August 9, 2014.

Conley Park is under two jurisdictions. The southwest corner of the park is city owned and managed by Parks and Recreation. The rest of the park has been and is currently leased by the city (Parks and Recreation) from Entergy Corporation.

Staff has discussed this project with Entergy representatives and per the lease agreement, **no structures may be added to the leased property without review and approval from Entergy.** This project is currently being reviewed by Entergy and may have additional requirements that will need to be met (example: environmental assessment).

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**Conley Park - Dixie Addition Memorial Wall Request (continued):**

Depending on approval by the Entergy Corporation, staff recommends approval for Dixie Day Celebration, Inc. to proceed with their plans to build a walkway and memorial wall.

Mr. Waller asked if the community aldermen are aware of this project and request.

Mrs. Allen said she has sent numerous emails to them but has not heard anything back.

Mr. Bryant said that the commission's hands are tied as the property belongs to Entergy, and the commission cannot vote on this until Entergy makes a decision of whether to permit this construction on their land. He suggested that Mrs. Allen send a letter with information to Entergy representatives, or schedule a meeting with them. She can get with Mr. Caplinger to get the contact information. Once Entergy approves the request, this can then be returned to the commission for final approval.

**Vestal Urban Farm:** Mr. Caplinger reported that in 2011, the Argenta Community Development Corporation signed a five-year agreement with Parks and Recreation to use one (1) acre of land at Vestal Park for the Vestal Urban Farm Project. Since then, the Argenta Community Development Corporation partnered with People's Tree Project and Boone Park Elementary School on various operations and programs of the project. The department assisted with supplying water to the area and they provided irrigation within the area. The Argenta Community Development Corporation also installed a fence around the project area along with two (2) hoop houses and laid pavers to provide a hard surface for other programs.

Last year, Argenta Community Development Corporation went through some staffing changes, and has since reviewed their budget and programs. They determined they need to terminate their agreement with Parks and Recreation upon approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The Argenta Community Development Corporation has currently been in talks with the Agape Community Temple of Servants Church about taking over the Vestal Urban Farm Project. The Agape Community Temple of Servants Church is willing to take over the project and sign a separate agreement. Mr. Caplinger has met with representatives of the Agape Community Temple of Servants Church and their plan is to continue with

the same plan that the Argenta Community Development Corporation initially set up. The Agape Community Temple of Servants Church has been working with the Argenta Community Development Corporation for the last couple of months.

If the Agape Community Temple of Servants Church or another group is unable or unwilling to continue the Vestal Urban Farm Project within 60 calendar days, the Argenta Community Development Corporation should be required to remove the hoop houses and signage regarding the project, and return the project area to an open green space as it was prior to the project.

The commission may want to hold off on Argenta Community Development Corporation's proposed date of termination for 60 calendar days or until such time another group is able and willing to take over the project. During this time, the Argenta Community Development Corporation will still be required to maintain the area to code.

The City Attorney's office will review the agreement for form and content.

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**Vestal Urban Farm (continued):** Mr. Harry Hamlin with the Argenta Community Development Corporation stated that their organization is changing priorities and wants to be released from the agreement immediately. All equipment will be transferred to the Agape Community Temple of Servants Church or whoever will take over this project, pending commission approval.

Mr. Bryant asked James Fletcher (with Agape Community Temple of Servants Church) if he had had a chance to review the agreement.

Mr. Fletcher said yes he had reviewed the agreement, and had no questions about it. Their church has a grant writer and will be working with Hannah Voegler and Harmony Hudson.

Mr. Waller made a motion to approve the staff recommendation to accept their (Argenta Community Development Corporation) letter of termination effective August 15, 2014, or until the agreement is taken over by another group. Mr. Jones seconded the motion. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Jones made a motion, seconded by Mr. Waller, to accept the agreement with Agape Community Temple of Servants Church as presented, for the Vestal Park Urban Farm. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

**Arkansas Tennis Association Request:** Mr. Rhoads stated that the Arkansas Tennis Association feels that the need for more tennis court lights is significant. They (the Arkansas Tennis Association) are willing to pay one-half (\$35,000) of the material cost of lights. They also will advance Parks and Recreation \$70,000 to be able to do four (4) court lights this year. Lights would make it possible for more teams, tennis leagues, tournaments and drop-in play to occur. The loan payment (from

the department) would be paid back to the Arkansas Tennis Association in 2015.

At times in the spring and fall, there are not enough lighted courts so people are turned away. The Arkansas Tennis Association pays for electric bill for the tennis center. Staff has included this in the capital priority list to be considered for Parks and Recreation to share \$35,000 to light four (4) courts.

Parks and Recreation staff would do the installation. Staff has checked with finance and city administration, and they are in agreement with this request as long as the commission is in concurrence. Finance has indicated that with commission approval, this request would not need to go to City Council at this time.

Mr. Waller stated that the 2015 list of capital needs has not been submitted or approved by the City Council. If the commission votes to do this commitment today and it is not approved by the City Council, the budget will have to be modified and money found to share the light cost and installation this year.

Mr. Rhoads said that if the commission is favorable to this expense, a motion could be made stating this and recommending that it be sent to the City Council now for approval before the 2015 budget is submitted.

Mr. Jones stated he has a concern that others will come in asking for one-half, and if so, what will the commission do then.

Mr. Waller stated that when this has happened in the past, the project is held until both parties have produced their money in full.

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**Arkansas Tennis Association Request (continued):** Paula Jones said a letter could be sent to the City Council, requesting to approve this expense now.

Mr. Bryant recommended this item be put on hold for discussion at the next regularly scheduled meeting, and have Mrs. Jones check to see exactly how this would need to be done.

Note: This request was approved in the following motion which states, "Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jones, that based on the projected capital Hamburger Tax surplus of \$80,500, the commission approve \$47,000 for the additional lights on the soccer fields and **\$33,500 for the lights on the tennis courts**, subject to City Council final approval. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously."

**Capital Money for Soccer Lights:** Mr. Rhoads stated that from this year's budget, \$60,000 is available in the Hamburger Tax Capital budget and another \$60,000+ in cash donations are available to purchase materials to light two (2) more soccer fields. It was found that the lights need to be three-phase lighting. Three-phase is available on Quad 1 at soccer, but is not available on Quad 3 where the lights will be placed.

Cost to the Electric Department will be \$58,000 to add the three-phase to Quad 3. Electric staff cost will be \$11,000, which includes pay for design work by an as-needed engineer. The remaining \$47,000 is for materials. This request to use \$47,000 out of the Hamburger Tax for materials will need to go to the City Council for approval. At this time, the department is anticipated to have \$80,500 in surplus at the end of 2014.

The Parks and Recreation Department and Electric Department staff would work together to do the installation anticipated for late summer or early fall completion. The lights must be present to be able to host the 2015 Southern Regional Soccer Tournament where 198 teams will participate for a full week.

In the past, the Electric Department has been able to cover these kinds of costs. Due to their budget situation now, they need the Parks and Recreation Department to pay for all of the materials. They will cover the \$11,000 in staffing. If this is approved by the commission, it will have to go to the City Council for their approval.

Mr. Waller stated that the anticipated \$80,500 surplus, with use of \$47,000 out of the Hamburger Tax, leaves only \$33,500. Therefore only \$1,500 is needed for the tennis lights and he does not feel that this is an unreasonable risk.

Mr. Waller said that he would like to see these lighting improvements made to the tennis courts and soccer fields.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jones, that based on the projected capital Hamburger Tax surplus of \$80,500, the commission approve \$47,000 for the additional lights on the soccer fields and \$33,500 for the lights on the tennis courts, subject to City Council final approval. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Rhoads stated that he would get these two (2) items placed on the City Council agenda for approval.

**Capital Needs for 2015:** Mr. Rhoads presented a list that shows capital being spent in 2014, capital requests for 2015, and all of the other items requested for funding over the last few years. Also listed are items in progress or completed as well as (11) priorities for 2015.

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**Capital Needs for 2015 (continued):** Funding is limited again in 2015, so only \$309,500 will be able to be spent. In future years, starting 2016, just over \$1,000,000 per year can be spent. The Arkansas Tennis Association is willing to fund \$35,000 for one-half cost of lighting two (2) courts. The Burns Park Baseball Association is considering paying one-half of the cost for field tarps for the youth complex. The North Little Rock High School Booster Club is working to raise money for the DeJanis field tarp. The ball associations have not submitted their pledges in writing.

If these organizations do not follow through, then the department would only spend the amount that was approved.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, to approve these as staff requested and send to the City Council for approval for the 2015 capital budget. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously. See Attached.

**Burns Park Golf Course Fees:** Mr. Rhoads stated that because staff is working to increase play and assist veterans and active military, there is a recommendation of two (2) changes in relation to procedures and fees at the golf course.

Due to the closing of the Emerald Park Golf Course on June 30, 2014, staff is recommending all veterans and active military be allowed to play at both Burns Park courses at the senior rate. This would represent a \$4.00 to \$6.00 decrease per round played, depending on when the round is played and on what course.

<b>Tournament Course Veterans)</b>	<b>Regular</b>	<b>Senior Rate (for age 55 and older)</b>
Monday through Friday	\$14.00	\$10.00
Saturday/Sunday/Holidays	\$14.00	\$12.00
<b>Championship Course</b>		
Monday through Friday	\$14.00	\$10.00
Saturday/Sunday/Holidays	\$20.00	\$14.00
<b>9 Holes</b>	\$10.00	\$ 8.00
Saturday/Sunday/Holidays		

Mr. Ralston said to increase play, he is recommending the commission allow the adult/child program to be extended. This program was approved by the commission approximately five (5) years ago. The program allows an adult to play (paying fee) and bring a junior (17 years and under) to play and ride the cart at no additional charge. Currently, it is Saturday only starting at 3:00 p.m. He is recommending the program also be available on Sundays with the start time moved back to 12:00 noon both days. It is a very popular program.

Mr. Ralston is also recommending a program for “monthly” green fees at the Burns Park Golf Course. Quite a few players have asked about annual fees, and then asked if there were monthly payments. The office is not set up to sell an “annual fee” on a monthly basis; however, monthly “passes” that are good for only the current month could be sold. They would be numbered, color-coded and require identification from the player.

**Burns Park Golf Course Fees (continued):** These monthly passes would only be for the calendar month (regardless of the date bought), would not be refundable, transferable or extended for any reason. It would be a very simple card that was good only for the month in which it was purchased and for that player only. This program is different from the other surrounding golf courses. This program has been tried at Emerald Park, which was very popular.

Suggested rates would be as follows:

<u>Regular</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Senior/Veteran</u>	
December 79.00	\$ 39.00	\$ 59.00	\$
January	59.00	79.00	39.00
February	59.00	79.00	39.00
March 39.00		59.00	79.00
April 59.00		79.00	99.00
May	79.00	99.00	59.00
June	99.00	119.00	79.00
July	99.00	119.00	79.00
August 79.00		99.00	119.00
September	99.00	119.00	79.00
October	79.00	99.00	59.00
November <u>59.00</u>		<u>79.00</u>	<u>99.00</u>
Totals Paid by Month \$ 708.00		\$ 948.00	\$ 1188.00
Current Annual Fees \$ 400.00		\$ 650.00	\$ 800.00

The difference is basically a \$300.00 benefit to the department per year, if a player chose to pay monthly all year. The reason for the difference and what separates this program from all others, is that other courses require a one (1) to three (3) year commitment on their monthly fees. This program will simply be for the calendar month in which it is purchased and players may choose the month(s) in which they would like to pay a monthly fee.

These are for green fees only. Golf cart rentals will be separate if a player desires. Monthly and yearly programs can be designed if players request that. This recommendation is to try the program through the end of the 2014 year and evaluate it in January 2015. Fees can be adjusted if needed.

If a senior or veteran wants to add an immediate family member, it will be \$20.00 per month per family member.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jones, to adopt the golf fees as submitted for the veteran and senior citizens play at Burns Park. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Smith, to adopt changes for the adult/child golf program starting Saturdays and Sundays at 12:00 noon as presented. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jones, to adopt the monthly annual fee plan rates as presented, subject to review June 2015. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

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### **Director Reports:**

Mr. Rhoads reported:

- Three (3) **letters of commendation** have been received:

- From Gary Davis, North Little Rock School District Athletic Director: Complimenting Jason Rhodes, Warren DeBusk, Tony Pate and the ground crew at park maintenance for their outstanding job in helping them host the state baseball tournament.

- From Alderman Beth White: Thanking the staff and Shep for making Arkansas Trails Day a success.

- From Karen Boone with the Wildcat Foundation: Thanking Steve Ralston for his help in making their tournament a success.

Zachary Baxla, member of Boy Scout Troop 99, received donations and labor to build **two new (2) pavilions** in Burns Park. They are dedicated to the Wounded Warriors of Arkansas and Native Americans of Arkansas.

The **rocket slide** at Burns Park, **North Heights pool** and **Glenview splash pool** are now open. **Sherman Park pool** will hopefully open June 18, 2014.

Paula Jones stated that the North Little Rock Teen Court sentenced the **vandalizing teens at North Heights** to community service. The parents had no money for restitution.

Mr. Caplinger reported that The Enjoy Life organization has adopted the **skate park**. They will help alert the department to any vandalism or maintenance needed. The police are making more of a presence at that location and new park closure signs were added.

**Calendar of Events:** Mr. Bryant stated that the next commission agenda deadline is Tuesday, July 8, 2014, 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, July 21, 2014, at 5:00 p.m. in the North Little Rock Community Center.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Jones made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, to adjourn at 5:58 p.m. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.



**Public Comments:** Mr. Bryant opened the meeting for public comments.

Wesley Holt wants the Victory Lake area to be open and accessible all night, a marina built to generate revenue, trail areas developed for trail races, signs posted at the boat ramp listing levee times and have water area at the boat ramp dredged and cleaned out.

Mr. Bryant asked Mr. Holt to give his list of requests to Mr. Caplinger. He also told him that the department has talked with the Game and Fish Commission and others about the dredging. It costs a lot but is being looked at.

Submitted by,

Otistene Smith, Secretary