

Norman Board of Parks Commissioners
September 1, 2022

The Norman Board of Parks Commissioners of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met on September 1, 2022, at 5:30 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting was posted at 201 West Gray Street, 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

ITEM 1, being:

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Wright and Commissioners Favors, Isacksen, Moxley, Ross, Sallee,
and Salmond

Absent: Commissioners Davison and May

City Officials

Present: Jason Olsen – Director of Parks and Recreation
Heather Poole, Assistant City Attorney
Wade Thompson, Parks, and Facilities Manager
Veronica Tracy, Recreation Manager

ITEM 2, being:

APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 4, 2022 - REGULAR PARK BOARD MINUTES

Commissioner Isacksen requested Staff make corrections to the August 4, 2022, Regular Park Board minutes, which were made prior to the meeting. Chair Wright highlighted the corrections to the Board. Commissioner Isacksen made the motion, and Commissioner Ross seconded to approve the corrected August 4, 2022, Regular Park Board minutes. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Wright and Commissioners Favors, Isacksen, Moxley, Ross, Sallee,
and Salmond

NAY: None

ITEM 3, being:

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Sallee made the motion, and Commissioner Salmond seconded to approve the agenda. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Wright and Commissioners Favors, Isacksen, Moxley, Ross, Sallee,
and Salmond

NAY: None

ITEM 4, being:

**NO SMOKING PLAN UPDATE PRESENTATION BY NORMAN REGIONAL HEALTH
PLEX/HEALTHY LIVING PROGRAM**

Ms. Sara Sancak, the Program Coordinator with Norman Regional Health Systems (NRHS) Healthy Living Program, said the program serves Cleveland County and works with local community partners to help prevent cancer and cardiovascular disease by reducing tobacco use and obesity. She highlighted the report, stating Norman prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco products and/or vapor products on all indoor/outdoor City owned/operated property, excluding the Westwood Golf Course and the parking lots of playground areas.

Ms. Sancak said tobacco use is the number one preventable cause of death in the United States and said tobacco use kills more than 7,500 Oklahomans yearly; tobacco smoke contains at least 250 harmful chemicals and at least 69 known carcinogens. Tobacco causes cancer, heart disease, and respiratory illnesses, and in Oklahoma, more than 21 percent of adults smoke. Ms. Sancak said every year, we spend \$3.7 billion, or \$1,272 per adult, on smoking-related health care costs and lost productivity

Ms. Sancak said if Norman decides to update the City's "No Smoking Plan," it will demonstrate that your community cares about the health of its citizens and employees. It will allow everyone to demonstrate by example that tobacco use is not the norm and is unhealthy. She said secondhand smoke is hazardous to your health and is responsible for nearly 50,000 deaths among adult non-smokers yearly in the United States. Ms. Sancak said there is wide support for being tobacco-free, stating more than 81% of Oklahomans want cities and towns to adopt smoke-free policies for all workplaces, and at least 52 Oklahoma communities have passed tobacco-free ordinances. She said tobacco litter harms children, pets, and the environment. In 2012, American poison control centers received more than 8,600 reports of poisoning from ingesting cigarettes, cigarette butts, and other tobacco products. Nearly 85% of these poisonings were in children ages five and younger.

Ms. Sancak said healthy incentive grants are available for communities, and an updated tobacco ordinance would make the City eligible for additional funds. She said the City had received a total of \$50,000 from the Healthy Incentive Grants for Communities (HIGC) in 2012 and 2013, and since that time, the criteria have been updated to increase the maximum funding to a total of \$150,000. Grant application periods for FY23 are open during the following dates, November 1, 2022 – November 30, 2022, and March 1, 2023 – March 31, 2023. Ms. Sancak said funding for healthy incentive grants for communities is determined based upon the following: 1) the City adopting a comprehensive ordinance that prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco products and/or vapor products on all indoor/outdoor City owned/operated property; 2) the level (or strength) of the Worksite Wellness policy adopted and the municipality's practices in support of the policy; 3) Community Actions achieved by the community toward an environment of wellness; and 4) the population size of the city/municipality – the higher the population size, the larger the potential grant award. Ms. Sancak said Norman's population has the potential to get the maximum funding of \$150,000.

Ms. Sancak highlighted Norman's history, stating her team met with Mayor Rosenthal in 2015-16 to discuss this policy, and her concerns were that if a policy were passed, the City would not have a way to enforce it. Mayor Rosenthal asked that we collect data from surveying Westwood Golf Course. The survey results indicated that those who had an opinion regarding smoking preferred it not to be allowed. Ms. Sancak said NRH continued to meet with Norman Parks and Council Members over the years to gain support but did not try to pass a policy again until 2019. She met with Mayor Clark and attended a Council Oversight Committee meeting to see when a presentation could be presented to the City, but

nothing came of it. She said more recently, in June 2022, she presented to the Council Oversight Committee survey results, policy suggestions, and the benefits. Ms. Sancak said she received positive feedback overall and was asked to get support from Westwood Golf Course.

Ms. Sancak highlighted the Westwood Golf Course visitor survey results to the Board. She provided direct quotes from anonymous golf course users, including the following: "It is pretty rare to see someone smoking at the golf course, maybe one or two regulars," "I hate the smell of cigarette smoke, so it would be great if the City passed a no smoking policy," "I did not realize you could vape or use tobacco products here" and "We want clean air. We value it." Ms. Sancak said Westwood Golf already has signs stating people cannot smoke near the clubhouse.

Ms. Sancak highlighted the next step as follows:

- Support from Parks and Recreation to move forward with Westwood Golf Course and parking lots of playgrounds to be tobacco-free;
- Present to City Council on all city-owned properties to be tobacco-free;
- Write a model policy; and
- Apply for the Healthy Incentive Grants for Communities on behalf of Norman's updated tobacco-free city-owned policy – Norman is eligible for \$100,000.

Commissioner Salmond asked whether Westwood was the only city facility that is not smoke-free, and Commissioner Sallee asked which playgrounds would be included in a proposed no-smoking policy. Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that currently, smoking is not allowed at the Westwood golf clubhouse, tennis facility, and swimming pool. He said all parks with parking lots were excluded from the ordinance and felt Council may have seen them as a place people were allowed to smoke rather than at the park and/or the facility itself, i.e., they could go out to the parking lot and smoke by their car. Commissioner Moxley asked if the policy would include marijuana, and Ms. Sancak said that was also requested at the Oversight Committee meeting. Mr. Olsen said the City Attorney's office would need to determine whether marijuana should be included in the proposal since it can be used medically in Oklahoma. Chair Wright asked if the proposal would include no smoking in your car. Mr. Olsen said the general idea is not to allow smoking/vaping in any city park parking lot, even if the person was inside or near their car. Ms. Sancak said while a person's car is their personal property, most people would lower the window while smoking, and discussions have determined the air (smoke) moves to the playground and children. Commissioner Moxley asked if the HIGC funding was an annual or a one-time grant, and Commissioner Isacksen asked if the funds would need to be used for healthy living efforts. Ms. Sandak said HIGC funding is an annual grant, and the City would use the funds to improve city parks and/or trails; however, the improvements would need to be healthy living oriented. Commissioner Moxley recommended the funding be put back into the program, and Mr. Olsen agreed, stating the general intent would be to use the funding for no smoking signage, education, and health benefits of being a smoke-free park/parking lot. Chair Wright asked whether signs would be installed on the golf course, and Mr. Olsen said yes, for the ordinance to be enforced, signage would need to be displayed at the golf course and in the city parks. Commissioner Salmond asked whether the ordinance would state that City facilities and parks are tobacco-free. Therefore, would smokeless tobacco be included in the ordinance and not permitted? He asked whether the City would lose revenue from people not going to the golf course if they cannot smoke, and Mr. Olsen said he did not think so, that most municipal courses already have tobacco-free policies. Commissioner Sallee asked how the policy would be enforced, and Staff said a violation would need to be reported to the police department. The police would issue a citation to those who broke the policy.

Commissioner Moxley made the motion, and Commissioner Sallee seconded to approve the No Smoking Plan, to include Westwood Golf and all playground parking lots. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Wright and Commissioners Favors, Isacksen, Moxley, Ross, Sallee, and Salmond

NAY: None

ITEM 5, being:

ANNUAL PRESENTATION FROM THE SOONER THEATRE

Ms. Jennifer Baker, Executive Director with the Sooner Theatre, gave an annual presentation to the Board. A written report, including financial information, was provided to the Board before the meeting. She said The Sooner Theatre's mission is to change lives, offer diverse perspectives, and create a cultural connection to the community through the performing arts and arts education. Ms. Baker said the Sooner Theatre had a very successful summer, and she is looking forward to the opening show, "Little Shop of Horrors," in October 2022, and "The Wizard of Oz" during the holidays.

Ms. Baker said one of the goals for the Sooner Theatre is working on the Oklahoma Center for Non-Profits, Standards for Excellence, which is the benchmark for all the practices of a nonprofit organization. She said she is very excited about getting this completed/submitted and felt it makes the organization look at what is working and what needs improvement, both on the Board and Staff levels.

Ms. Baker asked the Board if they had any questions regarding the report and financials. Commissioner Favors commended Ms. Baker for working on and completing the Standards for Excellence and said it is an excellent way to ensure the Sooner Theatre organization continues to use best practices and show greater accountability. Commissioner Salmond asked when the "Wizard of Oz" performance was scheduled, and Ms. Baker said December 9th. She said we just recently had auditions for the show, and she is currently recruiting for Celebrity Sing! Ms. Baker said the Sooner Theatre brings in a company from Las Vegas called Flying by Foy, and we do all the flying, from the witches and monkeys to the bicycle with the basket scene. She invited the Board to see it, as well as "Little Shop of Horrors," during the show's running time from October 14th through October 23rd.

Commissioner Isacksen said she noticed an exciting trend as she looked back to 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 Profit and Loss financials, specifically, the *Friends Donations*. She said it was around \$62,000 for FYE 2018-19; dropped a bit in FYE 2019-20, and in FYE 2020-21, was up to \$80,000-\$90,000, and she would love to hear that it is continuing to go up or at least stayed at that amount for the current year. Ms. Nancy Coggins, PR & Development Manager, said the Sooner Theatre did well during FYE 2021-22 with donations. Although she did not have the exact number at this time, she felt like the donation numbers were around the \$80,000 mark. Ms. Baker said the Sooner Theatre is grateful for any donation(s) received, but they always strive to get more sponsors and donors. Commissioner Sallee asked about the SBA line item, and Ms. Coggins said that line item represents a combination of Small Business Association (SBA) grants and/or loans that the Sooner Theatre applied for and received during the COVID pandemic.

Ms. Coggins said the Sooner Theater applied for the following loans/grants to include:

- Shuttered Venue Operators Grant: \$270,000 grant that did not have to be repaid;
- Two (2) separate Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Grants, both \$45,000 each (\$90,000 total). These were initially loans to be paid back; however, the Sooner Theatre applied for and received loan forgiveness for a total of \$90,000; and
- Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL): \$150,000 loan that the Sooner Theatre has repaid in full.

The Board thanked Ms. Baker and Ms. Coggins and acknowledged the presentation.

ITEM 6, being:

ANNUAL PRESENTATION FROM THE NORMAN YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

Mr. Ashton Bray, Board President, Norman Youth Soccer Association (NYSA), gave an annual presentation to the Board. A written report, including financial information, was provided to the Board before the meeting.

Mr. Bray said NYSA currently has about 3,000 participants and offers three youth soccer leagues to include Recreational, Academy, and Competitive. He said NYSA hosts tournaments throughout the year as fundraising projects and is very excited about the Norman Forward Griffin Park Project currently underway, stating that NYSA will be able to host larger tournaments once the project is completed. Mr. Bray said NYSA offers camps throughout the summer, and the camps focus on developing the technical skills and tactical capabilities of campers.

Commissioner Isacksen said she noticed a big jump in the financials for the year ending May 2021 to May 2022 and asked whether NYSA had something in place to either get more revenue or cut some of the expenses to help from being a constant drain. Mr. Bray said there was a lot of inflation on many items over the last year, and NYSA bought some things in bulk, such as paint and fertilizer, which ultimately saved money. He said NYSA also changed accounting firms, and NYSA has been re-coding items and has become much more detailed since 2020-21. Commissioner Sallee asked about the Basketball Bracket revenue item on the financials, and Mr. Bray said it was a March Madness fundraiser at the clubhouse, half went to the club, and half went to the winner.

The Board acknowledged the presentation.

ITEM 7, being:

NORMAN FORWARD UPDATE

Mr. Jason Olsen, Parks and Recreation Director, gave a Norman Forward Update to the Board as follows:

Reaves Park

Work continues in the park, and topsoil is being placed so sod can be put down. The 12-foot drainage pond is finished, internal park roads and parking lots are nearly complete, and poles are going up for the new backstops. The project should be completed by November or December; however, a ribbon-cutting will be scheduled in Spring 2023, closer to the beginning of baseball/softball season.

Griffin Park

Mr. Olsen showed a new picture of the Griffin Park Project that reflected all of the phases. He said contractors are currently working on Phase 6, which includes eight fields, two concession/restroom buildings, one restroom-only building, and a new entry into the complex. He said a punch walk-through was done last week on Phase 5 and said the grass/springs are growing well on the three newly renovated fields and hopefully will grow more before it gets too dormant. Mr. Olsen said Phase VI was approved by City Council and consists of an expansion of Robinson Street, which is still under design and will be bid separately. He said new traffic lights, one at 12th Avenue and High Meadows and another on Robinson Street and State Drive, along with "entrance only" and "exit only" signage, will help with traffic going into and out of the park/parking lots. This project is scheduled to be completed in the Spring of 2023.

YFAC

Mr. Olsen said progress continues at the Young Family Athletic Center (YFAC) and invited the Board to a steel-topping ceremony on September 8th at 3:30 p.m. He shows a picture depicting the steel being erected on the site and says there will be a piece of steel that people can sign before it is placed on the building. The next celebration will be when the street named Trae Young is completed. Mr. Olsen showed a picture of the warm-up pool in the aquatic area of the YFAC and said the bottom floor of the pool was poured last week. He said the contractor would be pouring the side walls soon and, shortly after that, begin digging the competition pool. The YFAC is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2023.

Senior Wellness Center

Mr. Olsen showed a recent picture reflecting the surge pit for the swimming pool at the Senior Wellness Center. He reminded everyone it would be salt water, temperature controlled pool. He said the steel would begin going up soon, and another steel-topping ceremony will be scheduled for this project. The Senior Wellness Center project should be finished in the Summer of 2023.

Vinyard Park

Mr. Olsen said the new two-level playground, which includes a family slide, is completed at Vinyard Park, and we are hosting a dedication/ribbon cutting ceremony on September 16, 2022. He said this neighborhood park upgrade was funded through the Norman Forward program and invited the Board to attend the ceremony.

Cherry Creek Park

The old playground was recently removed at Cherry Creek Park, and Staff designed new playground equipment. Mr. Olsen said the new playground would take a couple of months to install, and the Staff will host another dedication/ribbon cutting ceremony in the future. Commissioner Favors asked if Staff had an idea of what the new playground will look like, and Mr. Olsen said yes, it had already been ordered. He said he has a picture of the new playground and will email it to the Board, as well as share it on the Parks and Recreation Facebook page.

Chair Wright said she had seen a lot of crews and activity at Faculty Heights Park, and Staff said after a storm event a few months ago, OG&E cut/trimmed a lot of the trees in the utility easement along the side of the park. Mr. Olsen said they left the trimmed branches, including wood chip debris, in the park, and the Park Maintenance Division has been removing the limbs and debris and cleaning up the area.

ITEM 8, being:

DIVISIONAL UPDATES

Ms. Veronica Tracy, Recreation Manager, said this is the last weekend for an open swim at the Westwood Family Aquatic Center (WWFAC). She said there is a season pass holder appreciation event this Friday, September 2nd, at 8:30 p.m. Ms. Tracy said the WWFAC employees had done a great job this summer, and she is very proud of them all! Outdoor Movie Night returns to Lions Park on Friday, September 16th, with the showing of Ghostbusters Afterlife. Ms. Tracy said activities are free and begin at 7:00 p.m., and the movie will begin at sundown. She said Staff has been working with Oklahoma City Ghostbusters, a nonprofit out of Oklahoma City, and they will be dressed up in Ghostbusters apparel and driving their Ecto-1 vehicle to the park!

Ms. Tracy said another fun event is the Oklahoma Showdown scheduled on Saturday, September 17th, at the Andrews Park Blake Baldwin Skate Park. She said this is an inline rollerblading competition that includes different levels of skaters, from children to professional rollerbladers. Ms. Tracy said the annual Paint Out Cancer Event at Legacy Park is on September 29th. She said the Parks and Recreation Department partners with Norman Regional Health System for this beautiful event. She invited the Board to come out and listen to the great female artists that are scheduled to perform.

Ms. Tracy said the after-school programs at our Recreation Centers are in full swing, and all but Little Axe is at capacity with a waiting list.

ITEM 9, being:

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

Mr. Jason Olsen, Parks and Recreation Director, said ERC would present the Park and Recreation Needs Analysis survey at the next Park Board meeting. He said the survey is a scientifically accurate report and will include great information regarding how the City's Parks and Recreation can move forward over the next five years.

Mr. Olsen said Commissioner Moxley requested Staff bring a presentation regarding the homeless in City Parks to the Park Board meeting. He said it was initially on tonight's agenda, but the City Attorney's Office requested more time to research this issue. He said they want to make sure their presentation includes the most accurate information as to what the City can legally do and not do regarding this sensitive topic.

Mr. Olsen said the old playground equipment would be removed at Andrews Park in the next few weeks and replaced with a new ADA playground. Commissioner Favors asked if Andrews Park was the only ADA playground that would be installed or will the City be installing ADA playground equipment at other parks, such as the new playground being placed at Cherry Creek Park. Mr. Olsen said all the new playground equipment includes ADA features, but the playground installed at Andrews Park is a higher-level ADA playground.

Commissioner Sallee asked for an update regarding the library benches in City parks. Mr. Olsen said the topic was also scheduled to come back this month for further discussion. He said the library requested more park options. Staff gave them a proposal that included six sites, such as areas along Legacy Trail and some of our recreation and community centers; however, we did not hear back from the library.

Chair Wright asked if Monroe Park was a City park and Staff said yes. She said it is not listed on the City's website, and Mr. Olsen said it should be, and he will make sure it gets on there. He said the City leases the property from Norman Schools and includes a park usage agreement. Commissioner Favors asked whether Monroe Park could be accessed during the day, and Mr. Olsen said yes, but only on non-school days. He said the school (Monroe Elementary) uses the park during the school year/day, and there is signage posted at the park stating such.

Commissioner Sallee suggested the Park Board agendas, minutes, and presentations are sent to the Board digitally rather than handing out hard copies. Mr. Olsen said Staff has always provided hard copies, but if the Board would instead get the information digitally, that can be done. He said Staff would poll the Board to see which Commissioners would like hard copies or digital copies.

ITEM 10, being:

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Wright adjourned the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

Passed and approved this 29th of SEPTEMBER 2022



Kristi Wright, Chair