

Norman Board of Parks Commissioners
December 1, 2022

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

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Commissioners Davison, May, and Moxley

City Officials

Present: Jason Olsen – Director of Parks and Recreation
James Briggs, Park Development Manager
Bethany Grissom, Park Planner I
Josh Holman, Recreation Supervisor
Mitchell Richardson, Recreation Supervisor
Scott Sturtz, City Engineer
Wade Thompson, Parks and Facilities Manager
Veronica Tracy, Recreation Manager
Karla Sitton, Administrative Tech IV

ITEM 1, being:

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 29, 2022 - SPECIAL PARK BOARD MINUTES

Commissioner Isacksen made the motion, and Commissioner Salmond seconded to approve the September 29, 2022, Special Park Board minutes. The vote was taken with the following results:

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

NAY: None

ITEM 2, being:

UPDATE ON NORMAN FORWARD ROAD PROJECTS

Mr. Scott Sturtz gave a Norman Forward Road Projects presentation to the Board and said the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) would oversee some of the projects. He highlighted the James Garner Avenue Project Phase 2 – Acres Street to Flood Street, stating the project will include a new bridge over Robinson Street, an extension of Legacy Trail, decorative lighting, and landscaped medians. The construction should begin in Spring 2023 and be completed in Spring 2024. The estimated cost is \$9,500,000, and Federal funding for \$4,825,733 will be used on the project. He said when finished, the project will have a modern, multi-lane roundabout at James Garner Avenue and Flood Street and showed pictures depicting the bridge aesthetics, which include James Garner's autograph. Commissioner Salmond asked Staff if the project would involve creating a separate lane to assist drivers during construction, and Mr. Sturtz said the project would be done in phases to help with traffic.

Mr. Sturtz highlighted the Griffin Park – Robinson Street Intersection Project, stating Robinson Street will become a five-lane street with a center turn lane and a new traffic signal at the Griffin Park Soccer Complex entrance. He said 12th Avenue NE would also become a five-lane street with a center turn lane and have a new traffic signal at the High Meadows Drive intersection. Mr. Sturtz said this would add a 4th leg into Griffin Park. Commissioner Ross said there currently is a traffic signal at 12th Avenue NE and High Meadows, and Mr. Sturtz said yes. However, a new signal for the addition of the turn lane into Griffin Park will be installed. Commissioner Ross asked whether sidewalks would be added, and Staff said yes.

Mr. Sturtz highlighted the Jenkins Avenue Widening Project – Imhoff Road to Lindsey Street Project. He said the project cost is approximately \$11,100,000, and funding for the project is from the 2019 Transportation Bond and Federal funds in the amount of \$7,500,000. Staff said the project would include the extension of Legacy Trail, provide better access to Reaves Park, a modern roundabout at the intersection, and stormwater drainage that will

be installed underground rather than on the sides (ditches) of the street. Mr. Sturtz said construction will begin in the Spring of 2024 and be completed in about Spring of 2025.

The Board acknowledged the presentation.

ITEM 3, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE NAMING OF ROADS IN REAVES PARK

Mr. James Briggs, Park Development Manager, said new water meters were installed at Reaves Park, and the interior streets in Reaves Park need to be addressed for billing and maintenance purposes. He said citizens can now utilize Wadsack Drive to enter the park and take the new loop road around to Lawrence Street, as well as continue to utilize the existing road near the Veterans Memorial. Mr. Briggs said Staff proposes naming the new loop road *Reaves Park Road*. He said a suggestion was made to Staff to name the existing road near the Veterans Memorial *Warrior Way* in honor of the Veterans.

Commissioner Sallee made the motion, and Commissioner Favors seconded to approve naming the new interior loop road in Reaves Park, *Reaves Park Road*, and the existing road near the Veterans Memorial in Reaves Park, *Warrior Way*. The vote was taken with the following results:

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

NAY: None

Chair Wright asked whether the speed humps on the interior roads were installed on purpose, and Mr. Briggs said yes, they were installed to slow traffic down.

ITEM 4, being:

ANNUAL PRESENTATION FROM THE WESTWOOD FAMILY AQUATIC CENTER

Mr. Josh Holman, Recreation Supervisor at the Westwood Family Aquatic Center (WWFAC), gave the annual presentation to the Board. He said the 2022 attendance was 135,879, which was an increase from 2021 (117,640). Mr. Holman said Covid was still an issue in 2021, which may be the reason for higher numbers this year; however, he said the programs, special events, open swim, and rentals continue to climb each year. Commissioner Sallee asked whether allowing beer and wine sales in 2022 could be a factor for higher attendance numbers, and Staff said the selling of beer and wine is only allowed during adult events which are held about three times during the season. Commissioner Ross asked if Staff had run into any issues since allowing beer and wine, and Staff said no, but security is required during adult events.

Mr. Holman said the 2022 sales included 7,002 Season Pass Holders, 1,489 Swim Lessons, and 1,892 Scholarships given to families. The 2022 revenues were \$1,059,505.51, and the expenditures were \$719,650.33, for a total net revenue of \$339,855.18. Staff highlighted the aquatic programs to include: Group Swim Lessons; Adult Swim Lessons; Teen Aquatic Safety Program (new for 2023); Scuba Lessons; Jr. Elite Lifeguard Camp; Lifeguard Training; Shallow Water Lifeguard Training; Westwood Swim Team; Toddler Time; Water Walking; Water Fitness; and Master Swim Team.

Mr. Holman said future WWFAC projects that could be funded through a capital project and/or bond project include installing eight Private Cabanas and a Flow Rider. He said the cabanas could accommodate half-day or whole-day rentals, and the Return on Investment (ROI) would be about two seasons. He said Flow Rider is a surf simulator which is an investment for the WWFAC and not an ROI; however, it is the only attraction that revenue can be built around, i.e., Flow Rider birthday parties, private lessons, and/or special events. Commissioner Sallee asked whether there were any other Flow Rider surf simulators in Oklahoma, and Mr. Holman said OKC River Sports installed a Flow Rider two years ago. Commissioner Isacksen asked whether we have the space, and Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said the initial NF WWFAC project was constructed to expand and grow, including being plumbed to allow for future attractions such as the Flow Rider. Mr. Olsen said Private Cabanas and Flow Rider are some features that can help keep the WWFAC active.

The Board acknowledged the presentation.

ITEM 5, being:

PRESENTATION FROM THE PARK DEVELOPMENT DIVISION REGARDING THE BENTLEY PARK DESIGN PROJECT

Ms. Bethany Grissom, Park Planner, said Bentley Park is approximately 7.2 acres and is named after Lionel Bentley, who was the former Director of Parks and Recreation for many years and was still very much a part of the Department even after his retirement. She said the Park Board approved the parkland dedication in 2003, and the park will serve the Summit Valley and Bellatona Neighborhoods. Funding for the construction of the new park comes from the Norman Forward, Park Development Fees, and a generous donation from the Bentley Family.

Ms. Grissom said a survey was sent out to the citizens in both neighborhoods, and she highlighted the results to the Board. She said Staff considered what priorities ranked the highest and highlighted the site design plan. The design includes a trail around the park's border with a large open space in the middle for future amenities. Other amenities include a picnic pavilion, playground equipment, tennis/pickleball courts, basketball courts, and exercise equipment stations. Ms. Grissom said the design also includes planting 50 trees and several areas that will be left natural, i.e., native grasses, wildflowers, etc.

Commissioner Ross asked why the basketball court is being installed as a half court versus a full court, and Staff said installing half courts are more of the standard as well as half courts save a little funding that can be used to add other amenities in the park. Staff said the budget for Bentley Park is \$500,000, construction bids will be made this winter, and park construction is expected to be finished at the end of the Summer of 2023. Ms. Lou Bentley and Mr. Jud Foster, representing Lionel Bentley, was in attendance and thanked the Staff and the Board for their consideration and work on Bentley Park. They both agreed the design was great!

Commissioner Favors left the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

ITEM 6, being:

PRESENTATION FROM THE PARK DEVELOPMENT DIVISION REGARDING NORMAN FORWARD NEIGHBORHOOD PARK REVISIONS FIVE-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Mr. James Briggs, Park Development Manager, said the original Norman Forward (NF) Plan for City-wide Neighborhood Parks was \$6.5 million, with pay-go projects budgeted in the five-year Capital Improvements Plan. He said the recommendations come from the 2009 Park System Master Plan & Park Planning Staff, and there is an itemized list for each neighborhood park.

Mr. Briggs said the first 5-year plan saw improvements at Sonoma, Oakhurst, Rotary, Prairie Creek, Cherry Creek, Monroe, Vineyard, and Earl Sneed Parks. He said the plan also upgraded remaining park signs, top-dressed playground mulch, added basketball half courts, and upgraded park furniture in several parks as well as added small trail sections city-wide, as budget permitted. Staff said we are only in Year five of the NF Neighborhood Park Project Plan, even though it is Year seven of NF Program Plan, due to several factors, including skipping a year due to COVID when tax collections were low; delaying Fiscal Year 2023 due to budget needs on other NF projects and moving Vineyard Park up the list after the playground was destroyed by arson.

Mr. Briggs highlighted the Park Revisions Five-Year Implementation Plan to include:

- Year 1: William Morgan, Sunrise, Canadian Trails, and Pebblebrook Parks
- Year 2: Kiwanis, Northeast Lions, Sutton Place, Woodslawn, and Rock Creek Parks
- Year 3: Springbrook, Eagle Cliff, Deerfield, Eastridge, and Colonial Commons Parks
- Year 4: Normandy, Oak Tree South, Little Axe, Crestland, and Brookhaven Parks
- Year 5: Chisholm's Trail, Lions Memorial, Colonial Estates, and Kevin Gottshall Parks

Mr. Briggs said the Neighborhood Park Improvements was always planned as a 15-year pay-go project that can only be accomplished as Tax Revenue is collected. He said park conditions are continually monitored to stay aware of conditions that may need to be resolved before the year any park is scheduled for a complete renovation. Mr. Briggs said parts of other park projects might be addressed yearly as the budget allows.

Chair Wright asked if the City planted trees at Colonial Estates Park, and Staff said the Red Dirt Collective group planted some apple trees and they will maintain them. Commissioner Salmond asked whether the synthetic turf at the playground areas will be replaced every eight years, and Staff said none has had to be replaced yet because it does not get the same wear/tear as synthetic field turf.

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 is progressing nicely, and Flintco will finish the project within 30-45 days. Mr. Olsen said there is a plan to renovate some of the concession stands and bathrooms as well as install windscreens with money left over from this project as well as funding from capital projects. 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 phases. He said a bid went out today for Phase 6, specifically connecting High Meadows Road to the Griffin Park parking lot. Staff said the contractor is currently working on installing the parking lots and medians inside the parking lots. This project is scheduled to be completed in the Spring of 2023.

YFAC

Mr. Olsen said work continues at the Young Family Athletic Center (YFAC) and said contractors are working on the fire suppression system, placing the final grade (rock) below the competition pool, and installing the lower brick façade on the front of the building. He said the YFAC would be fully enclosed in a couple of months, and the contractor would begin installing the HVAC system. Once the installation can be temperature controlled, the acclimating process for the basketball gymnasium flooring will take approximately 30 to 45 days, and then the flooring will be installed. The YFAC is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2023.

Senior Wellness Center

Mr. Olsen said a steel-topping out ceremony was held at the Senior Wellness Center yesterday, November 30th. He said the exterior steelwork would be done by the end of January, and contractors would begin working on the interior. Mr. Olsen said the final bid package(s) on this project were opened today, and the lowest bid came in about \$50,000 less than expected, which was a pleasant surprise. The Senior Wellness Center project should be finished in the Summer of 2023.

Cherry Creek Park

Mr. Olsen showed a picture reflecting the new playground equipment installed at Cherry Creek Park and said Staff worked with the neighborhood to address concerns about the height of the playground, which was moved approximately 70 feet east of the original playground. He said this project should be finished in approximately 30-45 days and Staff will schedule a dedication/ribbon-cutting ceremony.

ITEM 8, being:

DIVISIONAL UPDATES

Ms. Veronica Tracy, Recreation Manager, said the Ugly Sweater Fun Run is scheduled on December 3rd at 4 pm. The 3K untimed run was moved from Ruby Grant to Andrews Park in conjunction with the Norman Christmas Parade that will begin at 6 pm. The annual Andrews Park Community Tree Lighting is scheduled for December 9th, and festivities will start at 5:30 pm with shows from the Sooner Theater and Fancy Arts. After the tree lighting, participants will carol their way to the Norman Library Central for plays, crafts, snacks, and Santa! Winterfest will be held on December 10th at Legacy Park and begin at 5:30 pm. Participants will enjoy live music, food & drink vendors, Santa, Frosty, the Grinch, and a fireworks finale at 7 pm. Ms. Tracy said the Recreation Centers are once again doing *Letters to Santa* and *Zoom with Santa* for extra holiday fun for children as well as two "drop to shop" events for parents to get some kid-free shopping. Ms. Tracy said the Winter Break Camps were in such high demand

Park Board Meeting

Page 5 of 5

December 1, 2022

this year that a second location was opened for the first time. Both locations are full, and we are grateful for the opportunity to serve so many Norman families.

Ms. Tracy said Parks and Recreation have partnered with a nature school, Creative Academy, to offer guided hikes for families at various City parks. The hikes will be held monthly, and the next one is at Sutton Wilderness on December 10th at 9 am.

Ms. Bethany Grissom, Park Planner, said work at William Morgan Park was recently done to include a poison ivy removal, removing some dead trees in the park, and removing overgrown trees along the boardwalk/trail. The project will also install two rain gardens by the Stormwater Quality Division. Mr. James Briggs, Park Development Manager, said the Andrews Park Playground installation is complete, and crews will install the rubber surfacing soon. Once the surfacing is done, some fencing will be installed, and the sidewalks will be reconnected. He said Staff is working with a design team for the future nature park at the old Mattoon property that the City acquired near Carter Street and Alameda Street. Staff will schedule public meetings to gather input and ask the Naming Subcommittee to assist with naming the park. Mr. Briggs said security fencing was installed recently at Westwood Park at the front of the golf course and near the tennis courts. He said the roof at the Historic House was recently replaced from the damage it received from hail storms. Future projects will be requested to re-paint both structures and repair any wood rot and window damage simultaneously. Staff said the stained glass windows for the turret portion of the house are finished being repaired from their hail damage; and will be installed after the roof replacement is done. Mr. Briggs said he has 60% of the plans done for the Sutton Wilderness Parking Lot project, and the work is scheduled to be completed this winter. He said the Forester has been replanting trees in the downtown Main Street area and will be replanting trees in Tulls Park and along Legacy Trail (south of Eufaula) soon. The Staff has also partnered with OG&E to educate the public with the "right tree, right place" demonstrations. Mr. Briggs said the City also partnered with Grissom Landscaping, First United Bank, OEC, and the Park Foundation and gave away 300 trees to Norman residents at a Free Tree Giveaway on November 18th at Griffin Park.

Mr. Wade Thompson, Facilities and Parks Manager, said Park Maintenance Staff has assisted Park Planning on the tree plantings and removals, as well as installing Christmas decorations throughout Norman. He said Staff has helped mark water lines, installed irrigation to some of the new tree plantings (Tulls Park), and assisted with the many holiday events coming up.

ITEM 9, being:

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

None.

ITEM 10, being:

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Wright adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Passed and approved this 2nd of February 2023



Kristi Wright, Chair