



Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2022, Minutes

The Centre at University Park

Attendance: Ren Bressinck, Matt Buie, Samuel Ellis, Ashley Martinez, Lauren Eldridge, and Linda Smith

Absent: Alexandria Washington, Delwin Slater, Demetria Murdock, Doris Wright, Jesse Gibson, and Kenneth Taylor

City Board of Director Liaison: Director Capi Peck

LRPR Staff: City Attorney Beth Carpenter, Leland Couch, Angela Nelson, Shawanda Robinson, and Kaleb Turner.

Welcome and Introductions: Chairman Buie called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present. Chairman Buie then proceeded into the election of Chair and Vice Chair for the 2022 Parks and Recreation Commission.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair: Chairman Buie opened the election with the asking of nominations for Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission. With Matt Buie being the only nomination on the floor, Chairman Buie motioned the nomination of Matt Buie as the Chair of the Commission. The nomination was moved by Commissioner Ashley Martinez. Seconded by Commissioner Samuel Ellis

Chairman Buie moves to the asking of nominations for Vice Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission. With Ren Bressinck being the only nomination on the floor, Chairman Buie motioned the nomination of Ren Bressinck as the Vice Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission. The nomination was moved by Commissioner Linda Smith. Seconded by Commissioner Ashley Martinez.

Chairman Buie proceeded with the agenda to the approval of December's minutes.

Roll Call and Approval of Minutes: Angela Nelson called the roll and Chairman Buie reported a quorum was six (6) members in attendance. Official business will be voted on during the meeting.

Chairman Buie then entertained a motion to approve the December commission meeting minutes.

Beth Carpenter mentioned on page two, paragraph 3 of the December minutes, which revisions should be made on the land disposal synopsis statement.

Motion was moved by Commissioner Bressinck. Seconded by Commissioner Martinez.

The December commission meeting minutes were approved.

Citizen Communication: No citizen communication.

Chairman Buie then called for any staff reports.

Staff Reports: Interim Director Leland Couch mentions two big projects the operations department are starting this year. The first project Director Couch stated was the MacArthur Park playground. The project has received \$110,000 from MacPark to go towards the playground. The playground is estimated to be about \$650,000 and there will be a groundbreaking ceremony on February 18th at 10 AM. Couch also mentioned that March 12th there will be a groundbreaking ceremony at Western Hills for new playground addition and park improvements. The Western Hills project recently received a million dollars for those improvements from the previous sales tax.

Lastly Interim Parks Director Couch mentioned the process of filling all of the manager positions within the department. Couch informed the commission on Jordan Mayes on being the new Trail Coordinator, who will work on the soft surface trails and paved trails.

Angela Nelson Deputy Director of Administration proceed with staff reports for administration stating, the focus on hiring, filling in vacancies, and updating job descriptions. She then informed the commission about the summer playground program will start hiring within the next couple of months. Lastly, Nelson mentions the focus on ordering new equipment, keeping equipment and materials up-to-date, and keeping our employees productive.

Interim Deputy Director of Recreation Services Shawanda Robinson opened recreations staff report by informing the commission that due to Covid-19 the youth basketball program and Aging and Active program was postponed. The basketball program is set to be postponed for two weeks and re-start on January 24th. Along with the postponement of programs, Robinson mentioned that the Therapeutic Recreation Division went to virtual classes but now are back to face-to-face programs. Jim Dailey classes and the MacArthur Museum were postponed as well and are expected to start back on the 14th of February. Lastly, Robinson shared that the department had a successful homeless shelter at the Dunbar Community Center on Wednesday the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th for the inclement weather. The first night a count of 25 individuals showed up, 60 the second night, and 80 individuals the last night.

Then Chairman Buie proceeded to move down the agenda to old business.

Old Business: Interim Parks Director Couch reports as of currently there are no new update from the city attorney's office towards the Rock Creek Parkway. Couch also stated until the project gets a report back from the attorneys' office, that Rock Creek Parkway is currently not a top priority but still a desire as Interim Director to improve Rock Creek Parkway. Couch lastly states that he is open to discussion on the importance of the project.

Director Couch then reported on behalf of Dan Schieman.

Couch stated that park staff started a process to give a professional understanding Schieman's resolutions. Through the process, there were some concerns, which were taken back to Dan

Schieman. Schieman has sent back new resolutions to review and discuss. Director Couch mentioned that his goal is to present Schieman's new resolutions to the Commission when it is revised by the parks recommendation and everyone is agreeable, and be hopeful that the commission supports those resolutions going forward. Director Couch lastly reported that there is still a lot of information to be determined and finalized between him and Scheiman.

City Attorney Beth Carpenter stated on the Scheiman reported that currently there are other departments that could be involved in commenting on the resolutions such as the Public Works Director and Planning Director. She also mentioned that if there ever was a recommendation move forward, even in a revised state, the city attorney's office would need to review before going to the City Board of Directors.

Chairman Buie then proceeds to New Business.

New Business: Chairman Buie opens discussion on accreditation and gave the floor to Director Couch.

Interim Director Couch reported an update stating the Little Rock Parks and Recreation is an accredited department and that this process is done every five years, which ended last year. He requested that most staff submit for accreditation with the information that they had for submission. Couch mentioned after that process, it is in review and they bring a review team, which is set via webinar for a week in June. He also mentioned Angela Nelson being the point of contact for accreditation and everything is being followed up on for the 100% goal of being reaccredited.

Interim Director Couch spoke on future presentation special concepts topic stating that he wants to find a way to challenge the commissioners to be more included in part of Parks. Couch says he wants to start introducing weekly/monthly speakers from Parks staff, so that the commission can learn throughout the year some unique things Little Rock Parks and Recreation staff do on a daily basis and highlights of the department.

Matt Buie raises concern towards Attorney Beth Carpenter on if there needs to be a vote on adding a new feature to the ongoing meeting agenda. With approval from City attorney Beth Carpenter, the feature will be added to future agendas.

Chairman Buie opens discussion on Appointment of Committees reading from Article 7 of the Bylaws.

"The Commission shall have the following permanent committees: Parks Conservancy Liaison; Master Plan and Vision; and Outreach / Social Media. The Commission may, by passage of a resolution, create additional permanent or temporary committees. The Chair of the Commission shall appoint the Chair of any permanent or temporary committee as established by the Commission. The Chair shall make his or her appointments within thirty (30) days of passage by the Commission of a resolution creating a committee.

Chairman Buie spoke on the Parks Conservancy liaison, as one works with the city parks conservancy organization; official uncharitable nonprofit partner for the city of Little Rock Parks

and Recreation, raising money. Buie states that it is the key for the CPC, who is starting a fundraising campaign.

Buie proceed on to state that Master Plan and vision committee is one who interfaces with Parks staff as they develop new Master Plans and Visions for the parks as they are being updated and evaluated.

The last committee Chairman Buie discusses is the Outreach and Social Media, where he states there is a need to help educate the community on what the Commission does and why the commission is here. He also mentions that serving on this Committee will serve a role in educating the commission and general social media guidance and council in an advisory capacity.

“The Chair of each standing or temporary committee shall appoint the members of such committee. No appointment to membership by a committee Chair shall be final until approved by a majority vote of the entire Commission.”

Chairman Buie states that he would be appreciative if commissioners would communicate with him, stating what commission they would like to serve on and if they are willing and able to serve as a Chair for one of these committees. He lastly states, that he would like to have these committees formed and up-and-going by the next meeting, so the commission can start hearing any activity or news from these committees.

City Attorney Beth Carpenter states to Chairman Buie that the appointment of members to one of the committees will need to be approved by the entire commission. She follows the statement saying that this all has to happen in a business meeting or special called meeting of the Parks Commission.

Chairman restates his previous statement by saying the Chair of each committee will have the ability to appoint members. Buie also mentions that he would like to communicate with the Chairs of each committee, once identified, on who would like to serve where. He ended the discussion stating that at the next meeting the commission can vote to approve the members wanting to serve on the committee.

Chairman Buie reiterated to the Commission to be thinking on what committee they would like to serve on between now and the next meeting.

Chairman Buie then asked the Commission for items on the agenda for next meeting.

Director Leland Couch gave an update on the agenda items for next month mentioning that Parks has been working on new master plans for two different parks, Union and Morehart Park, and would like to showcase briefly the ideas and to receive input from the Commission.

Couch also added, the start of a millage for new revenue. Liaison Capi Peck mentioned that she would like to provide an update next with more information regarding the millage.

Chairman Buie lastly added a standing item going forward, that Commissioner Lauren Eldridge is taking the lead of the 2022 Parks and Recreation Commission Golf Tournament. Buie explained that the golf tournament put on by the Parks Commission as a fundraiser on an annual

basis, timing is TBD, open to the public, being held at Rebsamen golf course, and the proceeds go to various programs in the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Being no further agenda items or announcements. Chairman Buie opened the floor for Director Capi Peck.

Board Liaison Feedback: Director Peck spoke about the City Board meeting, on options regarding the millage. She emphasizes the needs of the “3 P’s”, Parks, Public safety, and Potholes to be in the millage. Director Peck mentions that the last time Parks was on the ballot it was 2003 and received 15 million dollars for a ten year period. Peck states that the options on when to call a special election are in May, August, or November. She lastly mentions that there will be a workshop on February 22nd.

Interim Parks Director, Leland Couch raises concern on if there is talk on how much the millage will generate. Director Capi Peck Responded back stating, in 2003 it generated 15 million dollars, and now it depends on how it get broken down. She mentions the millage will be asking for at least the same 15 million dollars over a ten year period.

With no further discussion Chairman Buie adjourned the meeting at 1:02 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned.