



## **Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes**

March 9, 2022, Minutes

The Centre at University Park

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

**Absent:** Alexandria Washington, Delwin Slater, Demetria Murdock, Doris Wright, 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:** Kaleb Turner called the roll and Chairman Buie reported a quorum was seven (7) members in attendance. Official business will be voted on during the meeting.

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

Motion was moved by Commissioner Linda Smith. Seconded by Commissioner Jesse Gibson.

The February commission meeting minutes were approved.

**Citizen Communication:** No citizen communication.

Chairman Buie then called for any staff reports.

**Staff Reports:** Interim Director Leland Couch opens staff reports on the topic of the marathon, who recently had its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary marathon. The number were still a little low according to Director Couch, due to Covid-19. Couch iterates his appreciation to the marathon team for their great work. He also mentions that there was a proposal at the finish line to conclude the event. Lastly on the topic of the marathon team, Couch mentions, when the team gets back in full operation and puts all their equipment away that they can come and speak on the success and future races/events. Director Couch then moves on to the new inclusive playground at MacArthur Park and how construction is now being moved forward. Lastly, Director Couch mentions the hire of the Trails Coordinator, Jordan Mayes, who is out working on the trails.

### **Recreation**

Shawanda Robinson starts her report on the Summer Playground Program, stating that the program will start on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Robinson also mentions that applications for those positions and lifeguards are highly needed. The senior program has come back and been active in their community center, MacArthur Museum has reopened and started to offer school tours and visitations again. Robinson reports that the community centers are moving strong but are in need of two Facility Supervisors to apply for the open positions. Lastly, Robinson mentions to check the Little Rock Parks and Recreation Facebook and social media pages for more updates and information of future events.

### **Administration**

Lastly, Angela Nelson started her report on the focus of inventory, to declutter computers, keyboards and nonfunctional equipment. Nelson mentions that the department is in the process of hiring a Therapeutic Recreational Specialist and a Park Construction Worker and a Parks Maintenance Manager position will soon be filled. The next focus for administration is a Special Programs Coordinator who will play a big part in resources for Administration.

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

**Old Business:** Lauren Eldridge reported an update on the 2022 Commission golf Tournament, where she stated, the 2022 Commission Golf Tournament will be held on Friday May 27<sup>th</sup> at Rebsamen Golf Club, before Memorial Day weekend. She mentions that the date was picked due to the possibility of better weather. The way the Tournament is ran is, there will be two flights, one flight will tee off in the morning and complete a round of golf. The next flight will tee off in the afternoon. Eldridge mentions, when time gets closer, more phone calls will be made for onsite organization and volunteering for the event.

Commissioner Eldridge also mentions the need of coordination with the Parks Department to help generating sponsors. The sponsors will have their names on holes and on the electronic map inside each golf carts. Eldridge mentions wanting to bring the tournament into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with online registration this year, which will allow sponsors and teams to register online. Lastly, Eldridge mentions on hoping to have more of an online presence, bringing the tournament into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and allow people to register online, either for sponsorships or teams.

Commissioner Jesse Gibson raised concern on who would be the beneficiary, which Chair Matt Buie responds that there has not been a beneficiary assigned. Interim Director Leland Couch states that his goal is to define what a project is and match the tournament. Director Couch wants the concepts of putting the money back into the golf course.

Director Capi Peck stated on sponsorships that the sooner the information can get out, as a Commission, there can be proactive action towards getting sponsorships for the Golf Tournament.

Chairman Buie then proceeds to the Appointment of Committees.

Chairman Buie opens discussion with appointing Chairs for the three (3) committees. For the Parks Conservancy Liaison, Chairman Buie appoints Vice Chair Ren Bressinck, who accepts his appointment. Buie moves to the next appointment for Outreach and Social Media, where Commissioner Martinez, expressed interest in being a part of that committee. Chairman Buie requested the appointment of Commissioner Martinez to be Chair of this committee. The appointment is then accepted by Commissioner Ashley Martinez. Lastly, for the Master Plan and Vision Committee Matt Buie appoints Commissioner Smith to be a Chair and lead the committee. She accepts her appointment of Chair for the committee. He mentions to the appointed Chairs that they are responsible for reaching out to the commission members and recruiting some members to serve on their respective committees.

City Attorney Beth Carpenter reminds Chairman Buie that actual appointments and discussions need to take place in a regular business or special called meeting. Carpenter states that the Chairs of the three (3) committees can be thinking about who they might would like to appoint as members of their respective committees. Any communication between at least two commission members under the FOIA Laws is considered a meeting, where the media must be notified.

Chairman Buie informs the commission, at the next scheduled meeting in April, there will be an opportunity to bring on members into committees and vote on insuring members into their committees. Chairman Buie lastly states to go back in the bylaws for further information on committees.

Chairman Buie then restates the appointed Chairs of the committees being, Parks Conservancy Liaison, Vice Chair Ren Bressinck, Outreach and Social Media, Commissioner Ashley Martinez, and Master plan and Vision, Commissioner Linda Smith.

Chairman Buie mentions that in the bylaws Article 3 on attendance:

*“Commission members are expected to attend all meetings to ensure the existence of a quorum in order to conduct business. When a member has missed more than twenty-five (25) percent of all regular meetings of the Commission in one (1) calendar year or more than three (3) consecutive regularly scheduled meetings, the member is automatically removed from the Commission. The Commission shall immediately certify to the city manager that the member has missed the requisite number of meetings. If, prior to the next scheduled meeting of the City Board of Directors, the member submits in writing his or her desire to remain on the Commission, the Board of Directors, by a majority vote, may allow the member to continue to serve. The member is not*

*allowed to continue to serve on the Commission, the vacancy shall be filled according to the applicable provisions of the Little Rock City Code.”*

Chairman Buie mentions the commission has been dealing with dwindling numbers for a minute now. There are several members that are subject to this rule and those that have met the requirement, Interim Director Couch and Chairman Buie will ensure to get the right information certified to City Manager for proper procedure handling.

Commissioner Gibson dial in to state that, after six years with the commission, he will be stepping down from his position. Gibson mentions that he is appreciative and one hundred percent supports Parks and the commission future.

Chairman Buie then proceeds to New Business.

**New Business:** Interim Director Couch opens discussion on the Western Hills Project, where he mentions there is a groundbreaking ceremony being established for March 19<sup>th</sup> at Noon. Couch invites the commission to come out and participate and gives praise to Commissioner Smith for attending the last groundbreaking ceremony at MacArthur Park. Updates will be sent out to the commission before and the attendance from the commission is always appreciated stated from Director Couch.

Commissioner Ashley Martinez questioned what the location of the groundbreaking. Interim Director Couch stated that, Western Hills is a project from the old golf course on Western Hills Ave. He mentioned that it is a large golf course, there will be signs set up for directions to reach the exact location.

Director Couch spoke on meeting locations, stating hopefully Covid number continue to decline and the mask mandate being released, has given the opportunity to have in-person meetings going forward. With the commission's blessing, Couch requested that the commission as a whole meet in person for next month's meeting at The Centre at University Park.

Vice Chair Ren Bressinck raised concern on if virtual attendance will still be an option with the commission meeting in-person. Chairman Matt Buie then motions a vote to have in-person meetings at The Centre starting next month, with virtual as a backup plan. The motion was moved by Commissioner Gibson and second by Commissioner Smith.

Before moving on Chairman Buie asked for agenda items for the next meeting. Commissioner Linda Smith requested an update on Parks 2022 budget and the list of projects, goals, and how they are progressing. Buie then mentions that Director Couch has expressed interest in having special staff reports each month. Lastly Commissioner Ashley Martinez requested more general information on the Day-to-Day duties of staff, the scope of programs offered.

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

**Board Liaison Feedback:** Director Peck spoke on the Impact the Rock which is a part of National Volunteer Week. Peck recommends the commission to go online and see the Parks based projects.

Director Peck opened her next topic on the board meeting. The discussion was on the 2012 millage and how they are looking at putting something on the ballot on August 8<sup>th</sup>. She mentions that this does not raise anyone's taxes but replaces the 2012 millage. Peck states there is a lot of work to get done but needs to be done in very little time. Parks was discussion topic mentioned Peck, and was dismissed by some of the board. Director Peck's plea and challenge for the commission is to reach out to ward directors and speak on how important parks is for the City of Little Rock. Director Peck strongly emphasizes the need of Parks to be on the ballot on August 8<sup>th</sup>. Chairman Buie states he would be honored if he could speak behalf, if the commission would allow him, the board as an advocate for Parks.

With no further discussion, Chairman Buie adjourned the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

**The meeting was adjourned.**