



LRSC September Meeting Minutes

9/28/22 | 3:00pm Willie L Hinton Resource Center - Auditorium

Welcome & Introductions - 3:04PM

Commissioners (*= Absent):

Jan Baker
Larissa Barry
Kate Fletcher
Rachel Furman
Scott Hamilton
Andrew Jester
Uta Meyer*

Rachel Cotner*
Anna Morshedi – Vice Chair
Ann Owen
Wesley Prewett - Chair
Sheridan Richards
Jeremy Stehle
Andrew Vogler

Guests: Gryffyn May

City Officials: James Owen (Mayor's Office), Lennie Massanelli (Sustainability Officer), Brittany Nichols (Sustainability Educator), Leland Couch (Director of Parks & Rec), Dr. John Landosky (Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator)

Special Guest Speaker & Q/A - Leland (Director of Public Works)

Leland Couch gives brief overview of the Department of Parks & Recreation, highlights:

- Thanks to Bond issue and ARPA funds we have money to put into existing parks and at large Community Centers
- Now has standing meetings with Sustainability Office for Parks sustainable initiatives
- Testing electric equipment at City Hall (lawn mower, blower, weed eater)
- Looking at resilience hub models with SO
- Looking at generators for warming centers

Q&A:

(Wes) How have the public hearings been going for Bond money?

This started early with us going out to the public before the vote happened. Gave feedback on how this amount of money can be realistically used (ie, can't build a brand new park = too expensive). Public input

is happening online right now as a questionnaire. Will start compiling this info next month and will go back to public in November. Parks is different (from public works) as it's not spread evenly across the city/7 wards.

(Ann) What is the process for considering a new park?

It has not happened at my time here, but for example we were maintaining the area of Rose Creek, but citizens came out and said they wanted to adopt it as a park and build a trail. That would have to go to city board for voting. There's currently a bigger discussion happening in the city about limited manpower and expansive acreage the Parks dept has to maintain. It's important to me to keep the land we have, but reduce inefficient assets like an out-dated ball field - can we remove that, but keep the land for future repurpose.

Capi comment on new parks - we have a disproportionate amount of parks for our city size. There's so much deferred maintenance and some real issues, particularly around ADA. There is not much in west Little Rock. The Board is more interested in addressing the deferred maintenance and making our existing parks to the standard we would all like.

(Lennie) How do we manage "pocket parks"?

That being a really small area, like the pop up park on 5th and Main and one further down on Main St (that one is private). There are 8 employees in our dept that work to maintain the downtown area.

(Rachel F) What construction is happening at Two Rivers Park?

A majority of that land is actually county managed, who is a good partner particularly at this park. They are building a massive new playground out there. Recommend contacting the county about this project.

(Wes) We've touched briefly on resilience hubs already, so thanks for addressing that effort.

Want to comment further on this - Existing community centers have failing energy systems - we're hiring an engineer to audit the community centers covered under ARPA fund to make sure we're installing new resilient systems that improve air quality and efficiency.

(Wes) There's a tendency to super-size parks. This takes away walkable parks. Is there a goal or effort internally to study park accessibility?

Yes and no. With the Regional Greenway project, we're looking at overall trail connectivity and make sure they touch existing bike trails and alternative transit routes. It will connect 1200 acres of protected park land. That's how we can help connect our citizens and communities to the amenities around Little Rock.

(Ann) What are the city's plans for War Memorial?

As we all know the golf course was closed a couple years ago - this is particularly challenging space to keep open to the public and maintained. We've partnered with Rangers to use the north section as practice fields. Now we have some money, we'll have more public commenting opportunities. There's no plan to "turn golf back on" - that will cost millions of dollars and is not sustainable for our Dept. I'm excited to look at Bond money with citizen input to improve what's already there. Turning it into a "Central Park" like designed with the previous task forces would cost \$30-100 mil, which we don't have.

(Sheridan) Do ARPA funds have a deadline?

2024, but we're not worried about spending that money. For example a new HVAC system at Dunbar will cost 800k. For the Bond issue, we'll get our part in 3 tranches, so roughly 5-6mil for the first 3 years. It's a lot, but very exciting problem.

(Follow up) can that money “problem” be used to create a sense of urgency. Can the commission help in any way?

I'm a firm believer in finding grant opportunities and leveraging existing funds to match those grants. We'll have to do that quickly - that takes partnerships, absolutely. Design and engineering is a part of the project that is not covered by grants

(Rachel F.) ROI on energy efficient systems - can you roll these savings over for new projects

The money we save just stays in the general fund, but it has an absolute benefit for building services and 3rd party vendors for maintenance. Look in this room, it's bright and airy and fun to be in - we want the same for other community centers.

(Rachel F.) How does development and Parks work together to think about resilient green infrastructure?

We are not looking at it through the same lens that the SC or Planning might, more of the problem we see is everyone else around the parks. How can we control the water and mitigate flooding in the parks. Ponds and water in parks is a real issue with limited staff. Example at MacArthur Park, we're dredging half of the pond which is going well and

Furthermore, we're putting in a natural bridge over at Kanis park due to these same concerns. We're learning more about traditional infrastructure that has a long-term negative impact on wildlife and not allowing water to move as it should.

Citizen Input

Gryffyn May is with Central High and interested in interning with the SC and SO. SO will follow up via email and outline potential shared projects for her to work on after gauging her interests in sustainability.

City Director & Liaison Input

Director Capi Peck shares gratitude to Lennie for presentation at BOD last week. Would love to see a substantial partnership with Parks. The 2nd tranche of ARPA funds in reserve - there is money that has not been earmarked. That presentation for a specific project would need to be done pretty soon. The Community Centers (Dunbar and Southwest particularly) would be a great avenue for this work.

Antwan has spoken with a few folks about our potential 15th Commissioner - that will happen next week.

The SO and SC should bring up to the Board about reference to “Sustainability” lacking in the Board Policy Statements.

Request that Commissioners plug the Green Restaurant Certification Program - ask folks when they go out to eat what they’re doing and have they heard of this initiative?!

LRSC General Report

- a. Consent agenda (*Kate makes motion to approve; Sheridan seconds; motion carries*)
- b. Ideas for speakers & field trips poll *Please share those ideas with Chairs*
- c. Jobs of Tomorrow update (Rachel Furman) *No updates at this time*
- d. Neighborhood Presentations (Anna) *Still want to push this goal to speak to neighborhood associations about who we are/hear their concerns.*
- e. Resolution for Sustainability
 - i. Ad hoc team helping LRSO

LRSO General Report

- a. Cooperative Task List Updated
 - i. Cooperative Sign Up
- b. Website updates, including GRCP, GG4E, Summit Series and more - *Please check out the website to understand what resources we have already to reference.*
- c. Sustainability Update & BOD Presentation *National Drive Electric Week events going on, please check out the [Upcoming Events](#) doc for more info; [See pamphlet](#) given to Board*
- d. GRCP: Clinton School intern, Micah Beck *Will help us figure out developing the program into its next phase*
- e. Central High: Youth representative, Gryffyn May *LRSO will send follow up email and set meeting w/ her (she attended Sept. meeting)*
- f. Next Green Events - Volunteer on “Cooperative Sign Up” above
 - i. Family Day with Arkansas PBS, Nov. 5th
 - ii. Harvestfest, Oct. 22nd
 - iii. ~~LITfest, Oct 7-9~~
 - iv. Music in the Park, Oct 6

New Business

Capi brought up the Bale Chevrolet that is looking at land in Ward 4 that is habitat to much wildlife. If anyone has the time to write a letter and protect this space, it is much needed. Already heard from 250 constituents that are protesting. It goes in front of the Planning Commission on Nov. 10th.

Jan mentioned “The Middle” project goes in front of the Board on Oct. 23; 11 acre development into 6 lots. This could be devastating to natural topography and water quality. You can find info for this project on Planning’s website. It’s not too late to weigh in on that one.

Scott’s comment - talk about the IMPACT to those existing communities. It’s best if you attend to go early to the meeting and sign up for public comment on agenda item.

Note for Brit - to bring report from 311 for tall grasses for 2022 to Natural Environment team.

Urban Ag partnership opportunity with ODEI at Dunbar Garden - if anyone is interested in helping plan this fundraiser event

Meeting Adjourned - 4:33pm

ADDENDA

LRSO General Report

- a. Cooperative Task List Updated
 - i. Cooperative Sign Up
 - b. 1 minute radio spots on KUAR
 - i. Interest?
 - c. Website updates underway, including GRCP, GG4E, Clean Energy and more
 - d. Email went out with GRCP update on 8/10/22
 - e. Next Green Events - Volunteer on "Cooperative Sign Up" above
 - i. Great Arkansas Clean Up, Sept. 10th
 - ii. Zoo Brew, Sept. 15th
 - iii. Family Day with Arkansas PBS, Nov. 5th
 - iv. Harvestfest, Oct. 22nd
 - v. LITfest, Oct 7-9 (?)
 - f. Future updates - what does LRSC what to hear from Office?
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Consent Agenda

- [August 2022 Meeting Minutes](#)
- [NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - September 2022](#)
- [BUILT ENVIRONMENT - September 2022](#)

Zoom Chat dialogue

From Larissa Barry (she/her) to Everyone 03:15 PM

the audio for everyone but our guest speaker is real choppy

From Rachel Furman to Everyone 03:27 PM

can't hear Rachel well

From Larissa Barry (she/her) to Everyone 03:31 PM

is there a timeline for the Gill street bridge project?

From John Landosky to Everyone 03:31 PM

Larissa, the last I heard it was Fall 2023, but Jon might know better

From Larissa Barry (she/her) to Everyone 03:45 PM

when is work expected to begin after contracting?

From Larissa Barry (she/her) to Everyone 04:06 PM

BYOC

From Larissa Barry (she/her) to Everyone 04:11 PM

I'd vote to invite someone from procurement

From Me to Everyone 04:13 PM

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rcqLXq8qB0Y0ULgZtsqO1MX8uB9CDXGj/edit>

From Rachel to Everyone 04:23 PM

great idea

I would love to help with writing and/or reviewing

didn't hear any of that last part

From Kate to Everyone 04:25 PM

Do we need to vote on Wes' motion to form the sub-committee?