



Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

June 11, 2025

The Centre at University Park

Attendance: Ben France, James Ferstl, Cannon Fletcher, Mike Bernardo, Summer Campbell, Chemia Woods, Quinten Whiteside

Absent: Samuel Ellis

City Board of Director Liaison: City Director-Capi Peck, City Director-Andrea Lewis

LRPR/LRCAO Staff: Parks Director-Leland Couch, Deputy Director Administration Resources-Angela Nelson, Deputy Director Recreation-Shawanda Craig, Deputy Director Operations-Justin Dorsey, Deputy City Attorney-Simone Blagg, Courtney Perry-Safety and Training Coordinator, Administrative Assistant to the Parks Administration-Mahoganey Burkhalter, Graham Brown-Parks Data and Marketing Coordinator, Kyndall Richardson-Secretary, Gabrielle Pervis-Parks Communication and Social Media Specialist

Welcome: Chairman France welcomed everyone. Meeting called to order at 11:50 am.

Roll Call: Roll call completed. Seven (7) Commissioners out of Eight (8) Commissioners in attendance. Quorum was established.

Approval of Early Meeting Adjournment: Chairman France asked for a motion to end the meeting early at 12:45 pm due to a few of the commission members having schedule conflicts: Commissioner Bernardo made the motion. Commissioner Whiteside 2nd the motion. Vote passed. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: Chairman France asked for a motion to approve May 2025 minutes. Commissioner Bernardo made 1st motion. Motion was 2nd by Commissioner Campbell. Vote passed. Motion carried.

Citizen Communication: No Citizen Communication.

Director's Presentation/Staff Reports/Events:

Director's Presentation:

- ❖ BOD Agenda Items and Upcoming Agenda Items from Parks
 - Rebsamen Golf Hole 13 Repair
 - Mowing Contracts – Three (3) Contracts w/ Different Contractors
 - Asset Inventory – ADA Plan w/ Cromwell
 - Senior Facility contract was executed by the City Atty's office. Waiting on Construction company schedule and notice to proceed. Project award \$4.1 million.
- ❖ Director's Introduction of New Employee – Gabrielle Pervis - Parks Communication and Social Media Specialist
- ❖ Reminder to please Follow the Parks and Recreation Department on social media.



- ❖ The Parks Director thanked the Commission and the Chair for the presentation to the Board of Directors and all others who assisted and supported this process.
- ❖ Reminder to the Commission, to take pictures of yourselves out in the City Parks and send them to the Parks Communication and Marketing team.
- ❖ Parks Director Couch requested that each meeting have a presentation. He has generated a list of items that can be presented on.
 1. Maintenance Pros & Cons
 2. Parks Master Plan
 3. What have we accomplished in our community centers, after completing projects and 2 million dollars in renovations?
 4. Golf Updates – Where do we stand? Good/Bad/Staffing?
 5. Outdoor Recreation Coordinator - Mike Simmons has popup events that should be shared.
 6. JDFAC Center has an advisory committee and shares the good aspects and challenges there.
 - Commissioner Whiteside asked about more information about the subcommittees that plan the events. Little Rock Open planning subcommittee, LR Marathon, and other subcommittees working on other events.
 - Director Couch stated that he is making suggestions to encourage the Commissioners to put together a list.
 - Deputy City Atty, suggested that they send their meeting request to the Parks Commission Secretary – Parks Admin

Staff Reports:

No questions about Staff Reports.

Events:

There are some upcoming events. Will share the events once dates are confirmed.

Presentation:

- ❖ No Presentation

Unfinished Business:

- ❖ Subcommittee Reports
 - Masterplan Subcommittee Report – Commissioner Bernardo – stated that there was no quorum in their meeting today. Gave general comments about their discussion. He stated that they're trying to research the process for asset management of unusable Parks properties.
 - Marketing Subcommittee Report – Subcommittee Chair - Commissioner Whiteside is giving the new employees some time to settle in before meeting. Will meet soon.
 - Parks Conservancy Subcommittee Report – Chairman France stated that they have spoken with the Facility Supervisor at Rebsamen Golf and they discussed reviving the Parks



- Commission Golf tournament fundraiser that will benefit the Summer Playground program. He will follow up with the Facility Supervisor on that.
- ***Subcommittee Meetings must be Recorded and sent to the Parks Commission Secretary.***
 - ❖ Second (2nd) Quarterly Site Visits at the Center/Parks visit dates for Parks Commission
 - July 10th at 4pm, Thursday afternoon –West Central CC-Ballfield.
 - Will tour the facility.
 - Parks Director suggested that they start their tour at the Ballpark and then make their way into the Community Center.
 - Deputy City Atty-Simone Blagg advised the Commission that they're not to discuss anything business related to the commission.
 - Upcoming Reservoir Park Fundraiser
 - Director Couch thanked Little Rock Marathon for their generous donation and spoke on the importance of having these fundraisers going forward.
 - Director Peck spoke about how well it went and how she is still continuing to advertise and promote this fundraising initiative. She also provided some ideas that she received from constituents about other fundraiser ideas. Discussed a Neighborhood challenge fundraiser. Director Peck asked for more Fundraiser materials to continue the fundraiser.
 - Discussed online donations and online interest.
 - Discuss/Vote on Applications for Commission Vacancies
 - Discussed what happens after they're appointed.
 - Question was asked about giving the new commissioners enough notice before having to start.
 - Was asked to table for further review by the Parliamentarian, Deputy City Atty Blagg. Chairman France made a motion to table. Motion was 2nd by Commissioner Bernardo.
 - **(This was completed being addressed later in the meeting after the start of New Business)** Deputy City Atty – Blagg stated that there were no specifics guidelines set by City Ordinance or Resolution regarding this topic. However, Roberts Rules of Order states that "Appointments become effective upon announcement."
 - Director Peck confirmed that once appointments are made, they're read into the official record.
 - Chairman France made a motion for them to start in July. Motion was 2nd by Commissioner Bernardo. Vote Passed. Motion carried.
 - New Commissioners will start in July 2025, pending BOD appointment.
 - Will add New Commissioners to the Agenda for Introduction, pending BOD appointment.
 - **(This was discussed later on in the meeting after reviewing the previous request for pushing back the New Commissioners start date.)** Onboarding for New Commissioners and Subcommittee Assignments Discussion about Changing the appointment/vacancy process in the bylaws & city ordinance. – The Commissioners discussed how the New Commissioners would be onboarded and introduced into this process. The New



Commissioners will be given an opportunity to give an introduction about themselves, observe the process, and select a subcommittee.

- The Commission advised that they would continue to operate according to the bylaws and city ordinance that's already in place.

New Business:

- ❖ Onboarding for New Commissioners and Subcommittee Assignments. - Chairman France will discuss this once Deputy Atty Blagg finishes the Resolution and Ordinance review.
- ❖ Summer Playground Numbers Update
 - Deputy Craig, gave an update
 - Program runs from June 2nd – July 24th
 - Eight (8) Week Program
 - Monday – Friday – 7:30 am – 6pm
 - Provided Breakfast and Lunch, asked to bring their own snacks.
 - Six (6) Locations:
 - Romine Elem - 150 Attendees
 - Chicot Elem - 150 Attendees
 - West Central CC (Teen Camp) - 73 Attendees
 - Dunbar CC - 205 Attendees
 - ELR CC - 100 Attendees
 - Stephens CC - 120 Attendees
 - 798 Attendees this year - 2025
 - 587 Attendees last year - 2024
 - Name has been changed from “The Summer Playground Program” to “The Parks Summer Day Camp” – based on Pilot Program launched in 2024 called “Youth in action.”
 - Incorporates Archery, Fishing, Orienteering, Camping 101, Bike Safety
 - Partnering with Mike Simmons – Outdoor Recreation Programs Coordinator
 - Commissioner Woods asked about STEM opportunities for the Attendees - Deputy Craig advised of the current STEM program that Parks has.
 - Director Peck advised and asked about incorporating the litter cleanup campaign.
 - Commissioner Whiteside asked about the biggest needs of the Summer Program that the Golf Tourney fundraiser could help with. Deputy Craig stated that funding for Transportation is one of the biggest needs at this time.
- ❖ Little Rock Open Update
 - Deputy Director of Recreation – Shawanda Craig, provided an update.
 - This was the biggest crowd that they've had.
 - Spoke on the contest that helped encourage attendance.
 - Had over 3,000 Attendees.



- Commission Fletcher requested that the Marketing and Advertising for these events be included at the city level, and opportunities and amenities added to the Junior Tournament to provide more options for attendees.

Agenda items for next meeting:

- ❖ Items previously discussed throughout the meeting.

Board – liaison Feedback

- ❖ Director Peck - There wasn't much discussed at BOD meeting in reference to Parks. Nothing major is coming up at this time.
- ❖ Director Lewis – Encouraged everyone to get involved with their Neighborhood Association for volunteer projects to help clean.

Adjournment:

- ❖ Chairman France made a Motion to Adjourn due to the meeting ending earlier.
 - Commissioner Woods made the motion to adjourn at 12:41 pm
 - 2nd by Commissioner Whiteside.
 - Vote passed. Motion carried. Adjournment approved.
 - Meeting Adj at 12:41 pm.