

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

MEETING DATE: January 25, 2023
LOCATION: Recreation Complex
CALLED TO ORDER: 7:00 p.m.
MEETING ADJOURNED: 7:52 p.m.
NEXT MEETING: February 25, 2022, 7pm

ROLL CALL

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT
David Addison, School Board Liaison	X	
Andrew Clapper		X
Tracy Downing		X
Ben Eckler-Chair	X	
Mike Johnson	X	
Kate Krieger	X	
Dan Meehan	X	
Lindsey Michaud		X
vacant		X
Karen Alexander, Council Liaison	X	
Scott Davis, Staff Liaison	X	

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Postponing approval until next meeting because committee didn't get to review them.

VISITOR COMMENTS

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Proposal to Rename Sculpture Garden Park. Scott requested that the letter sent from the Arts Commission be added to the minutes. Motion to add David, seconded by Dan, no abstention.

Mike has no reason not to agree to the renaming but thinks there's too much of a rush. He would like to

request additional time to review.

Ben: Should we consider others deserving of the name? 24 years is quite a track record!

Mike: He's obviously deserving, but has enough time lapsed to do this now, or does this come off as a favor done by coworkers who are in positions of power.

David: Due to Jeri's length of service and commitment to service, I think it's entirely appropriate. I agree that putting this decision off for a bit, maybe the next election cycle (4 years?)

Mike: again, I feel anything as big as naming a park, and based on it coming from the arts commission, it reads like they want us to join them in their request

Scott: They've already made the request to council

Mike: I'm certainly not voting against, that was just my initial reaction.

Ben: What about the names of the other parks?

Scott: Many of our parks are named after previous property owners who donated the space to us. (Reviews names of parks and previous owners' names).

David: I don't know the timing of the naming of the parks

Ben: So we can say there's nothing else named after someone in short order

Mike: And the Arts Council is hoping we'll join them

Scott: They hope you will, but it's up to you.

Ben: I like the idea of waiting for the 2026 election cycle

David: Where's no need to wait. We can do it while she's still around.

Ben: Note that we intend to wait until 2026 to nominate the former mayor's name be used as the park's new name. Ben motioned to pass, Mike seconded

David: Make a note that waiting is just as much about precedent as anything else.

COUNCIL REPORTS-presented by Karen Alexander

Karen: I will take that park renaming conversation back to the council. The last time we spoke about it, we felt it should be brought to the Parks Council to review before anyone else.

Scott: I haven't been here since any parks have been named or renamed. One park opened that named after its location, which was an easy one! We don't have any policies in place regarding the time frame of renaming, but presumably this will set a precedent moving forward.

Karen: I'll note that no one is opposed or feels that Gerry is undeserving, but that it's more appropriate that a term pass before making that move. Also, Ivory Crockett had long been out before the park was named for him.

David: Regarding the school district, I can share what we do. We set up a group to consider who might be appropriate first. That's how we considered the new elementary in Rock Hill. The school district felt that it was better for a group to consider a number of names, rather than nominating a single person. There's not really any rules in place for the school district either. That's why I think waiting is a better idea.

Karen: one council member asked if it would be appropriate if others are being considered for naming.

David: Councilwoman, if the council says P&R wants to think about it and consider names, would the council offer us a suggestion? Also, regarding transparency, it works better.

Scott: IC was renamed in 1985 after Mr. Crockett after he broke the record 9 years previous.

Karen: are you asking for direction from the council?

David: if council gave some direction, that might be a better way to do it. But that's a personal opinion!

Mike: I think we tell them we'd like to revisit in 2026 and if the council wants a list of names we provide them.

Karen's liason report:

New coffee shop opening at Rolling Ridge nursery, run by the Balkan Treat Box folks.

David: Bagel Union opened as well!

<discussion about location>

Dan: new store on Lockwood as well

David: and now there's a dunkin donuts

Scott: in the old flower shop

Scott: do we know the date the coffee shop opens?

Karen: not yet, but they've already gone through council and planning commission, but no firm date yet.

STAFF REPORTS-presented by Scott Davis

PARKS & RECREATION

Did you all get the Zoom link calendar invites in late December?

Some yesses, some nos

Scott: we'll have those resent, it'll come from Zoom. For now we're still on for the 4th Wednesday of every month, except for November and December.

Karen: do you meet at another time?

Scott: generally no, but in the past we've considered the December party a meeting.

David: was there a city party this year?

Scott: nope

I met with GRG and the design team last week about the new park. They are starting the design work now and will have some concepts for public input later this spring or early summer. They're starting to design the playgrounds, etc, and there will be public input meetings this summer. They're joining with a Webster class to put together design plans to present to GRG to see if any of the ideas are even possible; it's pretty cool.

Karen: how are student going to be involved?

Scott: from a class at Washington University, functional design course, using this as part of the course for their spring semester. We're excited to see what the students might come up with.

Karen: thanks

We have completed the interview process for our Inclusion Services Coordinator. We hope to have a new staff member on board in the coming weeks. We're in the process of making offers. Webster, Richmond Heights, and Clayton all involved.

Ben: how will they interact?

Scott: we've had someone in this position for a long time and shared among the cities. It's Wester's turn to host the employee. We also get grant money for the position. If the person works with those who have special needs be able to use our facilities or participate in anything offered.

Larson Park tennis courts were renovated since last time we met. We replaced the turf surface there. Those are the only turf courts we have in town.

The City is planning on participating in No Mow April. This is a month that we will encourage property owners to not mow turf grass to help the pollinator populations and to reduce greenhouse emissions and be more sustainable. Council will be adopting a resolution on No Mow April. Usually there's an ordinance against letting your grass grow higher than 9" but not in No Mow April. I'm excited and extremely nervous about it. I hope we'll be able to mow in May.

Dan: what about baseball in May?

Scott: we'll obviously have to mow some places, like ball fields.

Aquatic Master Plan public meeting is tomorrow night at 6:30 pm. I hope you can all join us for that. If not the presentation will be posted on the City's webpage later. At our first public hearing day we had two focus

group meetings of schools, commission members, high volume pool users, then we had an open public meeting. We also had a survey open for four weeks to gather resident and user input. Tomorrow night we will go over the survey data we gathered from over 1074 survey responses, and the consultant will show us a few different design concepts at various price points. We will be seeking public input on the different design concepts in February utilizing the BalancingAct tool. To get more money in the expenses you have to decide what to give up and the balancing tool offers that.

Ben: do we get any info now?

Scott: ha! No. Still going back and forth with the consultant still. I will say we should've built this pool 3 years ago. The pricing was so much better.

Camp Webegee registrations start Wed., Feb 1. 10 weeks of fun for your kiddos. \$125/\$150, \$45 before or after.

Daddy Daughter Dance is Fri, Feb 10 6-8 pm. \$20 per person.

We just finished up the second quarter of our fiscal year. P&R revenue is trending back up and starting to approach pre-Covid levels. In fact, YOY through Dec 31 revenue was up \$235,178 and expenses were down \$62,937. We are currently about 105% ROI on general fund spending. However, many of our larger expenses come in the second half of the year and that also does not include any of the Park Fund where we shifted a large portion of expenses last year. We raised all of our starting salaries to a minimum of \$14 this year. We are starting our budget process for next year and it will again be a somewhat lean year in terms of spending. We are not anticipating any fee increases at this time, though I am keeping my eye on the market trends in a couple areas.

In general, the City's budget is trending better, but we are not out of the woods yet. We had a few nice revenue items this year such as a \$500,000 legal settlement regarding cell phone towers, and the new local use tax which started generating revenue late fall, but really kicks in Jan 1. For a more detailed breakdown of City finances I would recommend watch about 20 minutes of the Council Meeting from 1/17/23 on Youtube starting at the 44:30 minute mark. I think Parks & Rec will be in pretty good shape this year.

Karen: Eric's presentation is also on the city's website as well.

Questions?

Mike: do the students have any guidance on their designs?

Scott: the professor is keeping it pretty open, but they're meeting with GRG to discuss it more. They're also doing research on the history of the area. I connected them with the historical society.

Mike: do they have a cost est. (the students)?

Scott: we told them we want something low maintenance, something to get to by traveling the greenway (no driving/parking). I could see yard games or hammocks or concrete tables. I'm hoping for a seating area or a playground, that would be sculptural. But it's not a big park.

Dan: will there be public input after they're done with their designs?

Scott: a few ideas will be presented to the public. The park is also partially in Maplewood, so they'll be chiming in as well.

Dan: what if public comes back to say we want pickleball?

David: may I request we adjourn now and answer questions general questions afterward?

SET NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting scheduled for 7 pm. Wednesday, February 25.

ADJOURNED

Ben moved to adjourn, seconded. Approved by voice vote with no dissent, abstention.
Meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

DRAFT