

Norman Board of Parks Commissioners
February 2, 2023

The Norman Board of Parks Commissioners of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met on the 2nd day of February 2023 at 5:30 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at 201 West Gray Street - 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Wright and Commissioners Davison, Favors, Isacksen, Ross, Sallee, and Salmond

Absent: Commissioners May and Moxley

City Officials

Present: Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation
Wade Thompson, Parks, and Facilities Manager
Veronica Tracy, Recreation Manager
Mitchell Richardson, Recreation Supervisor
Karla Sitton, Administrative Technician IV

ITEM 1, being:

APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 1, 2022, SPECIAL PARK BOARD MINUTES

Commissioner Isacksen made the motion, and Commissioner Favors seconded to approve the December 1, 2022, Special Park Board minutes. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Wright and Commissioners Davison, Favors, Isacksen, Ross, Sallee, and Salmond

NAY: None

ITEM 2, being:

PRESENTATION FROM VISIT NORMAN REGARDING PROPOSED VISITOR TAX

Mr. Dan Schemm, Executive Director, VisitNorman, presented to the Board highlighting the proposed visitor tax increase. He said visitor tax is charged as a lodging fee and paid by out-of-town visitors who stay overnight at Norman hotels. Mr. Schemm said Norman had not had a visitors tax increase in 30 years, stating the only increase was approximately ten years ago, and at that time, it was increased from 4% to 5%.

Mr. Schemm said Visit Norman's proposal is to increase the visitor tax from the current 5% rate and revenue split between Visit Norman – 50%, Norman Arts Council – 25%, and Norman Parks and Recreation – 25%. When the visitor tax changes to 8% rate, the revenue split remains the same for the current (first) 5%, but the additional 3% will be split between Visit Norman – 75% and the Norman Arts Council – 25%. He said the current visitor tax would generate \$1.65 million for FY 2023, and the proposed increase would generate an *additional* \$1.05 million for FY 2023.

Mr. Schemm shared visitor and sales tax comps for several Oklahoma towns/cities, stating the current visitor tax puts Norman at the bottom 25% of the comparison list. The proposed increase will move Norman closer to the top. However, Norman would still not be in the top five. Mr. Schemm said the visitor tax increase would boost revenue, especially after the University of Oklahoma (OU) joins the Southeastern Conference (SEC) for athletics. Joining the SEC will increase tourism and the student population at OU. He said the increase would generate \$262,500 for the Norman Arts Council.

Mr. Schemm said a Norman Sports Commission is currently being assembled, and he said the proposed increase could generate \$757,500 that would be allocated to the Sports Commission. He said the Commission would draw regional sporting events to Norman, as well as help upgrade or enhance facilities in the community, i.e., bleachers, field lighting, shade structures, etc. Mr. Schemm said he would represent Visit Norman on the Commission and Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, will represent the City.

Commissioner Sallee motioned, and Commissioner Favors seconded to support the Proposed Visitors Tax Increase from 5% to 8%. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Wright and Commissioners Davison, Favors, Isacksen, Ross, Sallee and Salmond

NAY: None

ITEM 3, being:

ANNUAL PRESENTATION FROM THE LITTLE AXE YOUTH SPORTS ASSOCIATION

Ms. Tiffany Earhart, Little Axe Youth Sports (LAYS) President, gave the annual presentation to the Board and provided financials before the meeting. She highlighted the 2022 season league and tournament activity and the fee structures. Ms. Earhart said baseball had 24 participants, softball had 64, and LAYS hosted eight tournaments. She highlighted the Profit and Loss financials stating the concession supplies include food purchases and a new freezer.

Commissioner Isacksen asked why the concession supplies are almost 50% more than concession revenue and Ms. Earhart said she did not break it down on the financials, but the concession supplies include a freezer purchase and food purchases/costs. Commissioner Salmond asked if LAYS was with the United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA). Ms. Earhart said yes, and she can be a tournament director; however, she has not done so due to the high fees it takes to hold a tournament. Chair Wright commended Ms. Earhart and the LAYS Program for accomplishing so much on a small budget.

The Board acknowledged the presentation.

ITEM 4, being:

ANNUAL PRESENTATION FROM THE DEPOT

Ms. Shari Jackson, Executive Director of The Depot, highlighted the annual presentation to the Board and provided financials to the Board before the meeting. She said 26,000 people attended (in-person) the 2022 Summer Breeze and Depot concerts and had over 5,000 views via YouTube and Facebook. Ms. Jackson said The Depot had new artist exhibits every eight weeks, continues to hold receptions in conjunction with the 2nd Friday Art Walk, and offers art clinics, chats, and workshops. She said The Depot received a very generous poetry donation and planned to return to poetry to include "Pickers and Poets" night and many more events spotlighting this art form.

Ms. Jackson highlighted the revenue sources to include Depot rentals (\$34,000), membership program (\$13,500+), program partners/donors (\$30,000+), and art and ticket sales (\$33,500). She said she appreciates all the work that Park Staff does at The Depot and with the Summer Breeze Concert Series at Lions Park.

The Board acknowledged the presentation.

ITEM 5, being:

NORMAN FORWARD UPDATE

Mr. Jason Olsen gave an update on the Norman Forward Projects.

Reaves Park

Mr. Olsen said Flintco is almost finished with the project and will schedule a walk-through/punch list within 30 days. He showed the Board pictures of the progress, including the new T-ball quad fields that will likely be the best in the state! He also showed photos of the new sidewalks, driveways, and a new concession and restroom building. Mr. Olsen said Staff continues to work closely with the Norman Optimist Club on items to get the ballpark ready for play and anticipates a ribbon cutting in late March before the beginning of the Spring League. He said the Staff would invite the Board as it gets closer.

Griffin Park

Mr. Olsen said work continues at Griffin Park. He said Phase 5 is complete, and Phase 6 will begin soon, which will include a road off of High Meadows Avenue to the parking lots that are being constructed. He showed pictures depicting new concession and restroom buildings, and the construction would be done in the spring, but the fields will not be ready for play until the fall. Mr. Olsen said a ribbon cutting would be scheduled in the fall for the entire project.

Multi-Sport/Indoor Aquatic Facility - YFAC

Mr. Olsen said work was progressing at the Young Family Athletic Center (YFAC) and showed pictures of the large pool and exterior construction that is currently being done. He said the plumbing on the large pool is complete, and pool decking will begin soon. Mr. Olsen said when the exterior construction is complete, the heating and air

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conditioning will be installed, and work will start on the interior. He said the building would be substantially complete in October, and afterward, Staff would work with the operator for approximately 60 days to get the facility up and running. A ribbon cutting is expected for January, before the beginning of the winter basketball league.

Senior Wellness Center

Mr. Olsen said the construction continued at the Senior Wellness Center and showed pictures depicting exterior work, an elevated stage, a multi-purpose area, and the pool. He said curb cuts are also being installed, and once they are completed, the asphalt parking lot will be poured. Mr. Olsen said the contractor should have the exterior done within the next 45 days and will begin installing the heating and air conditioning. He said the project should be substantially complete by late summer. Staff will work with the operator for approximately 30 days to get the facility up and running. A ribbon cutting is expected in September.

Cherry Creek Park

Mr. Olsen said the contractor is nearly finished with the new playground construction and will install grass turf once the sidewalks are complete. He said the project should be done within 30 to 45 days, and a playground dedication will be scheduled for the community.

ITEM 6, being:

DIVISIONAL UPDATES

Mr. Wade Thompson, Facilities and Parks Manager, said last month, Staff finished removing all the Christmas lights & decorations and made a few modifications to some before putting them in storage. He said Staff prepared and assisted during recent ice storms to keep City sidewalks, etc., clear, as well as getting seasonal mowing equipment ready for spring and summer maintenance.

Mr. Jason Olsen, Parks and Recreation Director, said the Daddy Daughter Dance (DDD) is scheduled for this Saturday, February 4th at Embassy Suites and 4,000 tickets have already been sold. He said the new playground at Andrews Park is nearly finished, and Staff will schedule a playground dedication next month.

Mr. Mitchell Richardson, Special Events and Multimedia Supervisor, said registration has opened up for Summer Camps at all three recreation facilities, 12th Avenue, Irving, and Whittier. He said the Westwood Family Aquatic Center opened up their online swim lesson(s) registration, and those are filling up quickly.

ITEM 7, being:

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION

Commissioner Favors asked if Staff has started charging pickleball players to play at the 12th Avenue Recreation Center has started charging pickleball players and Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said yes, \$3.00 per person.

Mr. Olsen welcomed the Board to the new Development Center and said a ribbon cutting would be scheduled later this month. He said Parks and Recreation, along with 120 additional employees, moved into the new building about three weeks ago.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Wright adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Passed and approved this 16th of April 2023

Kristi D. Wright, Chair