



# CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Municipal Building, Executive Conference Room, 201 West Gray, Norman,  
OK 73069

Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 5:00 PM

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## MINUTES

The City Council Study Session of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room in the Municipal Building, on Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 5:00 PM, and notice of the agenda of the meeting was posted at the Norman Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and on the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

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### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Holman called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m.

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Holman  
Councilmember Ward 1 Gandesbery  
Councilmember Ward 2 Peacock  
Councilmember Ward 4 Grant  
Councilmember Ward 5 Nofire  
Councilmember Ward 6 Hinkle  
Councilmember Ward 7 Blodgett

### ABSENT

Councilmember Ward 8 Dixon

### OTHERS PRESENT

James Briggs, Park Development Manager  
Darrel Pyle, City Manager  
Rick Knighton, City Attorney  
Anthony Francisco, Finance Director  
Lisa Webb, Administrative Technician IV

### AGENDA ITEMS

## 1. DISCUSSION REGARDING PARK IMPROVEMENTS IN VARIOUS CITY PARKS.

Presenter: James Briggs, Park Development Manager (for Director Jason Olsen)  
Staff present for this item: Wade Thompson (Parks Maintenance Manager), Megan Felen (Parks Planner); others as noted in the record.

Mr. Briggs provided an overview of citywide playground needs and priorities, focusing on two active concerns—KidSpace at Reaves Park and Lions Park and the broader Norman Forward neighborhood-park replacement schedule.

### KidSpace at Reaves Park

- Condition/Lifespan: Community-built in 1999; predominantly wood construction now beyond its ~20-year expected life. Ongoing issues include rot at ground contact, splitting, and structural fatigue despite extensive maintenance and selective TREX decking replacements.
- Accessibility: Built pre-2010 ADA standards; any significant modification would trigger full compliance upgrades. Goal is a modern, universally accessible playground consistent with recent projects (e.g., Ruby Grant, Andrews).
- Options & Cost Ranges (Leathers evaluation):
  1. Renovate existing wood structure in place: ~\$365,000 (adds ~5–8 years; continues heavy maintenance).
  2. Community-build new playground (modern materials): ~\$600,000–\$650,000 (saves contractor labor; certified installer oversight still required).
  3. Contractor-built new playground: ~\$900,000–\$1,000,000. New build would use steel posts/plastics/composite (“wood-look” as TREX), incorporate beloved thematic elements (towers, bridges/maze, covered-wagon motif, musical/interactive features), and honor the existing structure (e.g., picket names/tiles integrated into an art or “honor” wall).
- Maintenance Load (current): Periodic closures for multi-week structural repairs (e.g., replacing posts), with crews of 3–4 full-time staff and specialty materials; costs accumulate into tens of thousands annually.
- Potential Funding: TSET eligibility (anticipated \$100k, plus competitive \$150k); Hotel/Motel (tourism nexus); potential Norman Forward residuals; Capital Fund; community fundraising (including commemorative salvaged-wood items); future GO bond consideration.

### Lions Park Tot Lot

- Issue: Repeated flood impacts (April event shown on video) allowed water under turf surfacing, causing rippling/instability and closure; unknown subgrade/peer condition without full removal.
- Options (preliminary estimates):
  1. Relocate uphill (west) onto a new elevated pad outside the floodway (~\$300,000). Requires Floodplain Committee approvals, compensatory storage, grading, and site work. Existing equipment would be reused.
  2. Keep in place but replace turf with poured-in-place (PIP) surfacing (~\$100,000). Faster reopening; PIP resists “floating.” Does not eliminate future flood exposure but mitigates under-drain lift.

Item 1 continued,

Staff also noted interest in reclassifying Lions Park to a Community Park (given frequent citywide events), which would broaden eligible funding sources for future phases (and could pair with Norman Forward 2 for larger upgrades).

- Related notes: Nearby stormwater projects (e.g., south of Imhoff) and Andrews Park master plan detention could improve area hydrology over time. Tennis courts at Lions were flagged for resurfacing needs.

#### Systemwide Playground Replacement (Norman Forward)

- Staff reviewed the remaining 2015 “replace-now” list still pending and the FY25–FY27 sequencing (e.g., Northeast Lions, Eagle Cliff, Sutton Place; then Oak Creek South, Kiwanis, Springbrook, Chisholm Cattle Trail; then Lions, Memorial, Normandy), with a re-evaluation slated after FY27 to reprioritize aging assets citywide. Staff emphasized the original NF1 budget was not intended to replace every playground.

#### Council Discussion

- KidSpace (Reaves Park): General agreement that continued renovation of the wood structure would be “throwing good money after bad.” Strong interest in Option 2: community-build new playground with modern, low-maintenance materials, full ADA access, and clear homage to the iconic look/tiles/pickets. Interest in robust community engagement and fundraising.
- Lions Park Tot Lot: Desire to reopen quickly while planning a longer-term fix. Support for a hybrid approach—pursue Option 2 (PIP at current site) to get the tot lot open sooner, while concurrently seeking Community Park designation and planning for future relocation/upgrades through NF2 or broader funding.
- Funding/Policy Tools: Discussion of TSET grants; Hotel/Motel growth with new rooms; potential GO bond (including small, maintenance-focused concepts); Capital Fund reprioritization (clawback from less-ready projects); adjusting park impact fees (e.g., per-square-foot and possible commercial participation); community donations; and long-term bond capacity/thresholds.
- Maintenance Reality: Recognition that modern materials and strategic capital investments would reduce staff time and lifecycle costs, freeing resources for other parks.
- Other Items: Noted tennis-court maintenance needs at Lions; interest in sidewalk/perimeter details and PIP edges for accessibility; floodplain/engineering constraints acknowledged.

#### Council Direction/Consensus

- KidSpace at Reaves Park: Proceed toward new community-build design and funding strategy (modern materials; maintain the beloved theme; include an “honor” element for tiles/pickets).
- Lions Park Tot Lot: Short-term: Advance PIP replacement in place to reopen promptly. Parallel/Long-term: Pursue Community Park reclassification and develop a plan and funding for relocation/upgrades in a future phase (e.g., Norman Forward 2/capital strategy).
- Staff to return with refined cost estimates, funding packages, schedule options, and compliance/engineering steps.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

ATTEST:

*Brenda Hall*

City Clerk



*SJK*

Mayor