

Norman Board of Parks Commissioners
March 3, 2022

The Norman Board of Parks Commissioners of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met on the 3rd day of March, 2022 at 5:00 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.

ITEM 1, being:

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Commissioners Davison, May and Salmond

Tardy: Commissioner Moxley

City Officials

Present: Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation
Marc Claude, Westwood Tennis Pro
Paul Krout, Westwood Golf Maintenance Superintendent
Rick Parish, Westwood Golf Pro
Wade Thompson, Parks and Facilities Manager
Veronica Tracy, Recreation Manager

ITEM 2, being:

APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 10, 2022, REGULAR PARK BOARD MINUTES

Commissioner Isacksen made the motion and Commissioner Sallee seconded to move the approval of the February 10, 2022, Regular Park Board minutes to the April, 7, 2022, meeting. The vote was taken with the following results:

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

NAY: None

ITEM 3, being:

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Isacksen made the motion and Commissioner Ross seconded to approve the agenda. The vote was taken with the following results:

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

NAY: None

Commissioner Moxley arrived at the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

ITEM 4, being:

ANNUAL PRESENTATION FROM WESTWOOD TENNIS

Mr. Marc Claude', Westwood Tennis Professional, said the Westwood (WW) Tennis Center had another great year in 2021 and continues to be one of the busiest tennis centers in the state of Oklahoma. He said WW hosted over 40 USTA sanctioned adult league matches which brings players from all over the metro area of Oklahoma and also hosted four (4) Junior Weekend tournaments with brought in over 300 kids from the Missouri Valley Region. Mr. Claude' said WW will host five (5) Junior tournaments in 2022, and seven (7) in 2023, since he won bids for both of those events. He said this will have a big economic impact on the City of Norman as players and their families from all over the Missouri Valley Region will be attending.

Mr. Claude' said the mission of WW Tennis is to serve the public and to promote the game of tennis to all ages and all levels. He said his goals will continue to increase the warm body count year after year and to provide high quality customer service to everyone. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the warm body count decreased in 2020 to 26,862 from a total of 29,840 in 2019; however, WW bounced back in 2021, with a total of 33,841, our highest number ever at the Tennis Center. Mr. Claude' said there are nine (9) teaching pros at WW Tennis, and the facility is busier than ever.

Mr. Claude' said he collects the revenue from court fees and court passes and he collected more than \$25,000 in 2021. He highlighted the operations of the tennis center stating the USTA Oklahoma organization decides where the leagues and tournaments will be played. Mr. Claude' said he has to bid on these events every two (2) years in order for Westwood to be considered and USTA sets the fees for everything; however, they do give back a portion of the entry fee(s) to the tournament director. He said those fees are used to cover balls, officials, tournament staff and awards for the participants. While these events do not generate much of a profit, the economic impact on Norman is huge and it brings many people from all over the country to see our award-winning facility. He said the former OU Tennis Men's assistance coach, Nick Papik, is now working at WW Tennis and he brought a lot of new customers to the facility. Commissioner Saltee asked if they were all full time and Mr. Claude said four are full time and five are part time.

Mr. Claude' highlighted the WW programs that run throughout the year to include the Junior Clinics, Junior Team Tennis, Cardio Tennis, Tennis on Campus, Pickleball, Adult (and Senior) Local Leagues, social events and weekly Adult Drills. He said on average, there are 50-60 kids and 60-70 adults per week in our programs with an age range from 3 to 88 years old. Mr. Claude' said the tennis center is always trying to accommodate all ages and skill levels while constantly thinking of new ideas to make it fun for everyone. He said WW Tennis only hosted one social event in 2021, due to COVID, but were still able to raise \$860 to Food and Shelter. Mr. Claude' said the tennis center plans to hold more social events and fundraising in 2022.

The pickleball group usually plays on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings and has over 100 members. Mr. Claude' said pickleball is exploding nationwide. Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said there have preliminary discussions about resizing the four junior courts at WW Tennis, located just north of the indoor tennis center, for pickleball. He said in the future, the playground between WW Tennis and WW Golf will be removed and possibility more outdoor pickleball courts can be constructed in the area. Mr. Olsen said the possibility of constructing an indoor pickleball courts facility has been discussed, if and when funding becomes available. Mr. Claude' said there is a demand for more pickleball courts, stating 71 people played on Saturday. Chair Wright asked if pickleball is a trend or here to stay and Staff felt it is here to stay. Mr. Claude' said the National Tennis Association has really started

embracing pickleball. Chair Wright asked whether there are any unused tennis courts in City parks that can be turned into pickleball courts and Mr. James Briggs, Park Development Manager, said all the tennis courts, except for two, at 12th Avenue Recreation Center have been changed into four pickleball courts, and there is a league that plays indoors there as well. He said blended lines have been painted on the tennis courts at Rotary Park and Normandy Park to allow pickleball play.

The Board acknowledged the presentation.

ITEM 5, being:

ANNUAL PRESENTATION FROM WESTWOOD GOLF AND GOLF MAINTENANCE

Westwood Golf

Mr. Rick Parish, Westwood Golf Professional, highlighted current programs at Westwood Golf beginning with the Men's Golf Association and said the WMGA will begin tournaments in March and conclude in October. He said the Saturday League is also set to begin in March and end with the Club Championship in August.

Mr. Parish said the Westwood ladies will begin playing on Thursday mornings beginning in May. He said seniors will kick off with a 2-man best ball tournament in April begin playing every Wednesday morning thru October. Mr. Parish said 20-30 senior players participate every week.

The 47th Invitational is scheduled for July 2, 3 and 4, 2022, and said the tournament has 138 players in 2021, and 139 players in 2020. Mr. Parish said the Ping Junior Golf University is for ages 12-18 and two teams for fielded with 7 players on each team, one team was boys and the other was girls. He said the team has qualified for the state tournament four times, winning first place in 2021 and placing second in 2018 and 2019. Mr. Parish said the First Tee Program occurs on Wednesday nights in the Spring, Summer and Fall and generally 75 kids participate each session. He said in 2021, Westwood Golf hosted for U.S. Kids Tournaments and 463 kids participated. He said 391 participated in 2020 and 351 participated in 2019.

Mr. Parish said the South Central Section, PGA, Jr. Tour is June 7th, 2022, and there were 63 players in 2021, and 84 players in 2020. He said the Westwood Free Jr. Clinic is scheduled for June 14th and 15th, 2022, and the Westwood Jr. Academy begins June 21st, 2022, finishing with the Academy Championship on July 27th, 2022.

Mr. Parish said WW Golf hosts Norman High on Mondays, Norman North on Tuesdays, and Norman Middle Schools (Alcott, Irving, Whittier and Longfellow) on Wednesdays. He said 6A Girls – Sabercat JV 9-hole tournament is March 9th, 2022, and the 6A Lady Sabercat Varsity Invitational is March 21, 2022. Mr. Parish said WW Golf hosted the Girls 3A State Preview Tournament and Girls 3A State Golf Tournament for the past three years.

Mr. Parish highlighted that statistics for WW Golf stating the total rounds in FY20 was 30,996 and increased to 36,553 in FY21. He said the total rounds in FY22 should be approximately 35,000.

The Pro Shop discount is offered to annual members, Men's and Ladies Golf Associates and helps promote customer loyalty. Mr. Parish said he is honored to be the Golf Professional at WW Golf and appreciated his Staff and Admin Staff for all their help and guidance.

Commissioner Moxley asked how the facility is holding up and wondered if WW Golf was losing any tournaments or events. Mr. Parish said probably a few corporations because we do not have the inside facilities to accommodate dinner for them. Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said WW Golf is in desperate need of a new clubhouse and hopefully can be accomplished with either Norman Forward II funding or possibly some other type of bond package. He said a new clubhouse should be prioritized in the near future and also felt the current Grill and Pro Shop would do so much better with a new clubhouse. Commissioner Moxley asked Staff where a new clubhouse could be constructed and Mr. Olsen said the old Juvenile Building located on the north east side of the golf course was demolished and felt like with some imagination and engineering, a clubhouse could be constructed in that area or possibly around the 13th or 14th hole.

Westwood Golf Maintenance

Mr. Paul Krout, Golf Maintenance Superintendent, gave the Annual Westwood Golf Maintenance presentation to the Board. He said when he was hired in May, 2021, Staff began addressing specific issues to include a variety of weeds, i.e., goosegrass, nutsedge, and dallisgrass. Mr. Krout said Staff also began addressing the green speed with a few maintenance practices to include weekly sand topdressing to increase the quality of the greens which is a major drive for golfers to appreciate the golf course. He said Staff is taking an alternative weekly topdressing which is very effective rather than a very aggressive core aeration. Mr. Krout felt like weekly topdressing keeps the greens open more and therefore, making higher revenues for the golf course. He said Staff's second focus was water quality and said the Golf Course has three water sources, i.e., City water, well water and run off. He said City water costs money while the other two sources do not so Staff began looking at the drainage to transfer that water to the irrigation pond. He said he has been evaluating the golf course drainage and trying to re-route drainage piping and ditches in order to move the water into an area where it can be utilized. Mr. Krout showed a picture depicting the irrigation pond on the golf course. He said Staff installed a 24-inch pipe to move all the water that was going through the area and causing erosion. Mr. Krout said Staff will continue to work on the drainage and water movement in an efficient and cost effective manner.

Mr. Krout said another priority that Staff has been working on is bunker renovation(s), beginning with the grass bunkers. He said they started on hole #13 and showed a picture depicting the work. He said several sand bunkers still need to be renovated and Staff will also be doing the work in-house. Commissioner Sallee asked if this work was being done due to an anonymous donor and Mr. Krout said yes, that is correct.

Mr. Krout said Staff looks forward to a busy spring/summer season and will continue conducting winter maintenance to include sharpening and maintaining mowers, renovating bunkers (grass and sand), painting golf course accessories and inventorying and organizing fertilizers, chemicals and supplies.

Commissioner Sallee asked how many employees were in the Golf Maintenance Division and Mr. Krout said there are five full-time employees, including himself and one part-time employee. He said he will hire approximately two to three seasonal employees closer to summer.

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said Golf revenue was up last year due to COVID. He said not only was there more golf play, but there was also a couple of months that expenses were down. Mr. Olsen said have always been discussions about the Golf Course not making money; however, last year the Golf Course made over \$80,000. He said that is not the norm for the Golf Course, but felt the Golf and Golf Maintenance Staff, specifically Rick Parish and Paul Krout, should be commended for their hard work.

The Board acknowledged the presentations.

ITEM 6, being:

NORMAN FORWARD UPDATE

Mr. Jason Olsen, Recreation Superintendent, gave a Norman Forward (NF) Update to the Parks Board.

Park Maintenance Facility at the Municipal Maintenance Complex

Mr. Olsen said the Grand Opening/Ribbon Cutting ceremony was scheduled on February 11th at 3pm and showed some pictures of the event to the Board. He said Park Maintenance has moved into the facility and continues to bring equipment from the old facility by Reaves Park. Mr. Olsen said the facility is absolutely beautiful and suggested having a future Park Board meeting and/or tour at the facility once everything is moved and organized. He said this Facility complex also includes Fleet Maintenance and Embark Public Transportation stating the total project was \$8 million; however, Park Maintenance's portion was only \$2.5 million. Mr. Olsen said 30+ employees work at the new facility and they take care of 65 parks as well as many other City facilities. He said the location and the ability to store vehicles and/or equipment inside the facility during extreme elements will make operations run smoother and more efficient.

Reaves Park

Mr. Olsen said a lot of construction continues at Reaves Park and he showed a diagram of the different on-going work throughout the park. He said when the old Park Maintenance facility is completely demolished, a new T-Ball four-complex will be constructed in its place. Mr. Olsen showed a picture depicting a new access road in the park so patrons can get from field to field and/or parking lot to parking lot. He said the park is still open to the public; however, construction fencing is in place and has basically closed off 90% of the park. Mr. Olsen said James Briggs, Park Development Manager, is working closely with the contractor, Flintco, to ensure events such as the Medieval Fair and Baseball/Softball Programs are able to happen.

Griffin Park

Mr. Olsen showed a picture depicting the Griffin Park Project Phase 5 and Phase 6 and said all of the baseball and t-ball field are currently being demolished. He said Phase 5 and 6 projects are approximately a \$1.3 million and will include demolition, painting of the silos, three fields and a concession building.

Multi-Sport/Indoor Aquatic Facility (YFAC)

Mr. Olsen said the Young Family Athletic Center (YFAC) is somewhat at a stand-still due to a storm water issue and the architects are working on a solution to properly move the water in the area. He said they should have the remedy in the next week or two, so that construction can start once again to include foundation work, pool construction and utilities.

Senior Wellness Center

Mr. Olsen said the Senior Wellness Center is starting to make progress with the demolition of the building on the southeast corner of the property and utility relocations. He said soon thereafter, the contractor will start demolishing the parking lot and begin earth work. Staff said this project is about \$2 million over budget due to material inflation so Staff has gotten with the general contractor and the architect to look at taking out over-designed area and windows. Mr. Olsen said that should be ready to re-bid at the end of March and Staff will take to Council for consideration and approval at an April Council meeting.

Neighborhood Parks

Mr. Olsen said the Sister City Plaza at Andrews Park is nearly complete and will finish the Norman Forward projects in that particular park. Commissioner Sallee asked where this will be located and Mr. Briggs said this plaza has been in the park for years, but we are enhancing it by adding a directional pole that include the mileage to the different Sister Cities as well as polishing/replacing some stonework and updating the landscaping.

Mr. Olsen said another fire has recently occurred at Vinyard Park and the City is a little hesitant to install a new playground, especially since the playground area is located in back of the park out of view. He said Staff plans to meet with the neighborhood to discuss issues before moving forward with the install and to determine if they would rather have other amenities such as a shelter, basketball court or soccer goals. Mr. Olsen said a new \$200,000 playground area is scheduled to be installed at Cherry Creek Park in the near future. Commissioner Moxley suggested the City request the Vinyard Park HOA to insure the new playground area and Staff said they would discuss that option with the City Attorney's office.

ITEM 7, being:

DIVISIONAL UPDATES

Ms. Veronica Tracy, Recreation Manager, said the Daddy Daughter Dance took place on Saturday, February 5th, at Embassy Suites and the dance capacity was dropped by 50% as a COVID-safety measure. She said two of the three sessions sold out, accommodating about 2,300 people across all three dances. Dads and daughters were excited to have the dance in person again. Staff said after a successful fully-virtual dance last year, the City kept that as an option for those folks that were more comfortable dancing at home again this year.

The Westwood Family Aquatic Center has started selling pool passes and pool classes. They can currently be purchased online and will be for sale in person at the pool on May 2nd, 2022.

The Recreation Division has a lot going on to include Junior Jammers Basketball which is in full swing. Junior Jammers Volleyball has begun registration and will continue through March. The 12th Avenue Recreation Center will have a one-day Kids Camp on Presidents Day, Monday, February 21st, 2022. This will help to accommodate families who need care for their children since Norman Schools will be closed. Additional activities this month include a free Art and Activities day for adults with disabilities at the Little Axe Community Center, an E-Sports Tournament at 12th Avenue Recreation Center, a new Clay Hand Building class at the Senior Center, and free Art Classes for teens at the Irving Recreation Center.

On March 5th, 2022, the Parks and Recreation Department, will be having a Shamrock Off-Road 5K and 1-Mile Fun Run at Ruby Grant Park. Staff said the event will begin at 1:00 p.m., and invited the Board to attend.

Mr. Wade Thompson, Parks and Facilities Manager, said Staff has been very busy after the two back-to-back ice storm that occurred in February. He said Staff cleared ice and debris at City Hall, Recreation Centers and at the Libraries. Commissioner Ross asked how Staff handled the ice accumulation, do they have salt trucks or plows? Mr. Thompson said Staff uses an eco-friendly salt mix that is put on the sidewalks and we use a salt truck in the parking lots.

Mr. Thompson said moving from the old Park Maintenance building to the new Facility has certainly been a huge task, but very exciting. He said mowing will begin soon in City parks as Spring approaches and Staff will be opening up the bathroom parks early next month.

Mr. Briggs, Park Development Manager, said the City has offered the City Forester position to Colin Zink who has accepted it, but is still going through background check(s). He said he should start work within the next couple of weeks. Mr. Briggs said Mr. Zink has been a contract forester for an electric company for several years. He said the Department has also advertised for the vacant Park Planner I position. Commissioner Moxley asked whether or not the City Forester could attend a neighborhood meeting to assist and/or give information about the neighborhood trees and Mr. Briggs said part of the Forester's job description is to do public education and outreach. Mr. Olsen said there is grant possibilities through a Neighborwoods Program where the City and the homeowners could team up to plant trees, etc.

Mr. Briggs said a renovation of Lions Park restroom will begin soon and some of the funding will come from the Public Works Department/ADA Coordinator's budget. He said next year, some ADA funding will again be used at Andrews Park to install an inclusive playground area similar to Ruby Grant Park. Mr. Briggs said a landscape cleanup and furniture replacement project is being done at Earl Sneed Park. He said Greg Heiple wanted to donate a statue (as well as the installation) in honor of his mother to be placed at Andrews Park and the footing was poured today. Mr. Briggs said Staff is working on a plan to replant the landscaping at the Library, still using native species but having fewer species that are easier to control and maintain. He said the City will get it seeded but eventually the maintenance will be taken over by the Library. Mr. Briggs said there is funding to have the roof replaced at the Historic House. He said the regular windows were replaced recently and the stained glass windows are still at a stained glass specialist shop.

Commissioner Moxley asked whether the crushed granite in the low area(s) near the disk golf at Ruby Grant Park will be replaced with concrete. Mr. Briggs said most of the washout area(s) have been replaced by concrete, to include the areas near the sculpture piece and near the dog park, but Staff will go take a look to see what is going on. He said if concrete needs to be installed and/or maintained, there are annual maintenance funds that can be used.

ITEM 8, being:

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION

None.

ITEM 9, being:

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Wright adjourned the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

Passed and approved this 7th of April 2022



Kristi Wright, Chair