



**CITY OF NORMAN, OK  
CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE MEETING**

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

**Thursday, April 02, 2026 at 4:00 PM**

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**MINUTES**

The City Council Business & Community Affairs Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room on the 2nd day of April 2026, at 4:00 p.m. and notice of the agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and on the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Dixon called meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:**

Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant  
Councilmember Ward 8 Scott Dixon (Acting Chair)

**ABSENT:**

Councilmember Ward 2 Mathew Peacock  
Councilmember Ward 7 Kimberly Blodgett

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Mayor Stephen Holman  
Councilmember Ward 1 David Gandesbery  
Councilmember Ward 3 Robert Bruce  
Mr. James Briggs, Park Development Manager  
Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Ms. Megan Phelan, Park Planner  
Ms. Sandra Simeroth, Administrative Technician IV

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**1. DISCUSSION REGARDING COMMUNITY GARDENING AND WILD FORAGING OPPORTUNITIES IN PARKS.**

Mr. James Briggs, Park Development Manager, provided an overview presentation (with assistance from Ms. Megan Phelan, Park Planner) regarding community gardening and wild foraging in City parks.

Ms. Phelan defined "What is a Community Garden? It is plots of land in public areas where people gather to collectively plant, harvest, and maintain a garden space in public parks. They are in a safe recreational green space that is already established in the community. The gardens provide educational opportunities, strengthen community bonds, promote healthy eating and improve mental health. Norman has existing community gardens at Red Dirt

Item 1, continued

Collective Garden in Colonial Commons Park. This garden is operated by a nonprofit organization, and they provide materials for maintenance and programming. The Parks and Recreation department allows for the garden to be in the park and approves any new proposals. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue Recreation Center Garden features raised garden beds constructed by staff. The city has a Partnership with OSU Extension Master Gardeners that provides youth education through camps and afterschool programs. It is located between 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue Recreation Center and the tennis courts. Little Axe Community Center Wildflower Garden is a pollinator-focused garden combined with an art installation initiated and maintained by Lauren Rosenfeld, a naturalist and Jesse Rosenfeld, a sculptor. Emphasis is on pollinators rather than food production. Community gardens require a Project in the Park application which is reviewed and approved by the Park Board

Ms. Phelan also described Wild Foraging as being quite different from community gardening. It is the act of identifying, gathering and harvesting edible or medicinal plants, fungi and other natural resources from the wild such as forests, fields or urban environments. These items are naturally occurring and not managed like a garden. The City of Norman does not recommend consuming found edible or medicinal plants in the parks, but it also does not prohibit it. There are websites with information regarding where and what is edible in the City of Norman.

Councilmember Grant asked if the Community Development Block Grant Neighborhood have a community garden in McGeorge Park.

Mr. Briggs said that after informing them of responsibility for the care of the garden, they chose to start with pollinators. They recently did a refresh and are going to put up an information board about the different plants.

Ms. Phelan presented examples of other types of gardening plots located in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma and in Muskogee, Oklahoma. These are plots that residents rent out in the garden space. The Parks and Recreation departments provide the space, water sources, plant beds and planting medium. The residents rent the plots yearly and are responsible for planting, harvesting and maintaining them. The gardens are secure and have rules and regulations on how the space is used. Initial infrastructure cost is estimated to be between \$500–\$1,000 per bed.

Councilmember Grant asked what makes a project in the park an ideal one.

Mr. Briggs said nothing is ideal. Residents would fill out and submit the application, and it goes to the Parks Board for approval. Staff would like to vet it to make sure the proposed idea is not ridiculous, unmanageable or offensive and have a proposal on how to maintain and establish it. If it is not properly maintained staff will have to remove it.

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said Staff want to work with our community and see these gardens happen. It is better than finding something random in one of our parks. The city has experts on staff that can help and fully understand what will grow and will not. Staff in the Broken Arrow model found a downtown space and got businesses involved. Each business owns a number of plots and opens the community garden for people to work in it. The fruits and vegetables raised work their way back into the community.

Item 1, continued

Councilmembers will consider future direction based on community Interest and funding availability through the Capital Improvement Projects.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:23 p.m.

**ATTEST:**

  
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City Clerk



  
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Mayor