

Norman Board of Parks Commissioners  
February 5, 2026

The Norman Board of Parks Commissioners of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a Regular Session in the Development Center Conference Room A, on the 5th day of February, 2026, at 5:33 p.m., and notice of the agenda of the meeting was posted at the Development Center Building at 225 N. Webster Avenue and on the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Isacksen, Nanny, Tedder-Loffland, Wright, and Wyckoff

Absent: Commissioners Davison and Usry

Tardy: Commissioner Fagin

City Officials

Present: Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation  
James Briggs, Park Development Manager  
Megan Phelan, Park Planner  
Jeff Moody, Event & Media Coordinator  
Mitchell Richardson, Recreation Manager  
Wade Thompson, Parks Manager  
Karla Sitton, Administrative Technician IV

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ITEM 1, being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 6, 2025, PARK BOARD REGULAR MEETING

Commissioner Isacksen made the motion, and Commissioner Wyckoff seconded to approve the Regular Park Board minutes of November 6, 2025. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Isacksen, Nanny, Tedder-Loffland, Wright, and Wyckoff

NAY: None

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Commissioner Fagin arrived at the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

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ITEM 2, being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF PREVIOUSLY APPROVED COUNCIL ITEMS

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, highlighted the previously approved Council actions pertaining to the Parks and Recreation Department as follows:

- Approval of the Norman Youth Soccer Association's annual report to the Park Board
- Approval of the Norman Arts Council's annual report to the Park Board
- Ordinance O-2526-32: FIRST READING defining permanent resident and recreational vehicles; increasing the transient guest room tax rate from 8% to 10% & expanding the application of the tax rate to include spaces temporarily rented for recreational vehicles; all contingent on voter approval of Ordinance O-2526-33
- Ordinance O-2526-33: FIRST READING defining permanent resident and recreational vehicles; increasing the transient guest room tax rate from 8% 10%,0% & expanding the application of the tax rate to include spaces rented for overnight stays in recreational vehicles and increasing the excise tax

upon the gross proceeds or gross receipts derived from rents received from occupancy of hotel rooms and recreational vehicle spaces from 8% to 10%; all contingent on voter approval

- Resolution R-2526-91: appropriating \$113,932 from the NF Fund Balance to update the following NF Master Plans; \$22,750 to the Multi-Sports Park Project, \$20,500 to the Ruby Grant Park Project, \$7,500 to the Griffin Park Project; \$31,591 to the Reaves Park Project, \$15,795.50 to the YFAC Project, and \$15,795.50 to the AWE Project
- Resolution R-2526-96: transferring \$6,188 received for tree removal and vegetation damage remediation from Wildwood Church from the General Fund to the Capital Projects Fund and appropriating the funds to NextEra Energy Transmission Southwest, LLC (NEET) for planting trees in various parks to be accomplished by outside contractors
- Ordinance O-2526-36: authorizing the calling and holding of a Special Election on April 7, 2026, for the question of approving or rejecting issuance of General Obligation (GO) Bonds in the amount of \$8M for the construction of a community facility to serve as a homeless shelter to be owned exclusively by the City of Norman
- Resolution R-2526-92: giving the Secretary of the Cleveland County Election Board notice of a Special Election to be held on April 7, 2026 for four (4) ordinances being considered as follows: O-2526-29 – Street Maintenance Bond Program (GO Bond); O-2526-33 – Room Tax Increase & Addition of RV Spaces; O-2526-35 – Charter Amendments; and O-2526-36: Homeless Shelter Community Facility (GO Bond)

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ITEM 3, being:

**DISCUSSION REGARDING GIVING SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO HONOR FORMER PARK COMMISSIONERS AND JENNIFER BAKER FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING WORK TO THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT AND THE CITY OF NORMAN**

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said the Parks and Recreation staff would like to invite several former members of the Board of Park Commissioners to the March 5, 2026, Park Board meeting. He said they will be formally recognized for their outstanding commitment and dedicated service to the City of Norman. Mr. Olsen announced that Jennifer Baker will receive a Council Resolution at the February 24, 2026, City Council meeting. This recognition honors her dedication to the Sooner Theatre and acknowledges the Arts in Education Award she received at the Forty-Sixth Governor's Arts Awards on January 20, 2026. Mr. Olsen said the City of Norman is fortunate to have devoted citizens and friends who are passionate and vision-driven regarding the future of the Norman parks system and cultural centers.

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ITEM 4, being:

**ROOM TAX ELECTION UPDATE**

Mr. Jason Olsen, the Director of Parks and Recreation, provided an update on the Room Tax Election to the Board. The 4% Transient Guest Room Tax was first approved by voters in Norman in 1980 to promote tourism and is applied to rentals of rooms or houses for less than 30 days. Since then, the tax has increased twice, with current revenues divided among the Norman Convention and Visitors Bureau (59.375%), the Norman Arts Council (25%), and the Norman Parks and Recreation Department (15.625%), after 4% is retained for administration costs.

Olsen noted that current discussions involve expanding the tax to include overnight RV rentals, which are not currently taxed. Additionally, with recent tax increases in neighboring cities, there is interest in raising Norman's Room Tax to support the Parks and Recreation Department, which did not benefit from the last increase in 2023.

On January 20, 2026, a Room Tax Election presentation was made to the Council, leading to the adoption of Ordinances O-2526-32 and O-2526-33 on January 27, 2026. The first ordinance amends the tax to include RV

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rentals and proposes raising the rate from 8% to 10%. Both changes require voter approval, with a special election scheduled for April 7, 2026. If successful, the new rate will take effect on July 1, 2026.

Commissioner Tedder-Loffland asked about the increase in funding for VisitNorman from 47.5% to 50%. Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, explained that the proposal includes an additional \$150,000 for Norman Forward Venue Enhancements, offsetting the 2.5% decrease. Commissioner Fagin emphasized the need for public education on the Room Tax Proposal, and Mr. Olsen mentioned that mailers will be sent to all Norman households, targeted propositions mailers will reach regular voters, and various educational presentations will be held at local organizations, alongside social media outreach.

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ITEM 5, being:

### CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE SANTA FE DEPOT

Ms. Sharri Jackson, Santa Fe Depot Executive Director, presented the Santa Fe Depot annual report and financials to the Board. She said 28,500 people visited the Depot and highlighted the Summer Breeze Concert Series at Lions Park, Depot concerts & events, educational classes, and the art gallery. Ms. Jackson highlighted the Depot's revenue sources, including rentals, memberships, program partners, and art & ticket sales. She said the Depot's goals are to improve the internal space, including addressing noise issues with the heating and air conditioning, installing shop cabinets, and adding additional gallery lighting to enhance services to the community.

Commissioner Isacksen said the financials did not include a Balance Sheet, and Ms. Jackson said she would send it to staff for distribution to the Board.

Commissioner Fagin made the motion, and Commissioner Isackson seconded it to approve the Santa Fe Annual Report, with the condition that the Balance Sheet be submitted. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Fagin, Isacksen, Nanny, Tedder-Loffland, Wright, and Wyckoff

NAY: None

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ITEM 6, being:

### CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE OKLAHOMA MONARCH SOCIETY'S PATHWAYS FOR POLLINATORS AND PEOPLE PROJECT

Ms. Michele Loudenback, the Environmental and Sustainability Manager, announced that the City of Norman will partner with the Oklahoma Monarch Society on the Pathways for Pollinators & People Project. This initiative aims to expand native pollinator habitats while promoting community engagement through education and art. The City will receive up to \$11,000 in funding, materials, and technical support for installing new habitats on City property. Key project elements include native plant installations, educational signage, community outreach, and an eight-foot monarch-themed mural by artist Rick Sinnett. The City will prepare a site at City Hall for the installation and maintenance of the habitat, mural, and signage for at least five years. The mural will be placed on the southeast wall of the Development Center for visibility and proximity to the habitat area. Ms. Loudenback said the Environmental Control Advisory Board (ECAB) has reviewed and recommended the project to the City Council, and staff are bringing it to the Park Board for awareness and input. If Council approves, the installation is expected to begin in spring and be completed by October 2026.

Commissioner Wyckoff requested that the mural be installed on a panel rather than being painted directly on the brick. She explained that paint creates an impermeable barrier, trapping water inside which can lead

to bubbling, peeling, deterioration of the bricks, and potentially cause structural damage. The staff indicated that they would take this into consideration.

Commissioner Wyckoff made the motion, and Commissioner Tedder-Loffland seconded it to recommend forwarding the Oklahoma Monarch Society's Pathways for Pollinators & People Project to the City Council for consideration and approval. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Fagin, Isacksen, Nanny, Tedder-Loffland, Wright, and Wyckoff

NAY: None

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ITEM 7, being:

**CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE NORMAN SPORTS COMMISSION**

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said the Norman Sports Commission (NSC) gave their annual report on December 4, 2025, Park Board meeting. He said the Board requested that the NSC submit its full financials before approving its annual report. Mr. Olsen said that NSC submitted its full financials and that staff forwarded them to the Board prior to the meeting.

Commissioner Isacksen stated that the financial reports submitted were for VisitNorman. She requested that, going forward, the Norman Sports Commission (NSC) submit only financial reports specific to its operations.

Commissioner Isacksen made the motion, and Commissioner Wyckoff seconded to approve and submit the Norman Sports Commission's annual report to Council for approval. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Fagin, Isacksen, Nanny, Tedder-Loffland, Wright, and Wyckoff

NAY: None

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ITEM 8, being:

**CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE PROPOSED PLAYGROUND DESIGNS FOR FOUR NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS**

Ms. Megan Phelan, Park Planner, said Staff recently received bids for three playground replacement projects, Eagle Cliff, Northeast Lions, and Sutton Place Parks, along with a bid for new playground equipment for the City's new neighborhood park, Bluestem Park. She said the staff received and evaluated over a dozen proposals, and the budget varied by project, based on the site's size and the population served by that park. Ms. Phelan said Bidders were instructed to use all available funds and to include synthetic turf safety surfacing and a shade structure over a large portion of the new equipment.

Ms. Phelan showed pictures of the playground equipment for each park, where it is to be placed/replaced, and other amenities that have been or will be added, including park furnishings, upgraded walking trails, courts, soccer goals, and tree planting.

Ms. Jillian Mueller, a concerned parent, said she lives in the Sutton Place neighborhood and often takes her children to the park, but she is also an HOA representative. She requested that a fence be installed around the playground because it is located on the main street/entrance to the neighborhood and Staff said they would see if funding were available. Ms. Mueller inquired about the possibility of installing a different type of turf instead of the proposed synthetic turf safety surfacing. She expressed concerns about the synthetic

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turf's durability and noted that rocks and other debris could become trapped in it, potentially harming children. Staff said the proposed turf lasts far longer than much, costs much less than poured-in-place rubber and has been successful and is functioning well in other Norman parks. Ms. Mueller said Sutton Place Park is near Sutton Wilderness Park, which was named after George Sutton, a renowned University of Oklahoma zoology professor. She requested that the new playground design have a nature theme to match Sutton Wilderness, rather than the originally proposed theme. Staff stated they would consult with the playground contractor to see if the theme could be changed without exceeding the budget.

Commissioner Wyckoff made the motion, and Commissioner Nanny seconded to recommend the proposed playground designs for Bluestem, Eagle Cliff, Northeast Lions, and Sutton Place Park Playground to the Council for approval. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Fagin, Isacksen, Nanny, Tedder-Loffland, Wright, and Wyckoff

NAY: None

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ITEM 9, being:

### NORMAN FORWARD UPDATE

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said the playground projects previously mentioned in Item # 8 will be on February 24, 2026, Council agenda for their consideration and approval. He said the NF Saxon Park Project remains on hold pending the completion of road construction overseen by the Public Works Department. He noted that this road project will reduce the budget for the NF Saxon Park Project, as the associated costs for roadwork, utilities, and water and sewer connections will be integrated into the park development but paid for through the PW Department road construction project. Mr. Olsen said the Canadian River Park is a proposed Norman Forward project aiming to create a park, trail system, and wildlife refuge south of Lindsey Street and west of I-35 along the Canadian River. He said the project is still listed as a remaining NF initiative, and discussions have recently taken place regarding the need for land acquisition. Mr. Olsen said if successful, an Ad Hoc Committee will be formed and asked if any Park Commissioners would like to be on it. The Commissioners discussed the project and expressed hope for its realization, with many agreeing to participate in the Ad Hoc Committee.

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ITEM 10, being:

### DIVISION UPDATE

Mr. Wade Thompson, Parks Manager, said Maintenance staff continues putting away Christmas decorations and assisting with the recent snow event. He said crews worked on Sunday, clearing parking lots at the YFAC, AWE, City Hall, and NIC. Mr. Thompson said crews replaced a sidewalk at Summit Lakes Park and cleared out an area at Saxon Park for the Sierra Club to do a controlled burn.

Ms. Megan Phelan, Park Planner, said the remainder of the walking trail will be paved at Eagle Cliff Park, Staff will begin laying out the walking trails, trees, and native plants at Bluestem Park, and the City Forester is scheduling tree plantings in several parks. She said Downey Construction will finish their contract work at Bishop Creek Eco Park soon, and Staff will take over and complete native landscaping, fencing, furnishings, and signs. A Grand Opening of the city's newest park is scheduled in the Spring or early Summer.

Mr. Mitchell Richardson, Recreation Manager, said in January, the Parks and Recreation Department began using Rec Technologies, a new software program for rentals, membership passes, childcare, etc. He said the Annual Daddy Daughter Dance is this Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at the YFAC and offers three dances. Westwood Family Aquatic Center (WWFAC) hiring for 2026 has started and Youth Volleyball registration is open at the YFAC

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ITEM 11, being:

**UPDATE REGARDING THE COMMISSION FOR ACCREDITATION OF PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES (CAPRA)**

Mr. Mitchell Richardson, Recreation Manager, said the Parks and Recreation Department continues to work in the process of obtaining accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), and said this accreditation serves as a valuable measure of an agency's overall quality of operation, management, and service to the community. He said Staff are reviewing existing plans and working with Human Resources to finalize the personnel policies and procedures manual. They also aim to complete the Strategic Plan, which will support the Parks and Recreation System Master Plan. An on-site visit and self-assessment are scheduled for December 2026.

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**MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

Commissioner Nanny reported concerns from citizens about the safety of ramps and skill areas at Creekside Bike Park. Mr. Jason Olsen, the Director of Parks and Recreation, stated that the City hired the American Ramp Company to design the park, and they periodically examine the park's off-road trails, ramps, and other features to determine if maintenance is up to standard or needed. He mentioned that their expertise has contributed to creating a space suitable for skilled riders, which includes signage outlining the rules and skill levels. Additionally, there is a children's biking playground specifically designed for younger riders. Mr. Wade Thompson, the Parks Manager, noted that staff are working to improve drainage in one area to prevent washouts during heavy rain.

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**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Sheriff adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

Passed and approved this 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2026

  
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Sherrel Sheriff, Chair