



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL SESSION

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

Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 5:30 PM

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Special Session in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building on the 5th day of December, 2023, at 5:30 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray Street 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT

Mayor Larry Heikkila

Councilmember Ward 1 Austin Ball
Councilmember Ward 2 Lauren Schueler
Councilmember Ward 3 Bree Montoya
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash
Councilmember Ward 6 Elizabeth Foreman
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman
Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock

OTHERS PRESENT

Ms. Kayla Copeland, Owner at Copeland Design Collective
Ms. Evelyn Huff, Landscape Designer for Copeland Design Collective
Ms. Torrey Butzer, Architect for Butzer Architects and Urbanism (BAU)
Mr. Bret Cabbiness, Garver Engineering

ABSENT

None

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE ANDREWS PARK MASTER PLAN.

Ms. Kayla Copeland with the Copeland Design Collective began the presentation with the history of Andrews Park. The goal of the Master Plan is to reignite all of the fun, historical aspects of Andrews Park. The Park itself has been in existence since 1889. The hope is to have City Council, ultimately approve and adopt the Andrews Park Master Plan.

Andrews Park has a unique location and is full of historical features including many Works Progress Administration elements. Consultants conducted research to determine what was on the registry and what structures were important to keep and preserve

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throughout the park. The amphitheater, drainage channel, bridges and the two architectural elements by the splash pad are historical bathhouses and are all elements on the registry that need to be preserved. The pavilion in the center is not on the registry and that is important to know as things move forward with the plan. Many events that occur at Andrews Park were identified and Jazz in June is one of the larger events. The open spaces used for sport practices and the skate park are another major area to consider and are big draws for the park.

An Open House was held for the purpose of public engagement and the turnout was good. There were many different avenues presented for the public to voice their opinion about what they wanted to see in the park or changes they wanted made, etc. As another public engagement method, a Stakeholder group was formed.

After public feedback, three common goals were identified:

1. Preserving the history of the park, including the WPA elements
2. Continuation of events that have been held in the park in the past
3. Safety in the park

Updating Accessibility, maintaining the connection to downtown as well continuing to allow local employees to utilize the park as a break area are all items that the public wants to see continued or incorporated into the park.

The next phase was the design workshop and the entire design team came for a three-day brainstorm session where the designers explored the park and research was done by comparing other parks in Oklahoma City such as Scissortail Park and The Station in Moore to see what was liked or not liked. The Design workshop consisted of hundreds of ideas and ultimately ended with a Master Plan. There are twenty-five program elements and some of those include the WPA elements in a reimagined way. Feedback was received regarding the stage orientation in the amphitheater not being ideal. A new stage is needed to address this issue. Public feedback showed that conservation and water usage were other areas of concern.

The final Master Plan was presented to the Stakeholder group on the last day of the design workshop, there were revisions made and then the Master Plan being presented today was created.

The southwest corner of Andrews Park is where the master plan design shows a nature area minimizing maintenance for the park crews. A vision for Norman's first certified arboretum to go in the southwest corner is within this plan as well. The plan for the Webster Avenue extension is for it to be reclaimed as parkland. The bottom of the amphitheater area will remain a smaller, more intimate space with a stage. This area could hold an outdoor nature class or wedding event. Where the current splash pad is located, the bathhouses will be reimagined and have a covered pergola or something with a shade on it and this will be incorporated into the amphitheater area. The amphitheater and arboretum are the areas focused on nature.

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At the south end of the larger circle lawn, there will be a central pavilion that will include a public restroom, which will serve the amphitheater as well. The large lawn space will accommodate up to six youth sports practice areas. The WPA architectural aspects will be maintained as well as much of the rock used in the original WPA structures.

Overflow parking for larger events can be accommodated by the municipal complex parking to the south and the library parking to the north so a walkway is needed to and from the library complex.

The northeast corner of Andrews Park will be a new gateway with the James Garner extension to downtown Norman. A gateway entrance will be created that represents preserving the past but looking toward the future and will include columns that will be repurposed from older areas of the park. This area will also house the new water play area.

Additionally, the large Christmas tree tradition will occur on this corner with all of the lighting ceremonies, etc. It is possible that the splash pad could also serve as an ice skating arena during the winter.

The existing skate park enhancements will allow for more competitions and events to be hosted. Bleacher seating was one of the big requests for this area of the park as well as restroom access so when hosting an event it would be more comfortable for guests. It is being proposed that the tot lot be accessible as well and that would make this a truly accessible park for all children. The restrooms would be located somewhere between the skate park, the basketball courts and the playground area.

The playground is being reimagined including shaded picnic areas closer to the playground to allow for parties and more shade for the playground overall.

The next larger element to be addressed is the water being added to Andrews Park. The majority of the south side of Andrews Park is in the floodway. It is proposed that the larger pond be a retention pond so this would be full year round and would become an amenity of the park. The three pond series to the north would be a bio-retention and would help us capture water during a rain event. This would slow down the water going to the Canadian River; they would also be filtering the water and improving the water quality.

A boardwalk connection is proposed on the west edge of the larger pond and it will have a dock for those who want to paddleboat or go fishing. The park used to have a swan pond where the rock is on the amphitheater and this goes back to the history of the park. On the west side of the boardwalk is a small series of rain gardens for overflow as well as accommodating larger events. The public can be educated on alternative systems to create a more sustainable environment and this is another filtering tool that will ultimately distribute water into a dry creek bed that leads back into the WPA channel. The goal is to make a beautiful water element as well as a develop a new program for the park.

Along the south edge, it is important to connect the urban environment making that corner connect to the downtown area. Possibly a food truck court and larger pavilions

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could be incorporated. This would allow for people working downtown or those attending downtown festivals to utilize this area.

Finally, the large irregular parking lots were removed and moved to the edge. A large part of this master plan was making the park safe and one way you can make a park safer is to have all eyes looking into the park. Even with taking out all of the existing parking, we gained .7 acres of land back to the park. There will also be more parking spaces overall by moving the parking to the edge. This scenario was a win win for everyone.

Renderings were shown of all of the different elements of each area of the park and how things would look in the different seasons. The berm shown in the renderings is also a sound barrier for neighbors as well as a place to lounge, etc.

Council asked how deep the ponds would be. The main pond would be in the neighborhood of ten feet deep. These are still estimates at this time though. The larger pond is the only one that will hold water all of the time, the others will be filled with vegetation and hold runoff from rain events, etc.

Councilmember Peacock also asked where the opportunities for public art would be located in the park?

The park is desperate for public art, education and events.

Norman Arts Council was not included in the Stakeholder committee so they have not been a part of building this master plan.

Councilmember Grant asked if there are places identified for public art pieces? She mentioned the art piece called "Unexpectedly Ours" by Gabriel Freedman would be perfect for this park.

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said similar to Norman Forward projects, there is 1% for art at minimum and Norman Arts Council would become part of this process in the future.

One thing not mentioned yet is the pathways. There are a hierarchy of pathways where the main circle path is ten feet minimum and there is also a connection from each corner of the park. Access and connection from both sides including Webster and James Garner was an important aspect of the plan. The vision is that art pieces would be placed along these pathways or at one of the corners of the park or in the garden area. All pathways other than the main one are six feet minimum. The goal is to make everything ADA accessible.

Councilmember Holman asked if the paving around the stage area was concrete and if not, what will it be made of?

It is being priced for special paving and that area will allow for an accessible route as well as providing great seating for those that cannot go on the lawn area. This would also provide an opportunity for VIP seating or an orchestra by providing a hard surface so that events that are more diverse can be hosted. It was discussed that this surface

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would be something that is helpful with storm water management. It has been priced for permeable pavers, colored concrete, etc.

Councilmember Holman said that adding concrete to the park is a concern and will be discussed at some point in the future. He mentioned that the southeast corner sidewalk connection that continues south to the Police Department as part of the overall James Garner project needs a crosswalk of some kind that is not seen in these plans. Ms. Copeland indicated that this would be added to the plan.

Councilmember Peacock raised the question about the food truck area and wanted to know where the trucks would be parking. He asked if they would be parking on Daws Street or if they would be parking in the paved area on the map?

Ms. Copeland indicated that several options were discussed and it was decided that they would park on Daws Street. The electrical connections would be located in this area.

Councilmember Peacock suggested that the berm be wider than what it currently shows on the plan, which is 10-12 feet as per Ms. Copeland. He would like the berm to be larger and flow more into the space.

The berm can be made flatter which would give it more width and this would also be helpful with the maintenance of this area.

The representative from Jazz in June was consulted and is advocating for a larger stage in the new plans since they always have to bring in additional stage pieces for their event.

The new stage is the same square footage as the one in Scissortail Park in Oklahoma City if that helps give a visual comparison for size. The representative from Jazz in June indicated they desperately want an air-conditioned green room and restrooms. The next item that is needed are appropriate electrical connections for specialty lighting, performances, etc. These items were all included in the budget for this master plan.

The orientation of the stage is another concern because the current orientation is very uncomfortable for the performers. The preferred orientation is north south and was implemented into the design plans.

The vision that the Parks and Recreation Department has is aggressive and the plan is to be implemented within the next five to ten years.

The master plan is broken up into three general sections. Infrastructure package should be implemented first due to the cost. This would include floodway cleanup, main retention pond, moving parking, reclaiming the road, utility line movement. After that, there is the Place Making Package which includes creating the bio retention ponds, the gateway plaza, spray jet plaza, signage, amphitheater, lawn pavilion and those types of larger elements. Lastly, the Family Learning Package which will include the renovation of the playground, enhancing the skate park, additional public restrooms, food truck court, etc. These phases would be implemented in two to three year time frames.

The cost of items shown is \$26 million if this entire plan was done in the next year. Inflation projection has been included to show the actual cost as we move along in time.

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Every year that goes by will add 3.26% to the cost of this project. The goal of the Parks and Recreation Department is to accomplish these items as quickly as possible.

Norman Forward II would be the best fit regarding how to get the money for this master plan. Because this is projected over ten years, grant funding can be considered. This park is a perfect candidate for the Land and Water Conservation Grant and it is a 50/50 grant match with no cap. This is a big opportunity to get 50% of the water elements paid for through this grant. This is the reason that the water elements are included in the second stage of this plan so that we have time to apply for these grants. The park is also a great candidate for the Oklahoma Recreational Trails Grant with implementing the larger pathways. These pathways meet all of the requirements for funding and this is an 80/20 match. The requirements are that it is a concrete or asphalt eight-foot wide path. The grant will cover 80% of the cost and is capped at \$320,000, which will get us approximately ½ to ½ mile of trail. This grant also covers sight amenities along the trail, lighting along the trail and wayfinding along the trail. This grant is one that you can apply for consecutively, year after year.

Councilmember Peacock said that he feels this is not only a candidate for Norman Forward II, but also the crown jewel for this slate of packages. As far as public art is concerned, with it being at 1% of the total cost of the project, that puts the public art budget at \$260,000, which is a substantial piece of art or several pieces of art. I believe this is a great way to get this project done but we should also seek out other grants and other funding opportunities. This project will get everyone excited about all of the projects on the Norman Forward slate.

Council has a very important part in the progress of this because as soon as this concept is adopted it puts the City higher on the list as we apply for grants.

A question was asked about the cost of the new playground at the park that was recently built and it was said to be \$425,000. There will be another \$600,000 in renovations to this playground with this plan. Everything that is currently at the playground will be incorporated in the new design so as not to waste money. This is very important to the Parks Department so that none of the recent renovations is wasted.

In the public comments, it was mentioned that the public wants the park to feel safer. I think it is known why people do not feel safe in our park right now.

Looking at the current plan, there are a lot more trees and vegetation and this creates dark spots. Pedestrian lighting is one of the things that people said would make them feel safer in the park.

There are blue emergency lights that the University of Oklahoma has on campus. This has been looked at and it would be nice for people to have instant access to police if needed while out walking in the park.

Ms. Copeland indicated this option is being explored as well as security cameras, etc. Information Technology was one of the departments that was consulted during the design workshop in regard to security capabilities. It was discovered that we already have a communication line out at the skate park. This line can be used to enhance additional security cameras or add blue emergency lights, etc.

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However, one of the main ideas was to pull the parking out so that everyone is looking into the park and lighting was the other big piece of making the park safer.

In the cost estimate there are 200 pedestrian light fixtures. It will be low light fixtures that will be continually lit but will not cause any light pollution to the neighbors.

Most of the lights in similar type parks are on a timer of some kind or they are sun sensitive. The lights would dim at the time the parks close to 25%. The lights will be enough for security, but not enough that people would be hanging out long term.

Councilmember Grant said she was in support of this being Norman Forward II, but wanted to know what the timeline would be?

Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager, said it would be about six and a half years. The question can be put to the voters regarding Norman Forward II before the current Norman Forward program is completed. Surveys will be sent out and a vote on the continuance can be taken before the current expiration.

Mr. Olsen said the current Norman Forward program is 90% complete.

Mr. Pyle said because this is a historical park it opens up a lot of other grant opportunities. Every year the WPA channel reaches the banks and it is halfway across the street but with modern conditions hopefully it will be much safer. The condition of the water will also be better since there will be filtering in effect before it gets to the creeks.

Mr. Pyle said that without opposition, Staff will put this on the Council agenda for adoption of the Master Plan for Andrews Park.


2. CONSIDERATION OF ADJOURNING INTO AN EXECUTIVE SESSION AS AUTHORIZED BY OKLAHOMA STATUTES, TITLE 25 § 307(B)(4) TO DISCUSS PENDING CLASS ACTION LITIGATION IN THE CASE OF T 3M COMPANY AND E.I. DUPONT DE NEMOURS AND COMPANY AND OTHER DEFENDANTS INVOLVING PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS) CONTAMINATION IN RE: AQUEOUS FILM-FORMING FOAMS PRODUCTS LIABILITY LITIGATION, MDL NO. 2:18-MN-2873, UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

This Item was not considered.


ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

ATTEST:


City Clerk




Mayor