



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

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

Thursday, September 04, 2025 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

The Business & Community Affairs Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room in the Municipal Building, on Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 4:00 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.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by Chair Matt Peacock.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 2 Matt Peacock - Chair
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 6 Josh Hinkle
Councilmember Ward 8 Scott Dixon

OTHERS PRESENT

Mayor Stephen Holman
Councilmember Ward 3 Bree Montoya
Councilmember Ward 7 Kimberly Blodgett
Ms. Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City Manager
Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation
Mr. Tim Miles, City Engineer
Mr. David Riesland, Transportation Engineer
Mr. Brian Hiney, Traffic Management Center Engineer
Ms. Jane Hudson, Planning & Community Development Director
Ms. Kathy Hammans, Admin Tech III, City Clerk

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE WESTWOOD MASTER PLAN.

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, presented the preliminary Westwood Master Plan. He explained that work on the plan began over a year ago, engaging with GSB, Inc., an Oklahoma City Based Architectural firm, who was selected for the project through the RFP, (Request for Proposal) process.

The main focus of the Westwood project is the golf course and tennis area.

- The existing infrastructure is aging, including the irrigation system, which has a typical lifespan of 20-25 years. Many components, such as greens and the clubhouse, are nearing the end of their functional life.
- The golf course is an affordable option for residents. The course plays approximately 35,000 rounds annually.
- The clubhouse is over 50 years old and was designed by the same architect as Oklahoma City's golf courses, many of which have since been renovated.
- The golf course maintenance facilities are located near the clubhouse, which is not ideal due to noise and visibility concerns.

A steering committee was formed, consisting of seven members nominated by the Park Director, Council members, and user groups. This group worked with the consultants for over a year to come up with a design.

- The final design includes a new pickleball facility, a new clubhouse located near the driving range, and updated golf maintenance facilities. The new clubhouse will potentially include a restaurant or banquet area, with a lease structure like Kicking Bird Golf Course in Edmond.
- The proposed new design aims to make Westwood a more modern and sustainable community resource.
- The steering committee emphasized the importance of making the facility affordable and accessible to a broad demographic.
- The expected timeline for the project's completion, if approved, is between 2032 and 2035.

Mr. Olsen went on to highlight some of the recommended improvements for Council. There is an emphasis on the proximity of a new neighborhood to the facility and that a restaurant would be a strong addition, allowing residents to walk to the location. The intersection at 24th and Robinson, being one of the busiest in the city, was highlighted, ensuring high traffic flow for the facility.

1. (continued) PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE WESTWOOD MASTER PLAN.

The importance of modernizing the golf course was highlighted. The driving range, originally designed in the 1960s, no longer accommodates current equipment and increased hitting distance capabilities of players. Changes were proposed to extend the range, alter certain holes, and possibly add additional parking.

Visual concepts were shared for a more modern look, with metal roofs like the swimming complex. The new layout includes potential changes to court arrangements and parking spaces.

- The proposal includes creating a new main entrance that would provide better accessibility and visibility.
- The design will keep the 12 tennis courts, required to maintain eligibility for major USA Tennis events.
- The new facility plans include the installation of covered hitting tees to address wind and noise issues for the driving range. To accommodate modern golf equipment and extend the range, a few changes to the course layout would be required, including swapping holes one and ten to bring the clubhouse closer to the course's finish.
- The lighting technology for the range is advanced, using directional LED's while minimizing light pollution.
- Recent renovations at Earlywine in Oklahoma City, where covered hitting ranges and night lighting were implemented, show a significant increase in sales—\$60,000 in one month just from driving range tokens.
- The relocation of the current tennis courts, along with the addition of indoor tennis and pickleball courts, will further help reduce the impact of wind and street noise, improving the playing experience.

Efforts are being made to ensure pedestrian traffic flows smoothly within Westwood, especially during peak summer months when over 100,000 people visit the swimming area annually. Additional parking and adjustments to hole nine would need to be made to improve traffic flow and parking availability.

- The need for a clear separation between pedestrian circulation and vehicle traffic was emphasized.
- A suggestion was made to address parking for staff during the busy summer months by allocating 138 additional spaces at the back of the facility and to designate on-street parking along Fairway Drive.

The master plan is designed as a concept to help prepare for future elections to approve project funding. The estimated cost for the complete redesign of the facility would be \$54 million, with plans for construction to be done in phases. If funding allows for only \$30 million in the first phase, the project phase will proceed and additional phases to be completed later, depending on funding availability.

1. (continued) PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE WESTWOOD MASTER PLAN.

Minimizing maintenance, while maximizing staff productivity was emphasized. The current maintenance team is small, with only six full-time staff caring for the 120-acre golf course. The new design would help improve workflow for this team through better access to the maintenance areas.

Measures to facilitate more efficient maintenance could include:

- Removing underground drainage and restoring open creeks could ease maintenance challenges.
- Additionally, plans to expand and reconfigure ponds for better water retention were presented.
- The project will aim to reduce dependence on Norman's water system by recapturing irrigation and rainwater runoff, which includes drainage from surrounding areas.

The development of a new business plan, based on the proposed upgrades, was discussed and includes considerations for staffing, operational hours, potential revenue changes resulting from the improvements and conflict mitigation with the surrounding neighborhood.

Councilmember Peacock raised concerns regarding noise and light pollution from the driving range and emphasized the need for reasonable hours of operation and noise controls. Parking concerns, particularly the additional parking to the southeast, were also discussed, with suggestions made to reconfigure the layout.

Restoring Merkel Creek, with an emphasis on returning to a more natural state, was brought up.

- Past trends prioritized efficiency over natural aesthetics, but it was noted that these underground drainage solutions didn't provide the expected efficiencies.
- Public preference reflects the emphasis for a natural appearance and increased accessibility for families and residents.
- The plan for the creek restoration may involve areas off-site, to avoid conflicts with the golf course.

Pedestrian Traffic

- Prioritization on safe and improved pedestrian access between the three main facilities: tennis, golf, and pickleball courts.
- Align entrances to create an efficient flow of people from one facility to another.
- Raised pedestrian crossings and careful planning of the pedestrian circulation to ensure safe and easy movement throughout the park.
- Ensure all pedestrian connections are prioritized, keeping foot traffic away from vehicular routes and improving the overall experience for visitors.

1. (continued) PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE WESTWOOD MASTER PLAN.

Parking Layout

- Design parking layouts with a focus on minimizing disruption to the park's atmosphere and maximizing pedestrian movement.
- The layout would potentially have tennis courts at the south end, with additional parking located in between.
- Concerns regarding the parking layout closely related to how pedestrian movement could be maximized and how the spaces would be used to avoid disrupting the natural beauty of the area.
- The future use of Fairway Drive was discussed, particularly the cul-de-sac area.
- Possibly convert this road into a pedestrian area. Consider residences facing the street before a change is made.
- Consider on-street parking along Fairway Drive, instead of adding a parking lot to the back of the pool. This would help reduce the impact of large parking structures near the park's edge, while improving the aesthetic appeal of the park.

Tennis Facility Design:

- The orientation of the tennis courts is a point of consideration, with the final design potentially being influenced by the MZA (Master Zoning Area) station.
- Flexibility and adaptability in the design, considering both functionality and how it integrates with the surrounding environment.
- Evaluate how the orientation of the tennis courts aligns with the Master Zoning and other structural plans.

The entire Westwood Park renovation is expected to close the facilities for approximately one year, which will impact the golf course, but not the pool.

- Maintenance staff would be used as a construction crew to help reduce costs.
- The tennis courts would be relocated early in the project to minimize disruption.

The park's redesign should be done in collaboration with the community, particularly the neighbors who might be impacted by increased traffic or activity. Conducting surveys of the residents would help staff understand which aspects of the park redesign residents want most and are willing to support financially. The goal would be to prioritize phased improvements based on what the community values most (e.g., slides, features, pedestrian pathways, etc.).

Discussions highlighted the importance of balancing expansion and change while respecting the park's existing character.

Expansion possibilities for the water park are factored into the plan, with some plumbing and infrastructure already in place. The area near the corner of the park has already been plumbed for future additions (such as slides or a surfing feature like a flow rider). Expansion in that area would be the first option, but alternative layouts are also possible.

2. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE SMALL DEVELOPER TRAINING SPONSORSHIP PROPOSAL

Chairman Peacock presented information on the Small Developer Training Sponsorship Proposal for the City of Norman. This proposal is from the Incremental Development Alliance, a group that specializes in training developers to work in a more sustainable, incremental manner.

The program is a partnership with the City of Norman, focuses on providing education and support for small-scale developers in Norman and is aimed at equipping residents to engage in incremental development.

The Goal of this program is to:

- Create local developers who can carry out infill projects—such as housing, small businesses, or restaurants—rather than waiting for outside developers to come in.
- The long-term vision is that by training 35-50 developers, Norman could see 35-50 new projects (like “The Standard”, a successful local project) that add diversity and character to the city.

The City would act as the anchor sponsor for the entire program, but additional funding would need to be secured from other sponsors for the overall cost. The sponsorship package would allow for a mix of lectures, workshops, and boot camps, ensuring the program’s reach and effectiveness.

The program would consist of three phases:

1. Lecture Series:

- 200–300 people.
- Introduce incremental development, explain common language and concepts, and generate interest in more detailed training.

2. Workshops:

- 100–150 people.
- Build on lecture content, dive deeper into the nuances of the development process, and allow more hands-on learning.

3. Boot Camp:

- 35–50 people.
- Intensive training on zoning, proforma development, bank financing, and how to pitch projects. This would be a hands-on experience where participants work through real development scenarios.
- The aim is to empower participants to undertake small infill projects on their own in Norman, rather than relying on external developers.

2. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE SMALL DEVELOPER TRAINING SPONSORSHIP PROPOSAL

Councilmember Grant emphasized that small-scale developers often have diverse passions and visions for their projects, so training them could lead to a wider variety of development ideas. For example, one developer may focus on housing, while another might focus on a restaurant or creative space.

It was suggested to connect with the Coalition of Community Development Financial Institution, (CDFI), (out of Tulsa), that focuses on social good projects. These institutions would help smaller developers learn about available partners and services for their projects (financing, construction services, etc.), access financing and additional resources for their projects.

The goal is to kick off in mid-October, with consideration for the football schedule and the workshop following 4-6 weeks later, and the boot camp taking place soon after. This timeline is designed to generate momentum before the end of the year.

Staff involvement will be kept minimal, with much of the logistical work handled by the Incremental Development Alliance team. The role of Staff will include supporting the marketing, outreach and coordination of the program, while minimizing the burden on any one department.

As part of this process zoning and policies will need to be aligned with the training to ensure that the zoning ordinances and policies are in place to support the types of projects that will be developed, taking feedback from the boot camp to identify roadblocks and refine policies.

- If developers are taught a set of practical tools and skills, but the zoning regulations don't support those skills, the program might not be as effective.
- Boot camp participants would work through a real development project (with zoning and financial considerations), and the city could gather feedback from them on which aspects of the zoning code or policies are barriers to small-scale development.
- If multiple participants flag the same zoning or regulatory barriers, the City can adjust policies to remove obstacles and encourage development that aligns with the community's goals.

There is an ongoing concern about Norman's reputation as a difficult place to develop. This program, in conjunction with updates to zoning and policies, could shift that narrative by equipping residents with the skills they need to develop and improve their community.

This initiative is aimed at empowering local developers to take on small-scale, infill development projects in Norman. It's designed to be self-sustaining in the long term, with trained developers creating a ripple effect of new projects that reflect the community's needs and values. By aligning educational programs with the city's zoning and policy changes, Norman could foster a more entrepreneurial, locally driven development culture.

There was a suggestion about creating a rebate or incentive structure for sponsors who fund the program, where they could receive money back if they complete a project in Norman. The aim is to incentivize development in the city and make it more attractive for businesses and developers to engage locally. While there is no clear answer yet, the idea seems to be feasible.

2. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE SMALL DEVELOPER TRAINING SPONSORSHIP PROPOSAL

The general thought is that Norman residents would be the focus of this program, and successful development projects in the City would lead to significant economic returns, such as generating sales tax from materials, business operations, and increased local activity. The projects would not only generate sales tax revenue but attract more development, thus creating a self-sustaining cycle that pays off over time.

An alternative financial mechanism for the program could be the creation of a TIF. The idea is that, even if a rebate isn't offered directly, developers could still access TIF funds that are designated for infill development in Norman, giving them an advantage in funding and incentivizing them to take on projects that others might overlook.

This program is not just for professional developers; it is about empowering local communities to take control of their built environment and helping everyday citizens who want to get into small-scale development, but do not know where to start. For example, ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units) or other small infill projects could be a great starting point for individuals in the community.

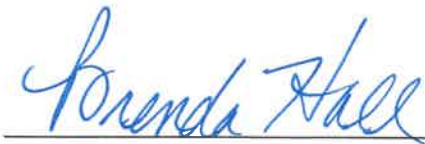
The program aims to lower the barrier to entry by providing knowledge and financial tools that help people navigate the complexities of development. For many, the biggest obstacles are lack of knowledge about the process or access to financing. This program would provide both education and connection to local investors and lenders.

Councilmembers raised concerns about the \$50,000 needed for the City's anchor sponsorship. The amount is significant, and while the value in the program is seen, there was some hesitation expressed due to the size of the investment.

With community leaders, lenders, and other local stakeholders involved, there is opportunity to broaden participation in development and ensure that the projects align with the community's needs and values. The process could also help identify gaps in local knowledge and resources, making it easier for future developers to navigate the landscape.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 pm.

ATTEST



City Clerk



Mayor