



Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

April 9, 2025

The Centre at University Park

Attendance: Ben France, Samuel Ellis, Cannon Fletcher, Mike Bernardo, Summer Campbell, Chemia Woods, Quinten Whiteside

Absent: James Ferstl, City Director-Andrea Lewis

City Board of Director Liaison: City Director-Capi Peck

LRPR/LRCAO Staff: Parks Director-Leland Couch, Deputy Director Administration Resources-Angela Nelson, Deputy Director Recreation-Shawanda Craig, Deputy Director Operations-Justin Dorsey, Deputy City Attorney-Simone Blagg, Courtney Perry-Safety and Training Coordinator, Administrative Assistant to the Parks Director-Mahoganey Burkhalter, Karen Sykes-Volunteer Coordinator, Graham Brown-Parks Data and Marketing Coordinator, Kyndall Richardson-Secretary, Savanah Wells-Secretary

Welcome: Chairman France welcomed everyone. Meeting called to order at 11:54 am.

Roll Call: Roll call completed. Seven (7) Commissioners out of Eight (8) Commissioners in attendance. Quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman France asked for a motion to approve March 2025 minutes. Commissioner Whiteside made a motion for the approval of the minutes. Motion 2nd by Commissioner Campbell. Motion carried

Citizen Communication: No Citizen Communication.

Staff Reports/Director's Presentation/Events:

Staff Reports:

Questions from the Staff Reports:

- ❖ Commissioner Bernardo wanted more information about Pickle Ball.
 - Director Couch stated that he would like it added to the Recreation report.

- ❖ Commissioner Fletcher asked about Asst Marathon Director moving to another Department.
 - Director Couch advised that nothing has been finalized as of yet.

Director's Presentation:

Director Couch presented on the following:

- ❖ BOD Agenda Items & Upcoming Items from Parks
 - Reservoir Playground has been completed and approved by the Board of Directors.
 - Design plans presented by Cromwell for construction completion Reservoir Park
 - Equipment for Rebsamen Golf
 - New lift for Urban Forestry



Questions from the Director's Presentation:

- ❖ Commissioner Whiteside asked about the Softball field being repaired.
 - Director Couch confirmed that it is listed in the Masterplan to repair the Softball fields.
- ❖ Commissioner Fletcher asked about cricket playing at that location.
 - Director Couch confirmed that he has seen this as well.

Events:

- ❖ City Director Capi Peck – May 21st, 5pm -7 pm-Fundraiser for Reservoir Park tornado recovery at Trios Restaurant. Please come out and support. Thank you to Capi Peck.
- ❖ April 29th Ribbon cutting at Kiwanis Park
- ❖ #LRStrong Relief Event, April 12th. Location: Rock Creek Trail at Bowman entrance.
- ❖ Impact the Rock on April 26 – 9am. City's Beautification Day. Project in every Ward.
 - Three (3) for Parks
 - Fouche Creek in Benny Craig Park. Cleaning the waterway via Canoes and Kayaks
 - Rock Creek Trail – Picking up Litter
 - Reservoir Park – Tree planting (1st Post tornado event)
- ❖ Projects in each Ward
 - Ward 1 - Downtown LR Streets
 - Ward 2 - Benny Craig Park
 - Ward 3 - Little Rock Zoo
 - Ward 4 - Reservoir Park
 - Ward 5 - Rock Creek
 - Ward 6 - Kanis Road
 - Ward 7 - The Animal Village

Questions from the Events:

- ❖ Commissioner Fletcher asked about the city being signed up as a provider for the new Arkansas State law requiring High School students to have volunteer hours.
 - Volunteer Coordinator Sykes advised that she was working on that.

Presentation:

- ❖ No Presentation

Unfinished Business:

- ❖ Subcommittee Reports
 - Marketing Subcommittee Report – Nothing to present at this time.
 - Masterplan Subcommittee Report – Commissioner Bernardo – Asset disposition processes and best use.
 - Asked for online access to 2001 Masterplans.
 - Parks Conservancy Subcommittee Report – Chair – Sam Ellis attended the Parks Conservancy Meeting and discussed the upcoming Trios Fundraiser for Reservoir Park. Director Peck discussed the Fundraiser and the goal of \$25,000.



- ❖ Goals/Ideas for 2025
 - Chairman France will discuss these during the site visits.
- ❖ Quarterly Site Visits at the Center/Parks visit dates for Parks Commission
 - April 24th at 4pm, Thursday afternoon/evening – MacArthur Park / AMFA
 - July 10th at 4pm, Thursday afternoon – Southwest CC or West Central CC-Ballfield.
 - October 9th at 4pm, Thursday afternoon – Boyle Park
- ❖ Present a Draft Presentation for the BOD
 - Director Peck asked for Kiwanis to be added.
 - Chairman France requested a Motion to make changes and addition of Kiwanis Park.
 - Commissioner Bernardo made a Motion, Commissioner Whiteside 2nd the motion.
Voted on and passed.
 - Presentation is on May 6th.
 - Director Couch will get this added to the Board of Director's Meeting Agenda.
- ❖ Vote on Applications for Commission Vacancies
 - Chairman France asked for the Vacancy Applications t be sent out again.
 - City Director, Capi Peck made comments that the Parks Commission is the only one who operates this way.
 - Vice Mayor Wyrick added to the comments and provided context for the reason that the bylaws were set up this way.
 - Commission Fletcher asked a question about the process.
 - Chairman France asked for a motion to discuss and review vacancy applicants and process during the next meeting.
 - Commissioner Bernardo made a motion, 2nd by Commissioner Ellis. Voted on and Passed.
 - Will add this to the next meetings agenda.

New Business:

- ❖ Discuss Special Meeting on March 19, 2025
 - Chairman France referenced the previous BOD presentation review.
- ❖ New date needed for May 14, 2025, meeting due to conflict w/ City of Little Rock Employee Appreciation luncheon.
 - Director Couch advised that they could leave it at the same date. The commission decided to leave the meeting as is.

Agenda items for next meeting:

- ❖ Items previously discussed throughout the meeting.

Board – liaison Feedback

- ❖ Vice Mayor – Wyrick advised that the Commissions are still doing virtual meetings.

Adjournment:

- ❖ Chairman France asked for Motion to Adjourn.
 - Commissioner Bernardo made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Ellis 2nd the motion.
Voted on and Passed. Meeting Adj at 12:55 pm.