



## Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2022, Minutes  
The Centre at University Park

**Attendance:** Ren Bressinck, Matt Buie, Samuel Ellis, Ashley Martinez, Lauren Eldridge, and Linda Smith

**Absent:** Alexandria Washington, Delwin Slater, Demetria Murdock, Doris Wright, Jesse Gibson, and Kenneth Taylor

**City Board of Director Liaison:** Director Capi Peck

**LRPR Staff:** City Attorney Beth Carpenter, Leland Couch, Angela Nelson, Shawanda Robinson, J.P Rogers and Kaleb Turner.

**Welcome and Introductions:** Chairman Buie called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present. Chairman Buie proceeded with the agenda to the roll call and approval of March's minutes.

**Roll Call and Approval of Minutes:** Angela Nelson called the roll and Chairman Buie reported a quorum was four (4) members in attendance. Official business will be voted on during the meeting.

Chairman Buie then entertained a motion to approve the March commission meeting minutes.

Beth Carpenter mentioned on page three, paragraph five of the March minutes, which revisions should be made on the FOIA statement.

Motion was moved by Commissioner Martinez. Seconded by Commissioner Eldridge.

The March commission meeting minutes were approved.

**Citizen Communication:** No citizen communication.

Chairman Buie then called for any staff reports.

**Staff Reports:** Director Leland Couch started staff reports by introducing J.P Rogers as the new Parks Maintenance Manager, who was at First Tee prior to accepting his new position. Director Couch also reintroduced Shawanda Robinson as the new Deputy Director of Recreation Services.

Administration

Angela Nelson Deputy Director of Administration proceeded with staff reports for Administration stating, staff at the front desk are taking reservations for pavilions and have noticed an increase in rentals since the opening of rental reservations. Nelson mentions that

reservations are at 95% booked. She mentions the focus on receiving small training of reconciling and data entries that deal with the ActiveNet System the department uses. Nelson states that hiring is the top priority, getting all available positions filled. Lastly, Angela congratulated staff J.P Rogers and Shawanda Robinson on their new positions with the department.

#### Recreation

Deputy Director of Recreation Services, Shawanda Robinson opened recreation staff reports by informing the commission that there will be a Tennis Tournament March the 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> for the National level junior's Tournament. Following that tournament at the end of the month, there will be another tennis Tournament on the 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> for the Chenal Junior's Tournament. Robinson mentions, there will be players coming from all the country to participate in these tournaments. Robinson then reported First Tee had a successful tournament over the weekend, with many of participants in attendance.

Shawanda Robinson informs the commission that the Athletics Department, is preparing to start the Summer Playground Program on June 6<sup>th</sup>, which will occur for eight weeks. Registration for the program starts on May. Robinson mentions that numbers are being cut back in this program due to future concerns of Covid-19. Senior Programs are aging and active daily from various activities, such as their favorite, Bean Bag Baseball and Chair Volleyball. Deputy Director of Recreation Services, Shawanda Robinson reported that there was a Bean Bag Baseball tournament held at the West Central Community Center against other senior programs in the surrounding area.

Shawanda Robinson lastly reported that all six community centers are gearing up for Soccer, Tee ball, and Baseball, starting on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Track and field program has been adjusted to accepting three and four year olds to play. MacArthur Museum is back open and doing school tours. Robinson lastly informed the commission that recreation will be creating new programs and activities for all ages, and calling them opportunities and experiences. Robinson mentioned programs like aviation, coding, and archery are ideas in the works for creating various opportunities and experiences in recreation.

#### Parks Guest

New Parks Maintenance Manager, J.P Rogers, introduced himself stating his experience of working 19 years with the City of Little Rock. Prior to joining the City of Little Rock, he worked in private sectors, public golf courses, and country clubs. Rogers mentions that in the past he has worked at (6) six golf courses. Rogers reports that currently he is taking care of First Tee and parks maintenance.

Director Leland Couch mentions, he will proceed with his staff report during New Business on the topic of the Parks 2022 Budget.

With no further reports, Chairman Buie proceeded to move down the agenda to old business.

**Old Business:** Commissioner Lauren Eldridge gave an update on the 2022 Parks Commission Golf Tournament. Eldridge stated the official day of the Tournament will be the Friday before Memorial Day, May 27<sup>th</sup> starting at 8:00 AM. Lauren Eldridge mentioned that she has finalized an information packet, which she will be sending out. Commissioner Eldridge stated the tournament will be raising the prices on sponsorships this year, so there can be more money made, to go towards the beneficiary. As we move towards the start date of the tournament, Commissioner Eldridge states that prizes and raffle donations are needed. One prize mentioned from Commissioner Eldridge was a weekend at Oaklawn, presented by George at Rebsamen.

On the day of the tournament Eldridge mentions that it would be helpful to have a couple of volunteers in the morning, to assist with on-site payment, getting beverages cold, and handing out goodies and information. Flight one will start at 8:00 AM and volunteers would need to report by 7:00- 7:15 AM. Flight two will start at 1:00 PM, after lunch that will be provided by Director Peck, Trios, and Chester's Chicken. Commissioner Eldridge continues to mention that the prizes and raffles will start at the end of the tournament. Commissioner Eldridge mentioned that Director Leland Couch will be creating a new and improved flyer to advertise registration and information of the 2022 Golf Tournament. Commissioner Eldridge ends her update by mentioning a one-way email being sent out to the commission about the Golf Tournament and updates.

Chairman Buie asked for a reminder when time comes on volunteer assistance for the tournament.

Lastly, Commissioner Eldridge stated that last year the proceeds went towards Wakefield Park for improvements, and this year's proceeds will create a fund for the kid's recreational programs that are offered by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Chairman Buie steps in the conversation to formalize a vote to allow the proceeds from the Golf tournament to go into a special recreation fund that can be used by Deputy Director of Recreation Services Shawanda Robinson for recreational purposes. In Order to use funds, Robinson would come to the commission and request expenditure of funds through the account. The commission will then have the ability to vote on the recommended request.

Chairman Buie then entertained a motion to approve the proceeds of the Golf Tournament going into a special funds account for recreational use. Motion was moved by Commissioner Eldridge and Seconded by Commissioner Ellis.

*The motion was approved.*

Director Couch questions Commissioner Eldridge if a Banner was ever used to advertise the tournament. Commissioner Eldridge responds saying that flyers in the center were available but a banner has never been used.

Chairman Buie then proceeds to appointment of Committees.

Chairman Buie restates chairs of each committee being: Parks Conservancy Liaison is Commissioner Bressinck, Outreach and Social Media, is Commissioner Martinez, and Master

Plan and Vision, is Commissioner Smith. Chairman Buie asks Commissioner Martinez if there she has any questions or concerns and if she would like to appoint/ ask a couple of members of the commission to be a part of her respected committee.

Chairman Buie tables the appointment of committees due to missing commissioners. Buie states that appointments will be held during next month's meeting. Also, Chairman Buie mentions that Director Couch has communicated with the City Clerk's office for replacements of members, three members have been appointed to the commission, who hopefully will be in attendance during May's Commission meeting.

Chairman Buie then proceeds to New Business.

**New Business:** Chairman Buie opens discussion on Parks 2022 Budget and gave the floor to Director Couch.

Director Couch reported an update stating the first page of the budget is showing city information towards funding for previous sales tax, which is expired. The second page shows finalized projects intended for the years. Kanis parks improvements were towards the basketball courts and road infrastructure. Couch mentions there has been a final bid that project at \$1.4 million. Interstate park improvements are towards the resurfacing of roadways. This project was at 60% moving to 90% in the engineering drawing, Couch plans on meeting with the engineering team to discuss the drawings. Boyle Park mountain biking was a grant the department received, which had a bid last year, then ran into some problems in the attorneys office, and now resolving those issues and close the bid. Western Hill is in the process of finishing project and Tri-Creek Greenway received \$3 million in grants, along with Parks matching \$750,000, making it a \$3.7 million project.

With no further discussion, Chairman Buie opened the floor for agenda items for next month's meeting.

Lauren Eldridge comments on having the 2022 Golf Tournament added to the agenda for more updates.

Director Leland Couch mentioned adding an update on Parks accreditation process.

Chairman Buie lastly added to the commission, when new recruits are known and information is given, Buie encourages current Commissioners to reach out to them for welcoming.

With no further discussion Chairman Buie adjourned the meeting at 1:02 p.m.

**The meeting was adjourned.**