

MINUTES

On October 18thth, 2023 the Parks and Recreation Board met at 01:30 p.m. at the Parks and Recreation Board Room located at 509 S. Johnson Street Amarillo, TX, 79107 for a Regular Meeting.

VOTING MEMBERS	PRESENT	NO. MEETINGS HELD SINCE APPOINTMENT	NO. OF MEETINGS ATTENDED
Ms. Terry Price	No	62	53
Mr. Luke Austin	No	54	39
Mr. Robert Altman	Yes	45	42
Ms. Tiffany Podzemny	Yes	37	35
Mr. John Terry	Yes	7	6
Mr. Jeff Brain	No	27	24
Ms. Sherrie Ferguson	Yes	7	7
Mr. Shelby Massey	Yes	17	16
Mrs. Skylar Gallop	Yes	6	5
Mr. Josh Craft	Yes	2	1

ATTENDEES:

MICHAEL KASHUBA	DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION
BECKI DRYER	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION
JAMES STOW	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION
MEGAN SMITH	RECORDING SECRETARY
GEORGE PRIOLO	GENERAL MANAGER OF GOLF OPERATIONS
AUSTIN FARLEY	AQUATICS SUPERVISOR
BERKELEY HILLIARD	ZOO CURATOR
CINDY PEREZ	BEAUTIFICATION AND PUBLIC ARTS COORDINATOR
JEFF WHITESELL	SENIOR SERVICES COORDINATOR
LANDON MILLER	WARFORD ACTIVITY CENTER SUPERVISOR
MISTY PRIZ	ATHLETIC SUPERVISOR

- ITEM 1

Call to Order

Chairman, Ms. Tiffany Podzemny, established a quorum and called the regular scheduled meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to order at 01:34 p.m.
- ITEM 2

Public Comments

Amarillo citizen, Susan Smith, left comments for the board regarding vacant land in Westcliff.

Amarillo citizen, Martha Schroeder, left comments for the board concerning open land in Westcliff.
- ITEM 3

Discuss and Consider Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Sherrie Ferguson, said motion seconded by Mr. Bob Altman, voting aye were 7 members, voting no were none, carried to approve meeting minutes from August 9th, 2023, as written.
- ITEM 4

4. A. The Parks and Recreation Board will Discuss or Receive Reports on the Following Current Matters or Projects:

a) Department Divisional Updates

1) Administration: Mr. Michael Kashuba updated the board on the following items:

- Security Concerns: There was an incident where a contractor's vehicle was hotwired, damaging trees and the fence. Conversations are ongoing with the local police department (APD) to address this issue, including the installation of cameras and license plate readers.
 - Park Lighting and Fencing: There are challenges with park lights being on timers while installing cameras. They are working on separate power sources for the cameras and considering extending a road to improve response times. Fencing options are also being explored.
 - Lease Amendment: The Youth Sports Foundation no longer wants to use John Stiff Park and has relocated their activities to Martin Road. A lease amendment was taken to the council to reflect this change.
 - Botanical Gardens Lease: The lease agreement with the Botanical Gardens was clarified and approved by the council.
 - Organizational Changes: There have been changes in city management, with Andrew Freeman becoming the interim city manager and Laura Storrs as the interim deputy city manager.
 - Appointments: Upcoming appointments to the board are expected, with the council

making these decisions in the near future.

- Council Requests: The council has asked the board to evaluate the viability of Southwest Pool and reevaluate special event fees.
 - Work Order System: The implementation of a new software for a work order system is set to improve efficiency in handling work orders and responding to citizen inquiries.
 - National Conference: Staff members attended a national conference in Dallas, where they gathered valuable information and learned about grants for various park-related projects.
- 2) Aquatics: Ms. Dryer updates the board on the following:
- Swim Lessons: The organization has had a positive response to their swim lessons, both group and private. All lifeguards have done well in teaching lessons, and there are plans to get a full-time pool manager certified in the Red Cross's WSI curriculum.
 - Pumpkin Patch Event: A successful event, the "pumpkin patch at the pool," was held on October 7. Kids could jump into the pool to pick pumpkins, paint them, and enjoy games, cupcakes, and juice. The event sold out, and there are considerations for expanding it next year.
 - Pool Schedule: The organization outlined its pool schedule, including lap swim, water aerobics, open swim, swim lessons, evening water aerobics, and weekend programming.
- 3) Amarillo Zoo: Ms. Berkeley Hilliard updates the board on the following items:
- "Boo at the Zoo" Event: The annual event was held a week earlier than previous years and was successful in terms of revenue, with increased sponsorship and the gift shop was open for the first time during the event.
 - Event Safety: There was only one medical incident (a "code blue") during the event, where a person experienced heart issues but received prompt assistance. Some behavioral issues involving high school volunteers are being addressed.
- 4) Athletics: Mr. James Stow updates the board on the following items:
- Fall Leagues: Fall leagues for adult softball and co-ed softball are nearing completion, with two to three weeks left in the season, including make-up games and an end-of-the-year tournament.
 - Kids Inc Events: Kids Inc soccer and other kids' events have wrapped up.
 - High Plains Fast Pitch: A league hosted at Martin Road has also concluded its season, with Halloween tournaments still to come.
 - ASA Soccer: ASA soccer is winding down, with approximately one to two weeks left in the season.
 - Indoor Sports: Challenges have arisen in securing enough indoor courts for leagues. The organization is working with AISD to reserve court time, but custodian staffing has been a limitation.
 - Field Maintenance: The organization aims to improve field facilities and consider lighting and fencing projects to meet the demand for nighttime sports events.
 - Future Projects: The completion of lighting projects has allowed for early planning of field improvements, with a focus on field quality.
 - Interest from Schools: Some schools are expressing interest in using the improved sports complexes, including Rick Klein, for varsity football and soccer, sparking discussions about necessary equipment and facilities.
- 5) Beautification and Public Arts: Ms. Cindy Perez updates the board on the following items:
- National Cleanup Day: On September 16, the organization had 33 volunteers participate in National Cleanup Day at Twelve and Whitaker. They collected 57 bags of trash and filled one roll-off container with debris, primarily from illegal dumping. Since then, Solid Waste has collected four more roll-offs of illegal dumping.
 - Coca-Cola Cleanup: On October 7, the organization partnered with Coca-Cola and Keep Texas Beautiful for a cleanup project at Farm Road Complex. 22 Coca-Cola employees participated, and they collected about 35 bags of trash.
 - Park Adoption Program: The adoption of parks in the city has been successful. Elevate Amarillo adopted Ellwood Park, and they have organized cleanups and other park improvement initiatives. The Amarillo Downtown Lions Club recently adopted Medi Park and plans to hold membership drives and cleanup events.
 - Presentation to MPO: The Beautification of Public Arts Board created a subcommittee to present recommendations for the Port to Plains project by TxDOT. The presentation emphasized overall beautification, and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) liked it so much that they made beautification and landscaping one of their organization's goals.
 - Significance of Planning: Having beautification and landscaping language in place for city planning is significant because it helps guide long-term projects and influences how organizations like TxDOT design and implement their road projects.

6) Capital Projects:

- Capital Projects Budget: The organization's capital projects budget for the year is approximately \$1.5 million, which includes some funds carried over from the previous year, as well as funds reallocated from park maintenance savings.
- Lighting Projects: Most of the lighting projects are complete, but a few remain, particularly at John Stiff softball and El Alamo fields.
 - Approved Lighting Projects: The City Council has approved lighting projects for San Jacinto, Sam Houston (used for Starlight Theater events), and Medi Park. The priority is to begin with San Jacinto lighting. Thompson, Mary Hazel Rig Park, and Bones Hooks are also proposed for future lighting projects.
 - Soccer Field Lighting: Proposing the installation of lighting for the three north fields at John Stiff Memorial Park to maintain them as game-ready fields.
 - Collaborating with Law Enforcement: The organization is working with the police department to identify and address dark spots in parks, with the goal of improving safety and visibility.
- Southwest Pool: The future of Southwest Pool is under consideration, including the possibility of demolition and a master plan for the area.
- Memorial Park Gazebo: Ongoing plans to renovate the gazebo at Memorial Park, addressing structural issues and making renovations.
- Restroom Remodeling: Plans for remodeling restrooms at various locations, including the southeast and southwest parts of the city.
- Concrete Repair: Addressing trip and fall hazards in parks through a unit cost bid for concrete repair and replacement.
- Miscellaneous Equipment Purchases: Considering equipment purchases to enhance operational efficiency, such as golf carts for staff.
- Asset Replacement: Replacing shelters, benches, trash cans, and athletic equipment.
- Irrigation Redesign: Focusing on improving irrigation systems to allow for better isolation of problems rather than shutting down entire parks when issues arise.
- Inclusive Playground: Utilizing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to conduct a survey and layout for an inclusive playground.
- Installation of Playgrounds: The John Stiff Memorial Park playground has been installed and is awaiting final ADA inspection. West Hills playground installation is almost complete. East Park playground will start once West Hills is finished.
- Rick Klein Soccer Fence: The installation of the fence is almost complete.
- Resurfacing Tennis Courts: The tennis center and Memorial Park courts have been resurfaced, and a grant request will be submitted to seek reimbursement for these improvements.
 - Ribbon Cutting Event: A reopening event was held to showcase the newly lit courts and encourage people to visit and use the facilities.

7) Golf Operations: Mr. George Priolo updates the board on the following items:

- Revenue Increase: The organization reported a significant increase in revenue compared to the previous year, with July up by about \$100,000, August by \$44,000, and September by \$58,000. Overall, revenue was up by approximately \$488,000.
- Golf Round Increase: Despite raising prices, the organization managed to increase the number of rounds played, resulting in higher revenues.
- Golf Course Expenses: Rising expenses were attributed to increased maintenance costs, particularly for items like fertilizer, grass, and irrigation. The organization incurred additional expenses due to irrigation system repairs and replacements.
- Subsidy Reduction: Over the years, the subsidy for golf operations has been significantly reduced. While it was once as high as \$1.8 million, it has been reduced to approximately \$580,000.
- Golf Tournaments: The organization hosts around 125 golf tournaments and events each year, with almost half of them being charity events. Charity events have generated over \$1.3 million this year, a substantial increase from previous years.
- Happy Hour Price Adjustment: The adjustment in happy hour prices, increasing them at one complex and lowering them at another, resulting in a more balanced distribution of golf rounds. Despite a slight decrease in rounds at one complex, the revenue increased.
- Competitive Pricing: The organization maintains competitive pricing compared to nearby golf courses. While some local country clubs might be considered competitors, the organization is the only public golf option in Amarillo.
- Future Price Adjustments: The organization anticipates further gradual increases in green fees over time to keep up with rising costs. The focus remains on balancing increased revenue with maintaining affordability for regular golfers.
- Explore the Four Program: The "Explore the Four" program offers a mini-pass for four rounds of golf, encouraging golfers to play each of the four courses. It has been successful in generating additional revenue, and the organization plans to continue

the program.

8) **Park Maintenance:** Mr. James Stow updates the board on the following items:

- **Concrete Contract:** The concrete contract is currently open for bids. This contract is significant as it will address concrete-related issues, including fixing eyesores and painted hazards within the area.
- **Annual Bids:** Various annual bids are set to go out for golf and park maintenance, including bids for fertilizer, chemicals, golf supplies, grass seed, and other related items. These bids will be awarded in January and February following the standard process.
- **Irrigation Challenges:** This year has posed challenges for irrigation due to multiple mainline breaks. The exact cause is uncertain but may be related to fluctuating weather conditions. A dedicated crew is working to address these issues, with ongoing repairs and replacements.
- **Litter Collection:** The litter routes for the north, Center City, and south crews resulted in a collection of nearly 4,000 bags of trash during the month of September. This highlights the ongoing efforts to keep the parks clean and litter-free.
- **Winterization:** Preparations for winterization are underway, including splash pads, pools, and other park amenities. The parks are being prepared for the winter season.
- **Holiday Decorations:** The planning for holiday decorations, including the Christmas tree and lights, will commence next month, in preparation for the upcoming holiday season.
- **Upcoming Bids:** In addition to the concrete contract, other upcoming bids include the rebidding of the forestry contract and the landscape maintenance contract, which will be synchronized for consistency. There is also consideration of a restroom cleaning bid to maintain recently reopened restrooms.

9) **Recreation and Special Events:** Ms. Becki Dryer shows the board pictures while she updates the board on the following items:

- **Staff Updates:** Kelsey, who was on maternity leave, has returned to the office, while Gloria, who was in charge of marketing and was also on maternity leave, has resigned. The department is in the process of hiring a replacement for the marketing position.
- **Recreation Special Events:** Several special events were highlighted, including an archery camp, a contract with the Panhandle Christian Home Educators Association (PCHEA) for a PE program, Starlight Cinema events in neighborhood parks, mother-son adventures, Hooked on Fishing, Kids Day Out, Lego camp, Nerf gun wars, and coding activities.
- **Participation and Outreach:** The department emphasized efforts to expand its reach, such as participating in local career fairs, community events like Safety Town, and outdoor programs like Backyard Bushcraft and camping experiences to encourage families to engage in camping and outdoor activities.
- **Texas Parks and Wildlife Grant:** The department mentioned the Texas Parks and Wildlife Grant, which has been used to promote outdoor activities like camping and kayaking, encouraging more people to enjoy the natural resources available in the area.
- **Upcoming Event:** The upcoming event, "Hocus Pocus Two in the Park," was highlighted. It will take place at Memorial Park, featuring games, activities, and a movie screening.

10) **Senior Services:** Ms. Becki Dryer shows the board pictures and a slide show including scan charts while she updates them on the following items:

- **Memberships:** Warford Activity Center currently has 152 members who are aged 50 and above. There were six new members in July. Jeff, the center's representative, has been active in presenting to various senior and community groups. He recently presented to the Senior Ambassador Coalition and the Amarillo Hi-Plains Kiwanis.
- **Website Traffic:** The Neighbor Hub website, associated with the center, received 119 unique visitors in August and 127 in September. This indicates growing interest and engagement with the center's offerings.
- **Upcoming Events:** The center is planning an open house on October 19 to allow people to explore the facility and learn about its programs. There's also a day trip scheduled to Creek House Honey Farm in Canyon, partnering with transit. A Christmas party for seniors is planned for December 14.
- **Cornhole Tournament:** The center hosted a cornhole tournament in August with twelve participants. The event was successful, and it has inspired some participants to continue meeting regularly for cornhole games. Another tournament is planned for January.
- **Hooked on Fishing Event:** The center organized a Hooked on Fishing event for seniors and veterans. Veterans from a local facility were brought to the event, which featured an accessible ramp for wheelchairs, making it an inclusive and enjoyable fishing experience.

11) Tennis Operations: Mr. James Stow updates the board on the following items:

- Improvements and Grand Reopening: The tennis facilities at Amarillo National Tennis Center and Memorial Park have seen significant improvements, including resurfacing of the courts and the installation of new lighting.
- Collaborations and Future Plans: The city has engaged in discussions with the Alex O'Brien Foundation and West Texas A&M University (WT) regarding potential partnerships. This collaborative approach aims to maximize the use of the tennis facilities.
- Hosting Tournaments and Rentals: There is interest in hosting tournaments and events at the tennis facilities. However, discussions are ongoing about the logistics of court reservations, rentals, and tournament hosting, with a focus on balancing these activities with public access.
- Challenges and Evaluation: The rapid growth of pickleball and increased demand for hosting events have raised challenges in accommodating both the public and tournament organizers. The plan is to evaluate and establish boundaries for walk-up play, court reservations, tournament hosting, and rentals.

12) Warford Activity Center: Ms. Dryer and Mr. Landon Miller update the board on the following items:

- Fitness Classes: The fall fitness schedule at Warford Community Center includes a range of classes, such as weight training with a personal trainer, a boxing circuit, senior fit, evening water aerobics, Saturday water aerobics, and cardio training with a personal trainer. These classes are free for members. Unfortunately, they are seeking a replacement instructor for several classes due to a staff member's move to Dallas.
- Water Aerobics: Water aerobics classes are highly popular, with an average of 25 attendees for morning classes and 10 to 15 attendees for evening classes. They are exploring options for finding an energetic replacement instructor.
- Social Dance Amarillo Partnership: Warford Community Center has partnered with Social Dance Amarillo to offer free dance lessons, including hip hop, country, salsa, and line dancing. Future collaborations and special events with Social Dance Amarillo are under consideration.
- Community Garden: The community garden project has been moved to the front of Warford Community Center to make use of the space that was formerly occupied by old playground equipment. The project involves creating raised garden beds, with assistance from Public Health and master gardeners. The goal is to provide fresh vegetables for local food pantries.

b) Budget update: Mr. Kashuba updates the board on the following items:

- Budget Approval: The budget for the new fiscal year, effective from October 1, has been approved by the Council.
- Fee Changes: Several fee changes are set to take effect, and the approach is to provide ample time for the public to adjust to these changes. These adjustments are planned to start on January 1. The fee changes include:
 - Tennis user fees going up to \$5.
 - Aquatics fees at the Southeast and Southwest pools being set at \$5 for daily admissions.
 - Thompson Pool's entrance fee increasing to \$7.
 - Zoo admission prices rising by \$3.

ITEM 5

Discuss Items for Future Agendas

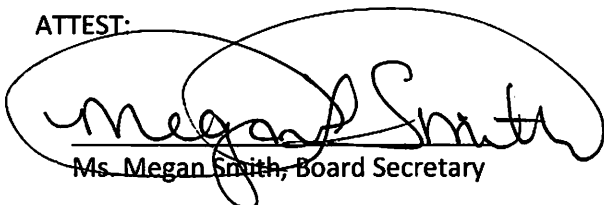
- 9th Street Trails – Parking lot update

ITEM 6

Adjournment

There, being no further business, Motion was made by Ms. Skylar Gallop to adjourn the meeting, said motion was seconded by Mr. Shelby Massey this meeting was adjourned at 03:12 p.m. This meeting was recorded, and all comments are on file with the City Parks and Recreation Department.

ATTEST:


Ms. Megan Smith, Board Secretary


Mr. Luke Austin, Board Chairman