

MINUTES

On December 13th 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
Mr. Howard Smith	Yes	1	1
Mr. Luke Austin	Yes	55	40
Mr. Robert Altman	Yes	46	43
Ms. Tiffany Podzemny	Yes	38	36
Mr. John Terry	Yes	8	7
Mr. Jeff Brain	Yes	28	25
Ms. Sherrie Ferguson	Yes	8	8
Mr. Shelby Massey	Yes	18	17
Mrs. Skylar Gallop	Yes	7	6
Mr. Josh Craft	Yes	3	2

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

MICHAEL KASHUBA	DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION
BECKI DRYER	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION
JAMES STOW	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION
SAMANTHA THOMPSON	RECORDING SECRETARY
MEGAN SMITH	OFFICE MANAGER
COURTNEY WHITE	ASSISTANCE CITY ATTORNEY
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
SARA BARTEL	MARKETING COORDINATOR
TANNER STEVENS	ASSISTANT PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

- ITEM 1

Call to Order

Chairman, Mr. Luke Austin, established a quorum and called the regular scheduled meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to order at 01:30 p.m.
- ITEM 2

Public Comments

No comments were made.
- ITEM 3

Discuss and Consider Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Bob Altman, said motion seconded by Ms. Skylar Gallop, voting aye were 8 members, voting no were none, carried to approve meeting minutes from October 18th, 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:

- Staff Member Promotions: Jerman Suaste: Promoted from Assistant Program Coordinator to Special Event Coordinator. Tanner Stevens: Welcomed as the new Assistant Program Coordinator. Sara Bartel: Promoted from Administrative Technician to Marketing Coordinator. Samantha Thompson: Welcomed as new Administrative Technician reporting to Megan Smith. Samantha will be actively involved in supporting board minutes and facilitating communication with board members. Eric Anderson: Welcomed as CIP Project Manager.
 - Lease Amendment Update: Mr. Kashuba apprised the board that, in discussions with the City Council, the Texas Panhandle Youth Sports Foundation proposed amending the lease agreement for the John Stiff Softball Complex. The foundation expressed concerns about safety and opted to relocate the lease to the Martin Road site.
 - Incidents at John Stiff Park: Mr. Kashuba reviewed with the board damages that had taken place at John Stiff Park in 2023. Tennis Center: A bench was slammed down causing damage to part of the court. Additional break-ins were reported. Softball

Complex (June): Incidents resulted in damage to the complex. Pool Area: A series of break ins occurred. Two aggravated robberies. Southwest Complex: A backhoe was stolen from a contractor and driven through the fence, causing damage. Dog Park: Damage occurred when a vehicle drove through the fence.

- Addressing Vandalism at John Stiff Park: Mr. Kashuba presented updates on measures taken to counter vandalism at John Stiff Park.
 1. Collaborating with APD to install cameras and license plate readers. Increased patrols when feasible.
 2. In process of removing restroom facility at the Skate Park. Process delayed due to asbestos abatement. Restroom has been painted ten times this year due to vandalism. Removal has been scheduled for December 19th.
 3. Considering the extension of the road to address the dead-end parking lot issue, with an estimated cost of \$300,000 for design and construction.
 4. Seeking budgetary estimates for lighting costs, with the intention of enhancing visibility from the road.
 5. Amarillo Police Department recommends a temporary closure to elevate consequences from citations to trespassing.
- Westcliff Update: Community members had submitted a comment regarding a potential park in the Westcliff vicinity, expressing interest in exploring a partnership with the city. Preliminary discussions are underway, and background assessments are being conducted to determine alignment with the master plan.
- Work Order System Update: The new work order system is set to soft launch in the coming week. According to consultants estimates, the implementation of this system is projected to reduce administrative time by approximately 70%. While there is consideration for potentially allowing community members to submit requests, this feature will not be available yet.
- Organizational Key Responses for City Manager: The Organizational Key Responses for the City Manager's evaluation encompass critical performance indicators for both departments and staff. The city has transitioned to an annual performance appraisal system, facilitating a comprehensive comparison of all employees concurrently. Anticipated implementation is set for early spring of the upcoming year.

2) Aquatics: Mr. Farley provided the board with the latest updates in the aquatics department:

- Introducing new aquatics programs during the off period between fall and winter lessons, with winter lessons commencing in January.
 1. Water Volleyball: Launched sessions on Monday nights, open sign-ups at no charge. Considering expansion for the upcoming year, including potential establishment of a league. Notably, 15 participants registered, and attendance consistently reached 15 individuals each night.
 2. Christmas Cinema at the Pool: Hosted a festive event featuring "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," with a special appearance by the Grinch. The event attracted an attendance of over 40.
 3. Upcoming Summer Programs: Anticipating the introduction of new programs for the summer season.

3) Amarillo Zoo: Ms. Berkeley Hilliard updates the board on the following items:

- Homeschool at the Zoo: Conducted a "Forest in a Jar" program, allowing children to create their own ecosystems to take home. Explored the impact of removing water, carbon, and soil from the ecosystem. The program had 13 out of 20 spots filled, prompting a discussion on potential cost adjustments due to the materials exceeding the initial estimate of \$5.00.
- Annual Christmas Party: Hosting an exclusive Christmas party for members and volunteers, with an invitation extended to the board. The festive event will take the form of a pajama party, featuring "Santa Paws," a jaguar dressed as Santa Claus.
- Safety Awareness Videos with Amarillo Fire Department: Collaborated with the Amarillo Fire Department to create safety awareness videos. This included a "Stop, Drop, and Roll" video featuring a jaguar. Upcoming collaboration will include a chaos video for the winter season, set at the fire station with Iris the camel walking in the background.

4) Athletics: Mr. James Stow updates the board on the following items:

- Seasonal Recap: Many seasons have concluded, and preparations for indoor volleyball have commenced. Current focus is on scheduling, coordinating with user groups (e.g., high points, fast pitch, West Texas youth baseball), and planning summer programs.
- Calendar Planning: Efforts to fill calendars, secure representatives, and complete necessary city processes for contracts and officials are in progress. Athletic staff is

- engaged in routine field repairs, facility painting, and restroom maintenance, including Southeast and Martin Road facilities.
- Rick Klein Complex Updates: Progress at Rick Klein Complex with the installation of fences, lights, and storage facilities. Interest from user groups, including football, lacrosse, and six-man football, with ongoing discussions on fees and usage.
 - Facility Expansions: Exploring expanded usage for Rick Klein Complex beyond soccer, including sports like lacrosse, football, cricket, and flag football. Positive outlook for Rick Klein Complex with improved lighting and fencing to protect the facility. Ongoing discussions with user groups interested in making Rick Klein their home fields.
- 5) Beautification and Public Arts: Ms. Cindy Perez updates the board on the following items:
- Mural Grant Application: Mural grant applications for the fiscal year are now open, starting from December 1 and concluding on December 22.
 - Habitat Restoration: Initiatives focused on creating habitat areas, starting with Rick Klein North, which features a long linear walking trail. Seeding wildflowers with an all-yellow mix for Amarillo's namesake and plans to implement natural areas along the trail. Exploration of programs like butterfly releases and collaboration with beekeepers for habitat restoration. Discussions with Texas Parks and Wildlife to identify areas for habitat restoration, drawing inspiration from Lubbock Lake Number Six.
 - Art Sculpture Contest with AmTech: Preliminary talks with the welding program at AmTech for a sculpture contest involving their students. Current art pads in various parks with plans to incorporate sculptures from the contest at select locations. Possibility of expanding the competition to other schools in the area, with potential partnerships for fabricating swing gates for parks.
 - Potential Partnerships with AmTech: Exploration of AmTech fabricating swing gates for parks. Proposed partnership involves providing materials, with AmTech students welding the gates, and city staff installing them. Recognized as a mutually beneficial partnership, offering real-world experience for students, and reducing costs for the city.
 - Arbor Day Proclamation: Acknowledged the Arbor Day proclamation at the recent city council meeting, emphasizing the importance of tree planting. Over the summer, 200 trees were planted at Martin Road as part of a project. This initiative aims to maintain recognition from the Arbor Day Foundation as a consecutive Tree City for approximately 23 to 25 years. The commitment to this tradition is affirmed, and the goal is to continue participating in this program.
- 6) Capital Projects:
- 9th Street Trails Parking Lot: Documents submitted to purchasing, pre-bid meeting on December 27, progressing toward bidding.
 - John Stiff Fencing: Fencing project in purchasing, similar to Rick Klein's setup, bidding to begin soon.
 - Lighting Projects: Completed John Stiff athletic field lighting; focus shifting to park lighting at Medi Park, San Jacinto, and Sam Houston. Playground installations finished, ADA inspections underway.
 - Fencing for Volleyball Court at John Stiff: Part of Rick Klein fencing project; material expected in December, installation in the new year.
- 7) Golf Operations: Mr. George Priolo updates the board on the following items:
- Offseason Updates: Introducing "Explore the Four" 2024 pass. Pass is currently selling at \$120, offering a cost-effective option for golfers. Sales ongoing from Black Friday through December 31. Eskimo Pricing for December and January: This program was initiated in 2017 and adjusts the fees to reflect course conditions. Regular rate green fees reduced by \$5.00.
 - Happy Hour and Fee Adjustments: Positive impact from fee adjustments last year, continuing in 2024. Report indicates success of happy hour initiatives. Programs for avid golfers to have discounted golf include 20 Round Mini Passes and Annual Pass Program where they can pay monthly.
 - Financial Performance and Subsidy Trends: Subsidy has decreased over the years, reaching \$597,000 last year from \$1.6 Million 6 years ago. Challenges with irrigation pump station expenses persist. October rounds flat, but revenue up by \$28,000. November sees a significant increase in rounds (up 1600) and revenue (up \$82,000) due to favorable weather conditions. Year-to-date performance: 1600 rounds up and \$107,000 ahead in revenue.
 - Tournament Planning and Charity Events: Working on the tournament calendar, aiming to finalize major tournament dates by month-end. Preparing for charity events and tournament bookings.
 - Future Updates: Planning to share the major tournament calendar soon. Ongoing focus on financial performance, weather impacts, and strategic planning.

- 8) **Park Maintenance:** Mr. James Stow updates the board on the following items:
- **Concrete:** City council approved the concrete contract discussed over the past few months. Once work order numbers are received, projects will commence, focusing on walking paths and ADA-compliant features in parks.
 - **Grinder Lease:** A grinder lease for golf maintenance is in progress, pending council approval. Addresses the need for grinders at both complexes, eliminating the inconvenience of transporting equipment across town.
 - **Seasonal Purchases and Winter Projects:** Seasonal supplies (seed, fertilizer, chemicals, tools) are in purchasing, awaiting bids. Winter projects underway, including irrigation system upgrades at Elwood Park, addressing outdated hydraulic systems causing irrigation challenges.
 - **Collaboration with AmTech for Gate Fabrication:** Collaboration with AmTech for gate fabrication is in progress, contributing to park maintenance initiatives.
 - **Thompson Park Road Removal Project:** Initiating a project to remove outdated roads in Thompson Park, consolidating access points. Aiming to enhance control and monitoring for APD groups, improve enforcement efforts. Collaboration with streets department to address road removal, acknowledging challenges with thick asphalt.
 - **Future Plans for Thompson Park Area:** Thompson Park Road removal set the stage for future development plans. Anticipating improvements in areas like disc golf, aligning with the need for overall restoration.
- 9) **Recreation and Special Events:** Ms. Becki Dryer presents the following items to the board:
- **Recreation held three "Kids Day Out" sessions during Thanksgiving Break.** 20 to 35 kids participated, engaging in fun activities. Other programs: Mario Kart competition, coding, Lego, and Nerf wars. PCHEA (Panhandle Christian Home Educators Association) sessions continued every Tuesday with an average attendance of 60 kids.
 - **Hocus Pocus Two in the Park:** 950 attendees enjoyed Halloween activities, games, and the movie "Hocus Pocus Two." Introduction of Scarecrow Lane: Various city departments participated, building scarecrows.
 - **Electric Light Parade:** The department participated in the Electric Light Parade organized by Center City. Decorated golf carts and the barrel train with a Polar Express theme.
 - **Breakfast with Santa:** Included two seating sessions: 8:30 AM (75 attendees) and 11:00 AM (54 attendees). Activities included photos with Santa, Grinch appearance, cookie decorating, craft-making, reindeer food creation, and a cool activity station.
- 10) **Senior Services:** Mr. Jeff Whitesell updates the board on the following items:
- **Membership:** Started with approximately 100 seniors and reached 200 by the end of November. Mr. Jeff Whitesell conducts presentations at various events to reach potential new members. (Senior Ambassadors, Kiwanis, and Lions Club.)
 - **Events:** Introduced cornhole tournament in the summer and plans for a cornhole tournament in January. Day Trip to Canyon Creek House Honey Farm and Lunch was a success. Looking to explore partnerships with Boy Scouts for potential camping trips.
 - **Medicare Advantage Benefits:** Promoting and utilizing the Silver Sneakers and Silver & Fit Programs via Medicare Advantage enables seniors to enjoy complimentary access to the Warford Activity Center.
- 11) **Tennis Operations:** Mr. James Stow updates the board on the following items:
- **Tennis Center Updates:** Completed resurfacing and lighting projects with USTA reimbursements covering half the costs.
 - **Pickleball Considerations:** The growing popularity of pickleball has prompted discussions on structuring hours, fees, and rental policies. A subcommittee from the board is expected to delve into these considerations, exploring fair pricing models and addressing concerns about facility usage during events.
 - **Cost Recovery Discussions:** As the tennis center explores more rentals, especially for pickleball, conversations about cost recovery and fairness to general park users are crucial. Exploring models similar to those used for golf events may guide these discussions.
 - **Maintenance Challenges:** Some challenges have been encountered with the installation of windscreens donated by the O'Brien foundation. Tear issues arose during installation attempts, leading to ongoing coordination with park maintenance to find a suitable solution.
- 12) **Warford Activity Center:** Mr. Landon Miller update the board on the following items:
- **Membership:** Warford had nearly 21,000 total membership scans in 2023, marking an increase of around 3,000 scans from the previous year. Approximately 2,600

memberships were either sold or renewed during the year.

- Facility Rentals: The facility experienced a total of 412 rentals by the twelfth month, showcasing an increasing trend. Specific rental breakdowns include 14 bounce house rentals, 31 game room rentals, 48 multi-use room rentals, 74 full fitness studio rentals, and 160 gym rentals. Warford remains a hub for various events, with an impressive 13 events scheduled for a single upcoming weekend, including birthday parties, a basketball tournament, and other special events. The facility is projected to reach approximately 450 total rentals by the end of the year.

b) 4. B. Update on appointments of new board members, and recognition of outgoing board members.

- During the recent council meeting, changes to board appointments were made. Former councilman Howard Smith is stepping in for Dr. Eddy Sauer, who resigned. Ronnie Walker is taking over Terry Price's position due to her retirement. Additionally, Ronny Head, Rodney Hill, and Hobert 'Gunny' Brown, and Thomas Riney will join the board in January. The departing members, Jeff Brain, Terry Price, Johnathon David Terry, and Sherrie Ferguson were recognized for their significant contributions with a token of appreciation. The board acknowledged the progress made in recent years, including the development of the master plan and asset master plan, and expressed gratitude for the outgoing members' dedication and efforts.

ITEM 5 Present, Discuss, and Consider Action for Special Event Fee adjustments.

This item is to discuss and consider recommending to City Council new fee adjustments for Special Events.

- The board members discussed council's request for a review of special event fees. The subcommittee, comprising Bob, Tiffany, and Terry, recommended maintaining current fees after evaluating revenue, damage considerations, and staff time. A pilot program, linked to recognized neighborhood associations, allowing up to three free events per year for nonprofits, was discussed as a potential model.
- Bob Altman moved to retain the existing fees, emphasizing flexibility to address various community needs and exploring ways to enhance the pilot program. Luke Austin seconded the motion. The discussion highlighted the balance between revenue generation and supporting nonprofit initiatives. The board expressed willingness to adapt fees based on ongoing assessments and community partnerships, recognizing exceptions for nonprofits contributing significantly to park maintenance or with specific local focuses.

ITEM 6 Discuss Items for Future Agendas:

ITEM 7 Adjournment

There, being no further business, Motion was made by Ms. Sherrie Ferguson to adjourn the meeting, said motion was seconded by Mr. Bob Altman this meeting was adjourned at 03:11 p.m. This meeting was recorded, and all comments are on file with the City Parks and Recreation Department.

ATTEST:



Ms. Samantha Thompson, Board Secretary

Ms. Samantha Thompson, Board Secretary



Ms. Tiffany Podzemny, Board Vice Chair

Ms. Tiffany Podzemny, Board Vice Chair