



Independence Park Commission Minutes

September 5, 2024 4:30 PM

Sermon Center, 201 N. Dodgion, South Room

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kyser called the meeting to order at 4:42 PM.

Commissioners present: Chairman Kyser, Kay Douglas, Jana Evans, Paula Martin

Parks, Recreation & Tourism staff present: Morris Heide, Frank Buhro, Mike Hicks, Jennifer Kim, Rosie Carlson, Cheryl DeHaan, Jeff Umbreit

Communications staff present: Madeline Rincon

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

1. General Obligation Bond Proposal - Lois McDonald & Jason White

Lois McDonald and Jason White are members of a volunteer committee promoting a General Obligation bond proposal expected to be on the ballot in April 2025. They presented information about projects currently in the proposal which include deferred maintenance on bridges, streets, and sidewalks as well as a new animal shelter, justice center, and police headquarters building, \$20 million for park revitalization projects, \$10 million for historic sites maintenance, and \$75 million for a new recreation center. The city council will decide on the final list.

Commissioners are welcome to join Ms. McDonald and Mr. White on tours of community centers in neighboring cities.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. May 2, 2024 Meeting

May 2, 2024 – Commissioner Douglas motioned. Minutes unanimously approved as presented.

STAFF REPORT

1. Budget

Parks, Recreation and Tourism Director Morris Heide presented financial reports for the fourth quarter showing 87% of budgeted funds were expended during Fiscal Year 2023-24.

Discussion followed about funding for historic sites which comes from the Transient Guest Tax. The City Council is expected to make a recommendation concerning the future of the tourism division at the Nov. 12 City Council study session.

2. Parks, Facilities and Grounds

Assistant Director Mike Hicks reported that crews were kept busy with preparations to open the water park and spraygrounds, cleaning up homeless camps, removing graffiti, and repairing vandalism in numerous parks. Crews removed several trees damaged by spring storms, trimmed back trees along trails, and removed invasive honeysuckle, in addition to routine mowing. Each headstone in Woodlawn Cemetery was string-trimmed and flags placed for veterans for the Memorial Day holiday weekend.

3. Recreation Services

Assistant Director Frank Buhro referenced the written report provided to the Commissioners and introduced recreation services supervisors.

Rosie Carlson presented information about Arts & Cultural programs, theatre performances and classes, Sports & Wellness programs including pickleball for beginners and open play sessions planned for all ages. Special events included a Toddler Town Easter Egg Hunt, the annual Youth Art Show which had eight schools participating, Main Street 1849 at SantaCaliGon, and the Best Little Arts & Crafts show coming up in November.

Cheryl DeHaan spoke about classes and activities for senior citizens including the nutrition site daily lunch service and home-delivered meals, several recent and upcoming trips, and popular fitness, social, and informational programs. Plans to expand pickleball playing times, tournaments and lessons were discussed.

Jeff Umbreit presented information about nature programs and special events. Fall hours start Oct. 1 at George Owens Nature Park. Staff updated the children's area in the DeWitt Center. The hummingbird festival started today which is always very popular, the chess program continues to grow with people of all ages and skill levels, and this was the first year for a tennis tournament at Santa Fe Park. The annual fireworks display involves coordination with many outside agencies and other departments. Upcoming events include Enchanted Forest, Heritage

Skateboarding Competition, Halloween crafts, Santa's Village and the Winter Solstice Torch-lit Hike.

4. Social Media

Madeline Rincon, Public Relations Manager referenced the report in the Commissioner's packet. There were no questions.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Community Center Feasibility Study update

Director Heide stated Pros Consulting & PGAV Architects will give their report to the City Council on Oct. 28. Pros Consulting is preparing a pro forma to plan staffing, operating and maintenance costs, and PGAV Architects is developing a rendering of a new community center.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Adventure Oasis - End of Year Report

Staff are preparing a report analyzing attendance and revenue, costs of necessary maintenance and repairs, and costs to operate with City employees. The contract with Midwest Pool Management ends this December. Director Heide will present the information to the City Council at the Oct. 14 study session.

2. Pickleball

A meeting between Recreation staff and pickleball players is being scheduled to discuss changes to playing times and fees. It was noted that the players really like the wooden floor in the Palmer Center gymnasium.

ADJOURNMENT - NEXT MEETING: 4:30 PM THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2024

FY 2024-25 Schedule: 4:30 PM on the first Thursday of September, November, February & May

Commissioner Douglas moved to adjourn. Commissioner Martin seconded. Meeting adjourned at 5:33 PM.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This commission is to act in an advisory capacity to the City Council relating to public education, use and knowledge regarding Parks and Recreation programs, will consider recommendations from the Tree Commission, will solicit and suggest disbursement of funds donated from private sources and will review the status of the projects funded by the Parks Improvement Sales Tax. They are to make a report to the City Council at least twice a year. They are to meet at least quarterly.