

NORTH LITTLE ROCK PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

JANUARY 22, 2013

The North Little Rock Parks and Recreation Commission meeting was called to order by Mrs. Vicki Stephens at 5:00 p.m., on January 22, 2013, at the North Little Rock Community Center.

Commission Members Present: Neil Bryant, Tom Davis, Chandra Martin, Vicki Stephens and Bruce Waller. Otistene Smith was working out of town and excused. Charles Jones was absent.

Staff Members Present: Bob Rhoads, Jan Eberle-Wilkins, John Crow, Tina Worrell, Steve Ralston, Jeff Caplinger, Jenny Cunningham, Renee Henson and Assistant City Attorney Paula Jones.

Others Present: Rebekah Howe, Jason Cauley, Shelly Shock, Jerry Cooper and Shannon Harris.

Disposition of Minutes: Mrs. Stephens presented minutes of the November 19, 2012, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. There was no December 2012 commission meeting.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Waller, to accept the minutes as presented. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

CARTI Fee Reduction: New fees were implemented for non-sponsored Parks and Recreation special events in city parks. Mrs. Worrell stated that non-profit CARTI has sponsored a bicycle ride in Burns Park for the last ten (10) years and would like for Parks and Recreation to waive one-half of the fees. For waiving one-half of the fees, CARTI would pay a fee of \$1,354 and recognize Parks and Recreation in various ways as a partial sponsor.

The estimated cost to Parks and Recreation based on last year's event was \$2,725, as shown:

Rental of Facility	\$1,300	Water (1)	\$ 10	Additional Restroom (1)	\$100
Electric Panel (2)	120	Bleachers (8)	200	Additional Hours (7)	875
Electric Outlet (1)	20	Picnic Tables (10)	100		

Staff feels this reduction of fees and what Parks and Recreation obtains in return would be a valuable exchange.

Mr. Bryant said he is familiar with CARTI. They are a very good organization and funds are spent responsibly.

Mrs. Martin agreed that they are a wonderful organization, but wants to make sure the commission continues to be a commission of integrity and stays consistent in actions. If the commission reduces fees for this group, the commission may have to do it for other groups of similar makeup and asking the same thing.

Mr. Bryant said he agrees with Mrs. Martin that each organization like this with a request for reduced fees would have to be reviewed. Another thing that needs to be taken into consideration is that CARTI has worked with the department ten (10) years and has proven that they have a good record of accomplishments that the commission can go on.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Waller, to approve this fee reduction and in return, become a partial sponsor and receive free advertising. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Stephens said she appreciates what CARTI does.

Association Annual Reports for 2012: Jeff Caplinger presented 2012 association reports from the Burns Park Athletic Association, Arkansas Soccer Club and North Little Rock Softball Association, as part of their agreements.

Association Annual Reports for 2012 (continued):

Burns Park Athletic Association President Jason Cauley, said that the Burns Park Athletic Association complex opened in April 2012. New tournaments are lined up that will bring in tournaments from surrounding states and cities. They expect leagues to double, triple or quadruple in the future.

Mr. Bryant asked Mr. Cauley who is responsible for turning off the complex lights each night.

Mr. Cauley said either a Burns Park Athletic Association member or himself are responsible.

Mr. Crow said that the lights can also be turned on or off by cell phone.

Mrs. Stephens and Mr. Bryant thanked him for coming to the meeting.

The **Arkansas Soccer Association** was represented by Shelly Shock.

Mr. Rhoads stated that the bid by the US Youth Soccer Association State Office, in conjunction with North Little Rock and Little Rock, was accepted to host the US Region III Soccer Tournament in late June 2015. There are 198 teams that will be participating.

The **Burns Park Softball Association** was represented by Jerry Cooper, who has served on the board for 25 years. They will hold their first meeting of the year in February 2013.

Mr. Rhoads and Mrs. Stephens thanked him for his service.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Martin, to accept reports for the Burns Park Athletic Association, Arkansas Soccer Association and Burns Park Softball Association. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Association Agreements for 2013: Mr. Caplinger stated that he met with members of the Burns Park Athletic Association, Arkansas Soccer Club and North Little Rock Softball Association, and proposed 2013 agreements are being presented for execution. Each of these new reformatted agreements reflect changes to date which are needed for scheduling purposes, field maintenance and concessions.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Waller, to accept agreements with the Burns Park Athletic Association, Arkansas Soccer Club and North Little Rock Softball Association for 2013. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Stephens thanked them for all they do for the Parks and Recreation Department.

Burns Park Burn Plan: John Crow stated that on the recommendation of Bert Turner, the department is looking to have and implement a controlled burn at no cost to the department or city. The Parks and Recreation maintenance division, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and Pulaski County Forestry Commission, is requesting support from the Parks and Recreation Commission to proceed with a prescribed burn of 482+/- acres in Burns Park. The acreage basically consists of the forested area south of I-40. It will improve site lines for park users. They will start as soon as the department notifies them to proceed. A notification plan has already been designed.

The main objectives of the prescribed burn are to reduce hazardous fuel load (grass, weeds, leaves, litter) and ladder fuel (saplings, vines) to prevent future wildfires, to improve the habitat for resident wildlife, and to reduce undesirable vegetation species that are competing for nutrients, water and sunlight with the native species. The burn crew will consist of state-certified wild land fire crewmembers from the Nature Conservancy and Arkansas Forestry Commission. Parks employees and experienced volunteers will assist away from fire lines to maintain safety. The burn will be performed under perfect conditions between April through November, section by section.

Burns Park Burn Plan (continued): Mr. Rhoads stated that the City Council and media will be notified, as well as the schedule announced and contacts made.

Mrs. Stephens said a notice needs to be put in the *Times* newspaper to notify, explain and educate people and organizations. The city has been fortunate to have not had a major fire in the park. She is glad that these organizations are willing to do this job for the department.

Mr. Waller asked if the commission has authority to approve this action. He thinks this is a good plan but the public response might be controversial. Education is the key when notifying the public. He wants to be confident that the commission is approving something that is within authority to approve. He appreciates the work that competent organizations have already put into it.

Paula Jones stated that the Parks and Recreation Commission has absolute authority over Burns Park.

Mr. Waller said the Mayor and City Council should be notified first, and that the North Little Rock Fire Department is part of that presentation.

Mr. Crow said that all parties involved in this burn plan have been contacted, and all are capable and willing to do what is needed to make this successful.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to proceed with the Burns Park burn plan. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Stephens said to be sure that each ward gets this announcement to as many groups and people as possible. If there is opposition to this plan, let the commission members know immediately.

Mr. Rhoads said he would notify the commission if this happens.

Authorize Director to Approve Recurring Alcohol Consumption Requests in Parks: Mr. Rhoads reported that City Ordinance gives the Parks and Recreation Commission authority to approve alcohol sales and consumption at special functions in parks. The ordinance also allows the commission to give the Director of Parks and Recreation authority to approve such “recurring requests.”

Staff is asking the commission to give authority to the Director to approve such requests after an applicant has received the commission’s approval for two (2) consecutive years, and has demonstrated the ability to properly and responsibly distribute alcohol at their event.

Mr. Bryant said that it would make sense, based on history and the people that have followed the rules, to allow the Director to approve this after the first two (2) approved times by the commission with the same group.

Mrs. Stephens said she agrees with the Director having authority to approve these requests. If the commission had approved the event twice before and all rules and policies were followed without problems from an alcohol standpoint, she did not have a problem with the Director giving future approval.

Mrs. Martin said she feels that that the consensus of the commission could change, and if this responsibility was delegated to one (1) person now, not all future commission members would feel the same about this action. She feels that the commission’s policy of granting approval each time should stay the same.

Mrs. Stephens stated that if this responsibility is delegated to one (1) person now and it did not work out, it could always be brought before the commission and changed.

Authorize Director to Approve Recurring Alcohol Consumption Requests in Parks (continued): Mr. Waller stated that instead of it being an open-ended policy, an expiration date could be delegated regarding this authority, such as December 31, 2014. Alternatively, if the person in the Director's position changes, the authorization would no longer be valid. With these stipulations, the authority would no longer exist unless it is readopted.

Mr. Bryant stated that Mrs. Martin has a good point. Either a time limit could be put on this action or the commission could continue what is currently being done.

Mrs. Stephens said that instead of the event representative submitting information to the commission, it would be submitted to the Director. If the commission is not comfortable with that, they can continue to require the event representative to come before the commission. She has no problem either way and the decision will be what the majority of the commission wants.

Mr. Bryant recommended that this item be tabled until the February 2013, commission meeting and kept on the agenda. The commission agreed.

Private Golf Cart Storage at Burns Park: Steve Ralston stated that he has received numerous requests over the years to allow private golf carts to be used and stored at the city golf courses. When Parks and Recreation operated the Camp Robinson course, a building was available and about 40 people stored and used their own carts. Additional fees were collected to have these privileges and this proposed plan at Emerald Park will copy that.

A small pavilion on the north side of the maintenance building is available with limited space at the Emerald Park golf course. This pavilion can currently store ten (10) to 12 carts, then could possibly expand to 18 or 20 carts if needed. Play has decreased over the years and this would be one way to generate revenue. The proposed fees are low compared to other golf course storage fees. Owners would be responsible for their own cart.

Mr. Rhoads said that these proposed policies and fees should encourage more use of the course and more revenue would be made from green fees and cart storage fees.

2013 EMERALD PARK GOLF COURSE PRIVATE CART POLICY

1. Cost of storing or trailering one (1) private golf cart at the Emerald Park Golf Course will be \$400 per calendar year, and owner must be an annual member of the Emerald Park Golf Course.
2. Cost of storing or trailering one (1) private golf cart at Emerald Park will be \$500 for a husband and wife jointly for the calendar year. The husband and wife both must be annual members of the Emerald Park Golf Course.
3. Any person(s) storing or trailering one (1) private golf cart at Emerald Park and wanting to share a private golf cart annually, will be required to pay \$400 per person per calendar year (outside of the spouse).

2013 EMERALD PARK GOLF COURSE PRIVATE CART POLICY (continued):

4. There will be absolutely no usage or sharing of a private cart if the owner(s) of record is not playing. No loaning of private carts.
5. Private golf cart owners will be encouraged to let other players in their group ride with them. These other players/riders will pay a discounted fee to the golf shop of \$3.00 each for 9-holes, or \$5.00 each for 18-holes.
6. Owners' children and/or grandchildren will not be charged to ride, however, under no circumstances will they be allowed to operate the golf cart. Children over 18 years will be charged.
7. Person(s) storing a private golf cart(s) or trailering the golf cart(s) to Emerald Park Golf Course will be required to have evidence on file of a \$300,000 insurance policy or rider on insurance of the private golf cart.
8. Neither Steve Ralston Golf Shop, Inc. and/or the City of North Little Rock will be held responsible for any damage or liability arising from the storage or usage of the private golf cart. The owner(s) assumes any and all risks arising from the storage and operation of the private golf cart(s).
9. All golf cart rules and policies adopted by the Emerald Park Golf Course (under the same policies as the Burns Park Golf Course), Parks and Recreation Department and Parks and Recreation Commission, will be strictly adhered to. Private golf cart owner(s) will be held responsible and may lose their privileges for a violation(s).
10. Private golf cart(s) will be accessed only during the Emerald Park Golf Course regular hours of operation.

Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Martin, to approve this private cart usage policy and the fees associated with it. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Director Reports: Mr. Rhoads presented written director reports.

Remedial Investigation Feasibility Study: Mr. Rhoads stated that a remedial investigation feasibility study relating to past explosives found in Burns Park will start in the near future and expand through areas in the park. The golf course will be included and the public will be notified.

Mr. Caplinger stated that the Corps of Engineers would be the organization overseeing this project and responsible for sending press releases. Certain locations in Burns Park were formally used as artillery range/defense sites and ordnances were recently found. They will be looking for metal anomalies. If they find more concentrated areas of metal than others, they will return at a later date and take soil samples to see if anything further needs to be done.

Mr. Bryant said he would volunteer to attend this meeting and bring a report back to the commission.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Stephens, to have Mr. Bryant go to the informational meeting as a commission representative. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Director Reports: (continued):

Flooding at Glenview Recreation Center Park: Mr. Rhoads stated that the City Engineer visited the Glenview area when it was flooded, and made the following recommendations:

1. Raise the sidewalk along the existing trail where storm water has a tendency to top/block.
2. Add several yard drains interconnected at low points and tie piping into the storm drainage system along Ben Street.
3. Re-grade area to a low point, add yard drain and tie piping into the storm drainage system along Ben Street.

Mr. Rhoads stated that recommendation #2 will be implemented. French drains and connections into the existing storm drainage will be installed and re-evaluate if needed.

Mrs. Stephens asked Mrs. Worrell to notify Ida Larry of these upcoming plans.

Mrs. Worrell said she would notify her.

Proposed Lodge in Burns Park: Mr. Rhoads reported that planning is still being done on the proposed lodge at Burns Park and land conversion. He will bring a recommendation back to the commission in the future.

Park Ranger Position: Mr. Rhoads stated that the Park Ranger employee had resigned and plans are being made to fill the position. Mr. Caplinger may be sworn in at some time to be able to perform those duties until the position is filled.

Mrs. Stephens thanked the Parks and Recreation Department staff for all they do.

Calendar of Events: Mrs. Stephens stated that the next commission agenda deadline is Tuesday, February 5, 2013, at 2:00 p.m. Any items need to be called in by that date and time to the Parks and Recreation Administration Office.

The next regularly scheduled commission meeting is Tuesday, February 19, 2013, at 5:00 p.m., in the North Little Rock Community Center.

Adjournment: Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, to adjourn at 6:02 p.m. All voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments: Mrs. Stephens opened the meeting for public comments but there were none.

Submitted by,

Jan Eberle-Wilkins for Otistene Smith,
Secretary