

NORTH LITTLE ROCK PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

OCTOBER 20, 2014

The North Little Rock Parks and Recreation Commission meeting was called to order by Mrs. Vicki Stephens at 5:00 p.m., on October 20, 2014, at the North Little Rock Community Center.

Commission Members Present: Neil Bryant, Tom Davis, Otistene Smith, Vicki Stephens and Bruce Waller. Randall Bradley was absent and Charles Jones had to work.

Staff Members Present: Bob Rhoads, Jan Eberle-Wilkins, Jason Rhodes, Tina Worrell, Jeff Caplinger, Glenda Parker, Katrina Wilbon, Renee Henson, Jennie Cunningham, Pam Smith, Ernest Peoples, Rachel Gaines, Willie Elizandro and Paula Jones.

Others Present: Dana Rozenski, Loraine Williams, Edward Williams, Jace Williams and Jacob Wells.

Disposition of Minutes: Mrs. Stephens presented minutes of the September 15, 2014, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

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

Vote for Excused or Unexcused Absentees: Mrs. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to excuse Mr. Jones from this meeting. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bradley's absence will be voted on at the next regularly scheduled commission meeting.

Special Awards Presentation: Jeff introduced Dana Rozenski, Chair of Hershey Track and Field, who recognized Tina Worrell for her work this past year and for her service to this organization.

On behalf of the Parks and Recreation Commission, Mrs. Stephens thanked Mrs. Worrell for all she did with this program.

Naming of Burns Park Pavilion: Mr. Rhoads stated that at the last commission meeting, it was discussed to name a pavilion after Roosevelt Horton, a long time Parks and Recreation employee. During the 30-day wait before final action occurs, no comments against the naming have occurred.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Smith, to honor Roosevelt Horton by renaming pavilion #8 to the Roosevelt Horton Pavilion. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Willie Elizandro thanked the commission members, Mr. Rhoads and the staff for this action. There will be an official dedication ceremony at a later date.

Soccer Agreement for 2015 US Youth Soccer Southern Championships: Mr. Rhoads stated that the Arkansas State Soccer Association would be hosting the 2015 US Youth Soccer Southern Regional Championships, June 18-25, 2015, at the Burns Park Soccer Complex. This regional tournament agreement is separate because it is such a large endeavor. The commission members need to review and give final consideration. Soccer staff has reviewed and concur with the agreement.

Highlights include parks and recreation doing maintenance related to preparing the fields and keeping them mowed during the tournament; purchasing some new nets and field paint; and making sure all scoreboards and lights are operational for the event. Concessions will be run by the department.

Soccer Agreement for 2015 US Youth Soccer Southern Championships (continued): The Arkansas State Soccer Association will share 30% of the parking revenue with parks and recreation, buy some nets; mark and refresh all field lines; and conduct the overall event.

Approximately 200 teams will be participating from 11 states. This represents about 3,600 youth and coaches. With spectators and volunteers, this will mean about 15,000 people will be in central Arkansas involved in the event for the opening ceremony and soccer play for three (3) to seven (7) days, depending on if a team keeps winning. All major North Little Rock and Little Rock hotels will be used for this event.

Jeff Caplinger said that this is a separate agreement from the 2015 US State Soccer Association agreement, and Phil Duerr has agreed to the terms.

Mrs. Smith asked how excessive utilities are determined vs. normal use.

Mr. Rhoads said that if they bring in additional equipment requiring additional power and lines, then that would be above normal use.

Mr. Bryant asked if there was a contingency plan for the sewer and water lines.

Jason Rhodes said that Waste Water will pump every station before the tournament, and portable toilets can be brought in if needed.

Mr. Waller asked if department employees would need to work overtime.

Mr. Rhoads said the employees will work staggered times and will work overtime on the weekend.

Mr. Bryant asked if concession and merchandising owners had to have a city license, as it is not in the agreement.

Mrs. Worrell said yes, a city license is required and it is in the department's policy.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, to approve this agreement with the Arkansas State Soccer Association. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Request to Waive Fees - 3 Bridges Marathon: Mr. Rhoads introduced Jacob Wells with 3 Bridges Marathon, Inc. Mr. Wells is requesting to have fees waived for three (3) water stations for the race. The total cost requested to be waived is \$300, which is the full amount they would be charged.

The event will have 400 participants and will start in Little Rock by the Two Rivers Bridge. The run will come into North Little Rock via the Big Dam Bridge, run the Arkansas River trail to the Presidential Library, and return the same way. They have used the city Parks and Recreation logo with their promotion. Hotels used are in Little Rock, but due to the logistics of all participants being shuttled to the start, only two (2) hotels are being used.

The cost to Parks and Recreation is minimal. Possibly some participants will eat, go to the mall and get gas in North Little Rock.

Request to Waive Fees - 3 Bridges Marathon (continued): North Little Rock Advertising and Promotion is working with them to put North Little Rock restaurant information in the participant packets. The city should easily reap \$300 in value.

Mr. Wells stated that this marathon is a big celebration with North Little Rock. It sold out in two (2) weeks last year and again this year. It brings goodwill and awareness to North Little Rock. The race last year was a huge success, and the event has already sold out for 2014. Last year and this year, 100 participants will be coming in from out of the state, and one (1) from Canada. It is the longest foot race on the river trail and 15 of the miles will be in North Little Rock. Reviews on the www.marathonguy.com website show this race to be straight 5 out of 5 stars. Five (5) governmental agencies are part of the sponsors. They did a specific post for the North Little Rock Facebook page. He said he appreciates everything Mr. Caplinger, Tina Worrell and the staff have done for him.

Mrs. Smith asked what the department staffing would cost.

Jason Rhodes said that the organizers and volunteers left the area very clean last year so no additional clean-up was needed.

Mr. Rhoads stated that usual weekend staff will be working and the trash would be emptied before the event.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to waive the \$300 fee for this event.

Mr. Bryant asked if the commission waived the fee last year.

Mr. Rhoads said the commission did waive the whole fee last year.

Mr. Waller said he was concerned about the budget restraints they were told to operate under, and the number of waiver requests they continue to get. He has a problem waiving fees because of the emphasis and shortfalls in the budget.

Mr. Bryant said this event would bring an economic impact to the city.

Mrs. Smith said she would consider waiving part of the fee but not all of it.

Mrs. Stephens explained that a major part of the department's operating budget is generated from the Hotel and Hamburger Tax. She noticed that no North Little Rock hotels were recommended for the visitors, and that is her concern.

Mr. Waller said he would second the motion to bring it to a vote.

Mr. Wells said he sees the \$300 fee as incidental to what will be brought to central Arkansas. Their group is made up of volunteers. This event will celebrate what is here and bring goodwill and awareness to North Little Rock. He tried to get North Little Rock hotel staff to work with them, but they (the hotel staff) would not. North Little Rock restaurant guides will be included in the participant bags and all money will go back into the race.

Request to Waive Fees - 3 Bridges Marathon (continued): Mrs. Stephens said she appreciates that, but the situation is that the department has just so much money to run their programs. She wishes that North Little Rock hotels had stepped up.

Mrs. Stephens said that the North Little Rock Advertising and Promotion Department has contacts with the hotels and someone on staff to work with athletic events. She suggested he work with this department next year.

Mr. Bryant suggested that he visit with the contact person at Advertising and Promotion and see if something can be done at this late date for this year or next year.

Paula Jones said that the Parks and Advertising Commission will be meeting Tuesday, October 21, 2014.

Mr. Wells said that when there is a profit made, it will go to the river trail. It takes a new event approximately six (6) to seven (7) years to make enough for grants or contributions. Little Rock is waiving all of the fees and will provide trash service. The event celebrates the river trail and their organization wants everyone to partner with them.

Mrs. Smith asked if it was too late for him to get with Advertising and Promotion to see if North Little Rock hotels would work with him.

Mr. Wells stated that even though everyone has already registered, that does not mean that their plans have been made. It is difficult to get people to go to North Little Rock hotels because it is not convenient for them to get to the start or end of the race. The real benefit is what cannot be measured financially, and that is the celebration of the river trail.

Mr. Rhoads stated that the two (2) Little Rock hotels selected for this event are the closest to the event site as possible. All participants have to be shuttled to the starting line.

Mr. Waller said his concern was not the event, but that the budget is \$350,000 behind in revenue and he cannot endorse waiving this fee. At some point the commission will have to start saying no to these requests.

Mrs. Stephens asked that he work with Advertising and Promotion next year to get North Little Rock to host this event.

The vote for the motion was: Mr. Bryant: Aye Mrs. Stephens: No
Mr. Davis: No Mr. Waller: No
Mrs. Smith: No

The motion failed.

Proposed Fee Increases for 2014 – 2015: Mr. Rhoads presented proposed fees and changes recommended to mainly go into effect in 2015. Staff is recommending Holiday Light fees be dropped and donations taken instead of fees, and ask that it be effective December 1, 2014.

Proposed Fee Increases for 2014 - 2015 (continued):

Highlights of Increases:

- Clean-up deposit for the Hospitality House and Idlewild Party House.
- Increase fees at the Hospitality House due to building renovations.
- Higher fees for the summer program due to one (1) additional week in 2015.
- Youth Cheer fees will remain the same, but there will be a discount if all charges are paid up front.
- Holiday Lights vehicles will be by donation this year instead of a set fee. This might increase revenue, as all other light displays in the area are donations.
- Field deadline with significant changes fee as well as a clean-up deposit and tournament field use without lights.
- Burns Park Baseball Complex fees are the same, but for each additional complex reserved, cost of \$150 is added.
- Increase basic rental fees for non-associated rentals of complexes.

Mr. Bryant asked if the RV Park fees are higher or lower than Riverside RV Park, and how does the department advertise. He feels the rates may be too low for Burns Park.

Mrs. Worrell said the Burns Park rates are lower than Riverside RV Park, but Burns Park charges for dumping in addition to the nightly fees. Most RV parks include a free dump with their stay.

Jason Rhodes stated that signs are installed on the interstate and in various magazines. The Burns Park RV Park stays full.

Mr. Bryant suggested that usage be tracked next year to compare the two (2) locations.

Mrs. Smith asked if clean-up and damage deposit is documented with a contract.

Mr. Rhoads replied that each renter is given a rental form and set of rules and policies. The renter signs that they received these forms. Staff is looking at installing signs with rules at each location.

Mrs. Worrell stated that an extra week of the summer program will occur in 2015, thus the additional cost. For youth cheer, parents can pay for this program either by a discounted one (1)-time payment before classes start or make eight (8) regular payments.

Jennie Cunningham stated that parents will be notified of any changes before the payment is due.

Mrs. Worrell said that the staff is working on getting donations for light displays.

Mrs. Stephens suggested that businesses be contacted to sponsor a light display.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to approve the January 1, 2015, fee schedule as presented, with the Holiday Lights to be effective immediately. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Food Program Agreements: Mrs. Worrell reported that parks and recreation has administered a successful summer food program for ten (10) years. The state would like the department to add an after school snack program starting this year.

Financially, these are break-even programs. Extra staff is employed to prepare and deliver food to the qualified sites at the recreation centers, libraries and Boys and Girls Club. The city is reimbursed for the food and these staff. Current staff helps with distributing food to the children and reporting of numbers served. Each child has to have two (2) components to be eligible to participate.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to have the snack program, continue the summer food program, and allow staff to negotiate the execution of the on-going agreements each year similar to those included. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Director Reports: Mr. Rhoads reported the following:

- \$15,000 has been approved for a **basketball court at Vestal Park**. The Baring Cross Neighborhood Association wants the court, however nearby neighbors do not. Plans were made to fence the area, lock and unlock it each morning and night.
- Habitat for Humanity has obtained a **\$20,000 grant for Vestal Park**.
- Formal approval has been received to continue with the Burns Park and rock quarry area **land swap**.
- A **baseball promoter** may come to the commission asking for **reduced tournament fees** in the future.

Mr. Bryant asked if Michael Foster was appealing his **ban from the Burns Park** athletic fields.

Mr. Rhoads stated that he has not responded in any way or formally appealed.

Calendar of Events: Mrs. Stephens stated that the next commission agenda deadline is Tuesday, November 4, 2014, 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 Monday, November 17, 2014, at 5:00 p.m. in the North Little Rock Community Center.

Adjournment: Mrs. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to adjourn at 5:59 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,

Otistene Smith, Secretary