



## AGENDA

Fort Smith Parks and Recreation Commission  
Regular Meeting, Wednesday, September 12, 2018  
12:00pm Creekmore Community Center

Approval of minutes from August 2018 meeting.

Introduce Commissioners appointed by the Board of Directors at their August 21, 2018 Regular Meeting: Susan Pruitt and Casey Millsbaugh

Items of Business:

1. Election of Chairman
2. Project Updates
3. Public Comments
4. Commission and Staff Comments

City of Fort Smith  
Parks and Recreation Commission  
Minutes of Meeting  
August 8, 2018

The Parks and Recreation Commission met at noon on Wednesday, August 8, 2018 at the Creekmore Community Center.

Park Commission members present: Chris Raible, Lacey Jennen, Madeline Marquette, Sherry Toliver, and Nancy Raney.

Park Commission members absent: Jim Rowland

Staff members present: Jeff Dingman, Doug Reinert, Sara Deuster, Jim Mackey, Linda Woodruff, and Amber Plank.

Others: Bobby Aldridge, David Harris, George Allen, Pam Weber, Bryan Merry, Penny Packard, David Roberts, Sarah Sawyer, Griffin Hanna, Luke Pruitt, Charles Cobb, Kellie Cobb, Arthur Green, Casey Millspaugh, Casey Dillard, Max Rodriguez, Nick Maestri, Tommy Camp, Bryson Williams, Paula Linder, Drew Linder, Tommy Street, Andrea Beckman, Kathleen Hanna, Andre Good, Dawn Stovall, and Sam Price.

Vice-Chairman Marquette called the meeting to order at 12:01p.m. Raney made a motion to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Toliver and unanimously approved.

**1. Mosquito Spraying in City Parks**

Reinert stated the Parks Department does not spray for mosquitoes in our parks, and that we have bat houses in Creekmore Park, Carol Ann Cross Park, and Tilles Park. He noted following this topic coming up, he had discussed adding bat houses to our other parks. These are relatively easy to build and could be used as a service project from a local organization.

Jennen asked if the Street Department sprays in our parks. Reinert noted they do not. Raible asked for an estimate on the cost to build a bat house. The cost is approximately \$10 per house.

**2. Highway 45 Widening Project**

Raible noted a question had come up during the Future Fort Smith Committee regarding this project and he wanted to pass along the subsequent information to the Commission. Included in this project is a separate lane along the roadway that will be designated for bikes. The FFS Committee asked why there could not be a separate lane away from the roadway for bikes instead. Raible noted Drew Linder was present at the meeting and provided an answer. Linder stated the cost would be much higher than the proposed adjacent lane, and the Arkansas Department of Transportation will pay for the bikeway as planned whereas a separate one will not be funded by them. Linder added the current plan provides a safer path for bikers, as they would not have to cross over roadways,

driveways, etc., as they would be able to travel in a straight path with the flow of traffic. Raible added Fayetteville had a similar path that was working well for bikers.

Raney asked if there would be any pylons or markers to distinguish the bike path from the roadway. Raible stated he was not sure of that specific part of the plan, but he would suspect there would at least be some form of signage and paint on the road. Reinert stated ArDOT had begun the preliminary environmental reviews and the design plans will follow with a lead date of 2021.

### **3. Project Updates**

#### Greg Smith River Trail Phase III:

The trail has reached substantial completion with only a few punch list items, such as signage and staining sections of the fence, to complete. The final walkthrough will be scheduled in the next couple of weeks.

#### Fort Smith Park:

The final walkthrough of the inclusive playground was performed this morning. Deuster noted there were already kids playing on the equipment. Maintenance Staff is going to paint the frame of the existing swing set recycled from the old playground. This will be painted the same orange color as is on the playground unit.

#### Riverfront Drive Skate and Bike Park:

Bobby Aldridge with Frontier Engineering was present to provide an update on the project. He noted the asphalt for the parking lot was laid last week and the irrigation for the sod and trees was completed. After the City inspects the system, we will be able to turn the irrigation on to begin preliminary landscaping. It is anticipated the skate park will be completed later this month, weather pending. A grand opening celebration is being planned for some time in September.

Raible asked about the status of the Rose Garden since it was brought up at the last meeting. Reinert stated the original intent of the rose garden was for the Parks Department to maintain the grounds and the Rose Society to maintain the rose beds. He stated the Rose Society was no longer able to adequately maintain the roses and had moved them to the garden club facility at Chaffee Crossing for perpetual care. Maintenance Staff will rework the beds and replant the rose beds in a manageable capacity for our staff. Marquette asked when the revitalization will start. Reinert noted the landscape crew has begun working on a landscape plan.

Raney inquired since the Rose Society had given notice of terminating their maintenance agreement and transplanted the roses, if it would be a possibility to repurpose the park into a dog park. Reinert stated he could discuss the possibility with the City Administrator and the Board of Directors would ultimately have to approve any changes to the facility. Raney asked how the Commission could start such discussion. Dingman stated the Commission could make a motion to start the discussion. Raney made a motion to have the Ray Baker Memorial Rose Garden be repurposed to the Ray Baker Memorial Dog Park. Jennen seconded the motion. Marquette asked if there was any discussion regarding the motion. Jennen made note that roses require a lot of attention and time to efficiently

maintain. She added with limited Parks Staff and the areas already being maintained, assuming such responsibility would be difficult to upkeep. Raney stated a gazebo and a few trees were already on site and a large rock for dogs to play on would be a simple addition. Paula Linder was present and noted there is \$10,000 in Park Partners for a dog park. Raible stated he would recommend the Parks Department revitalize the facility prior to pursuing the motion, adding his in-laws had their wedding ceremony at the Rose Garden. Pam Weber was in the audience, stating she was a part of the group who raised the funds to give to the Rose Society to purchase the roses. She added the funds were donated with the understanding the Rose Society plant antique roses, but hybrid roses were planted. She stated she is not in support of the area being repurposed for something other than its intended purpose. Following discussion, the motion passed with three in favor and two opposed (Raible and Marquette).

Marquette requested an update on the splash pads. Aldridge stated the contracts have been finalized and a Notice to Proceed for Creative Design Pools to order the amenities had been issued. The actual spray features are scheduled for delivery in late September with a completion date in mid-October.

Raible asked if the City had acquired the easement remaining for the Chaffee Crossing trails. Reinert stated we are still waiting on the easement. Reinert added we are also waiting on an easement from Kansas City Southern Railroad for the Riverfront Drive Sports Fields (51 Acres) to begin installing the water line.

Toliver referred to the email sent out to the Commission regarding the removal of Casey Millspaugh from the Commission due to three consecutive absences from the Park Commission Meetings. Toliver made a motion for the Commission to make a recommendation to the Board of Directors that Millspaugh be reinstated to the Commission. Jennen seconded the motion. Marquette requested an amendment to the motion to include all city commissions are comprised of volunteers. Raney seconded the amendment. The amendment and motion were unanimously approved.

#### **4. Public Comments**

Kellie Cobb was present in the audience and asked if there was any intention of the Parks Department to consider mosquito spraying in the parks. Reinert stated this is not a service we perform; the Street Department is responsible for the mosquito spraying program. He added we do not have an intent to spray for mosquitos in our parks, noting the additional cost and staffing for the service.

Ms. Cobb added she was understanding of the comments regarding the history and purpose for the Rose Garden. However, she also understood the amount of constant care roses require. Ms. Cobb stated there are several native plants that require minimal maintenance. She suggested using seasonal plants instead of roses to keep the property as a garden space.

Ms. Cobb made a recommendation to those present to attend the upcoming Board of Directors Meeting in support of the Casey Millspaugh being reinstated to the Commission. She added that if

the Board did not reinstate him, she would like a full account as to what procedures were used for his removal.

Walker Cobb was present in the audience and asked if there was any consideration in using other predatory species of insects that are harmless to people but might be able to cut down on the mosquito population. Reinert stated this was not something the Parks Department was considering, but he would mention this to the Street Department.

Pam Weber, Tommy Street, and Luke Pruitt spoke on behalf of reinstating Casey Millspaugh to the Parks Commission. Several citizens were in attendance to show support of Millspaugh's reinstatement. Raney asked staff which Board of Directors meeting citizens could attend to express their support. Dingman stated appointments are made at the second Regular Meeting of the month, which falls on the third Tuesday of every month. He added these appointments are discussed during an executive session. Following a request from the audience to be notified of the meeting so he could create a Facebook event page, Dingman stated the meeting will be August 21<sup>st</sup> in an executive session, during which the public is removed from that discussion. He stated it would be as effective for citizens to contact their Board of Directors to express their support. He noted waiting until the meeting occurs, citizens will likely miss an opportunity to interface with the Board.

David Harris was present in the audience, noting he has attended almost every board and commission meeting for the last 25 years. He stated citizens are appointed to these positions, and the automatic removal rule after three consecutive meetings was written because other citizens want these positions.

##### **5. Commission and Staff Comments**

Toliver noted this is her last meeting to serve on the Park Commission and she has enjoyed her time serving. She added she would like to see younger people serve on this Commission. Jennen thanked Toliver for her service, adding she hoped the Board would vote in favor of placing Millspaugh back on the Commission. Jennen referred back to the June Parks Commission Meeting in which it was brought up to expand our existing tree ordinance to a city-wide ordinance. She stated the City Administrator advised such discussion was outside the Commission's purview, as it was outside of parks. Following advisement, Jennen stated she contacted the Board of Directors regarding beginning a discussion for a city-wide tree ordinance. Marquette stated her appreciation for Park Staff in providing free programs throughout the summer for citizens. She added the City Play Day, held August 4<sup>th</sup> at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, was a big success and several families attended the event.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:57 p.m.

Madeline Marquette, Vice Chairman  
Amber Plank, Records Coordinator