



Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

Regular Meeting Minutes

December 18, 2024 at 5:30 PM

City Hall Commission Chambers
401 S. Park Avenue

Present

Leah J. Bonich, Thomas Sims, Ginny Enstad, Ellen Wolfson, Lisa Tinker Marsh

Absent

Lawrence Lyman, Anne Mooney

Staff Present

Parks and Recreation Director Jason Seeley, Assistant Directors Cathleen Daus and Mike McCosker, Recreation Coordinator Laura Halsey

1. Call to Order

2. Consent Agenda

- a. Approve the minutes of November 20, 2024

Motion made by Thomas Sims, seconded by Lisa Marsh, to approve the November 20, 2024 minutes with corrections as stated.

Motion passes 5-0

3. Public Comments (for items not on the agenda): Three minutes allowed for each speaker

Gigi Papa, 1440 Hibiscus Ave, addressed the board regarding the city holidays. She stated there are a number of city-observed holidays and events that were not listed in the utility bill flier. She would like corrections to be made and encourages staff to include all events in the September to December calendar. She also requests that all political activities be excluded from city events.

Mr. Seeley asked Ms. Papa if she has a list of specific events that were not included. Staff determined the article in question was created by the Communications Department. Mr. Seeley will reach out to Communications as there may be a reason they did not include everything.

4. Action Items

5. Non-Action Items

a. Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Planning Session

Mr. Seeley recommended discussing what the goals and expectations of the board are moving forward into the new calendar year. He also provided them with a list of projects, events, and actions the staff are working on at this time and moving into the new year. This is also a time for Q&A should the board have any inquiries or require any clarification on any of the items.

Ms. Wolfson opened the discussion with Kraft Azalea Garden rules & regulations pertaining to what items are allowed to be released at the park during weddings and other reservations. She brought a few of the artificial red flowers that are littered throughout the park, and do not seem to be biodegradable, to show board members and staff. Mr. Seeley was already aware of the issue and had assigned staff to look deeper into the situation. He is also working on adjusting the security deposit for the outdoor wedding venues.

Mr. Sims suggested a deposit and a fee that has some teeth, maybe in the range of \$1,000.00 that will encourage renters to follow the rules and cover the cost of having staff onsite for the duration of the rentals. He feels this would dissuade people from breaking the rules and littering in the parks. He would like to ensure that all city costs are covered by a price increase and deposit increase. Mr. Seeley is also considering decreasing the maximum number of rentals that can be held per day at the venues, especially if staff has to remain onsite for the duration of the rentals. Ms. Wolfson pointed out the parking problem the rentals cause in the areas, since both have very limited parking, and agrees that decreasing the number of rentals allowed per day at each outdoor wedding venue would be a step in the right direction.

The board feels current pricing is very cheap and not in line with surrounding venues and agree the goal should not be to attract wedding rentals. Ms. Bonich confirmed that Leu Gardens charges \$700 for a micro-wedding. Ms. Wolfson inquired about board members each adopting a park to help ensure they are kept free of litter, are not in disrepair, etc. Although it is the city staff's responsibility, she feels board members should take an interest in the parks. Ms. Enstad suggested reaching out to local schools for volunteers, since students are always looking for community service hours. Mr. Seeley was receptive to the suggestion and offered to provide a list of parks and locations to include the mini parks throughout the city, since the majority of the mini parks are located within neighborhoods. Having the neighborhood residents be more involved would be welcome, and he would encourage residents to adopt a mini-park.

Mr. Sims inquired about a "suggestion box" where residents can share thoughts or concerns. The city implemented the @yourrequest portal to allow residents, visitors, business owners, etc to contact staff with any suggestions, concerns, or inquiries. One possible solution to increase public knowledge about @yourrequest would be to include a QR code on the website. Another would be to include "adopt a park" verbiage in the

utility bill fliers. Mr. Seeley wants to ensure the residents don't view the activity as the city not wanting to do their jobs.

Ms. Enstad mentioned the planter beds on the west side of Park Ave look great, while the planter beds on the east side of Park Ave, where people actually walk, look horrible. Mr. Seeley pointed out street parking interferes with planting on the east side of the street and areas with larger oak trees have difficulty sustaining plantings. City staff are currently taking an inclusive look at Park Ave to make the areas more planter friendly, which may start with improving some of the infrastructure. Lighting, electrical access, and irrigation would all be items in the discussion.

Mrs. Bonich would like to see the open space at Howell Branch Preserve be more usable. Mr. Seeley took this opportunity to show the Howell Branch Preserve Improvements renderings to the board, which moves us into the staff updates section of the agenda.

6. Staff Updates

a. Program and Events Update

Discussion began with the Howell Branch Preserve improvements. Mrs. Bonich referenced the large open area that could be better utilized. Mr. Seeley shared the idea of moving the pond and observation deck to allow for the area to be better utilized. Mrs. Bonich stated the pond is always riddled with litter and there is never any wildlife to observe. A discussion would need to be held to decide if such a project would be done in-house or if it would require outside contracting. He would also look into any available grant funds that may be able to offset the cost of such improvements.

Mr. Seeley then moved to the Winter Park Sports Complex projects and Cady Way Pool improvements, showing the potential of creating a walkable loop around the perimeter of the area. Cady Way Court and Pickleball Courts have been completed. MLK, Jr. Park is being completed in stages with Unity Corner being the current project. Once completed, the focus will shift to the Community Playground. All renderings and updates are included in the agenda packet for the board to review at their convenience.

The final update included the purchase of the laundromat adjacent to MLK, Jr. Park.

The city is now working to purchase the property where Austin Coffee currently operates, which would complete the loop around the park and allow staff to create a boardwalk.

The city is also looking at the triangle-shaped piece of property located off of Semoran Blvd. adjacent to the Winter Pines Golf Course. Purchasing the property would allow for future growth and evolution of the golf course should they decide they'd like a nicer

clubhouse, dining room, or taproom.

West Meadow improvements were approved and slated to begin in January 2025, and will include renovating and improving the restroom closest to the playground. Kraft Azalea Garden will also receive restroom renovations and upgrades.

The last item on the list would be improving the dog park and maybe bringing back some of the shoreline to residents who don't prefer dogs. Having separate areas would allow for rotation and maintenance as well as provide the option to separate smaller and larger dogs that may need to be with dogs of their own size. This has not been officially added to the list of approved projects, but is on the radar for the future.

Mr. Seeley closed by stating he would resume the conversation with updates in February or March to allow for discussion and guidance.

7. Board Comments

8. Upcoming Agenda Items

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned by Chairperson, Leah Bonich

Approved by the Board on
/s/ Laura Halsey, Recreation Coordinator

ATTEST: