

**2022 MINUTES
REGULAR CALLED MEETING
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2022, 5:30 PM
OWENS MULTIPURPOSE CENTER
1405 SW 11th STREET, LAWTON, OK, 73501
CONFERENCE/BREAK ROOM**

The Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held Wednesday, October 26, 2022, at the Owens Multipurpose Center, 1405 SW 11th Street, Lawton, Oklahoma, and called to order by Chairperson, Sherene Williams, at 5:38 p.m. Meeting was moved from Fuller Room at Owens Center to the break room due to temperature of room in building. Signs were displayed for any guests attending.

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Scott, Terry Brierton, Linda Neal, Jacobi Crowley, Sherene Williams, Anthony Cox

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jason Wells, Susan Thompson, Angela Rivera, Jason Scott

STAFF PRESENT: Christine James, Parks and Recreation Director; Mitch Dooley, Parks and Recreation Deputy Director, Antonio Hopson, Parks and Grounds Superintendent, Ryan Brady, Recording Administrative Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT: None.

II. REPORTS

- A. Christine James introduced new Deputy Director for Parks and Recreation, Mitch Dooley, and Administrative Assistant III, Ryan Brady, to the Commission Members.

Mitch Dooley comes to the department from Lake Jackson where he was the Recreation Coordinator. This is the first time Lawton has had a Deputy Director in the department. Mitch brings many years of experience and expertise in Recreation, including a bachelor's degree in Recreation Management from Brigham Young University. He also has obtained the Certified Parks and Recreation Professional status from the National Recreation and Parks Association. The department is excited to have him and look forward to new ideas to create more citizen involvement in our recreation centers.

Ryan Brady is also new to Parks and Recreation. She is the new Administrative Assistant III and will now be the recording administrative for this committee.

The City of Lawton has been holding Ward Parks Public Input meetings. The intent of the meetings is to get the citizens thoughts, concerns and suggestions on the city's parks. The overhead to maintain all the city's parks is large and

just not feasible in some parks due to drainage problems, no irrigation, and some are just not that easily accessible. These meetings are to put together a recommendation for the City Council on which parks to keep, sale or change the status from a park to a natural habitat.

Commission members expressed their concern regarding the closure of some parks, including Lee West Park, Putney Park, and Elmore West. Christine informed the committee that some parks were included in the Lawton Public Schools/City of Lawton deal that had nothing to do with these recent meetings. Members would like to be informed on the recommendations prior to being sent to City Council for vote. Christine stated that P&R would be certain to send all Commission Members a copy of any recommendations.

- B.** Chairperson Sherene Williams shared she recently visited the Patterson center and commended the staff and center on their exemplary work.

III. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

V. NEW BUSINESS

- A.** Consider approving minutes from the September 28, 2022, Special Meeting.

MOTION by Jacobi Crowley; SECOND by Anthony Cox

AYES: Mike Scott, Terry Brierton, Linda Neal, Jacobi Crowley, Sherene Williams, Anthony Cox

NAYS: None.

MOTION CARRIES

- B.** Consider discussing updating the City's Adopt-a-Park Program, providing staff with guidance and making a recommendation to the City Council.

Director, Christine James, recommends that the city update its Adopt-a-Park program by changing the type of adoption available to three tiers: Litter Control, Litter Control and Supplemental mowing (in addition to the City's regular scheduled mowing days), and Grass trimming and mowing. Christine also expressed that she wanted to remove the option to make permanent changes stating that although citizens intentions are good to make such changes, the financial burden of maintaining such changes falls on the City. Christine suggested that the city offer one (1) free monthly event to any organization that adopts as enticement to get more community participation.

She also recommended that the adoption length be set for one (1) year agreements with a thirty (30) day notice to terminate said agreement.

Deputy Director Mitch Dooley brought two examples of other cities that have Adopt-a-Park Programs that the City of Lawton could use as tool to update its current program.

Sherene Williams inquired the budget to maintain parks. Christine explained that number is not easily obtained by current records but that she knows the weekly cost of mowing the city's right-a-ways and medians is \$44K. This number was a good reflection of the cost to maintain mowing alone.

Linda Neal expressed a desire to possibly converting some pocket parks in the city to community gardens. Christine agreed that was a good idea adding that the upkeep of said gardens would be better maintained by putting it in a neighborhood of homeowners as opposed to renters. Linda expressed that she and the committee would like to be kept in the loop of any recommendations to the City Council for voting be presented to this committee prior to going to Council. All members agreed stating that they like to be informed so they have answers when questioned in public by upset citizens.

Director James and Deputy Director Dooley agreed to keep the committee in the loop.

NO MOTION MADE

*****Special Meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 2, 2022 at 5:00 p.m., for purposes of electing Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for 2023.*****

VI. ADJOURN

MOTION by Linda Neal; SECOND by Jacobi Crowley

AYES: Mike Scott, Terry Brierton, Linda Neal, Jacobi Crowley, Sherene Williams, Anthony Cox

NAYS: None.

MOTION CARRIES

Meeting adjourned @ 6:27 p.m.