

Documenters

POWERED BY CITY BUREAU

Board of Park Commissioners Meeting

Documenter name: Paige Koeppen

Agency: Wichita City - Board of Park Commissioners

Date: May 13, 2024

[See more about this meeting at Documenters.org](#)

Write all notes on the following page

Notes

The meeting started on time and was attended by [Park Board Members](#), Doug Hye, Eddie Fahnstock, Tom Ewert, Nathan McClure, Alejo Cabral and Troy Hautman. Absent was Kent Gose and Philip Simon. Also in attendance was Nate Johnson, Assistant City Attorney and Penny Garding, the Clerk of the Board.

Public Comments – A representative from [ICT Trees](#), had a very successful tree drop off in area codes 67204 and 67208. He wanted to thank John Bacon and [Evergy](#) for funding the project.

Approve the minutes – It was unanimously approved with one change that it was an estimate for the economic impact not a study.

Katie Eddy, providing a social media update, reported that the city is looking at properties that they own that are not parks but that they are maintaining. Millwood Park, Delano Greenway, Riverside Community Gardens, Redbud Trail and Prairie Sunset Trail. They would like to designate all of these as parks. The Park Board would name them with input

from constituents. Maintenance would improve and would be added to the cycles of maintenance. It would also add to the total of parks in the city.

District Vi Member Tom Ewert questioned if the Riverside Community Garden would want to have a different name.

Redbud Trail is being designated right now and will include an art budget. Federal funding would also be possible. Both the Redbud Trail and Prairie Sunset follow former railroad lines. The long term goal would be to link the Redbud Trail with the Prairie Sunset Trail. Getting [Bike Across Kansas](#) and other events could then be possible.

At-large Member Doug Hye questioned whether designating them a park would affect the non-profits such as the Riverside Community Garden. Katie Eddy said it would not affect the agreements. Restrooms would not be planned at any of these possible additions to the park system due to cost. The Park Board's job is to advise the City Council, which would vote on this issue.

Reggie Davidson, superintendent of recreation, reported that pools will be open on Memorial Day weekend. Repairs have been made to the [train](#) and the track at Watson Park. There will be scanners at the pools and at [Watson Park](#) that will be ready once the ramifications of the ransomware is worked through. There is a [50th year celebration](#) that is planned for the Keeper of the Plains on May 18th. The Swim Team is registering for programs.

Jesse Coffman, director of golf, reported that the ransomware has caused some lost revenue for golf courses due to cash and check being the only ways to pay for your round of golf. It has also financially impacted concessions and the pro shop.

[Tex Consolver](#) hosted a [golfer appreciation day](#) on Saturday, May 11. It was very well attended with food trucks, bands and many fun golf activities. The goal wasn't to make money but for camaraderie around golf among all golfers and their families. Rounds of golf are up throughout the city courses. Junior Golf is full and the Junior Tour is going great. There are some small \$5,000-\$10,000 projects that are being done but no major improvements at this time. Irrigation is always a concern, so saving some budget money for that future expense.

Trent Jones from [First Tee](#) was seeking a 100-year lease extension for the golf course campus at McDonald Golf Course. First Tee is a non-profit that has grown junior golfers from 60 in 2018 to 1,200 in 2023. They are wanting to build an indoor facility that could

be used year round for tutoring and many golf activities. They have resources that aren't available with the parks department. The goal is to grow young golfers to sustain our golf courses for years to come. First Tee doesn't own the land that the building would sit on. The new lease would include termination provisions after twenty years with the option to reevaluate and keep extending the lease for additional ten year increments.

Troy Houtman, park and recreation director reported on several communication items.

1. [Wesley Hospital](#) has decided not to pursue purchasing Sleepy Hollow Park. The neighborhood was very much against this purchase.
2. Creating a master plan for funding for the future of our parks.
3. The [Ralph Wulz](#) Riverside Tennis Center will not be changed to all pickleball courts. Also, the city council voted to not move forward with the [South Lakes plan](#). New pickleball courts will have to be looked at differently than those two options.

Looking at #2, which is the master plan for our parks for the next 10 to 20 years, Houtman said he wants to make sure that the master plan defines Wichita as a city. He listed Minneapolis, Minnesota, as a great example of a [park system](#) that uses all of their green spaces and parks to their fullest. During their cold winters, they have ice skating, hockey and ribbon racing. In the summer, the same places can be used for walking trails.

Gary Farris, arborist, reported on park maintenance and forestry. Splash pads and pools are ready for summer. Baseball fields have also been prepared for the upcoming season. Weed crew and irrigation has been busy with two seasonal employees hired to help in this area. Goats will be outside of [Botanica](#) to eat the brush that has overgrown the area to the west.

Forestry has been busy removing trees outside of Mid-American Indian Center and Seneca Street to Riverside, approximately 30 to 50 trees in all.

No Parks Foundation meeting was held. Hye will represent the Park Board Meetings.

Director's Update

Houtman, park and recreation director, reported that Red, White & BOOM!, an annual Fourth of July celebration, will be in its 10th year and will be sponsored by [Evergy](#). The Riverfront [Stadium](#) will be open to view the fireworks as will the lawn of the Hyatt Hotel. Pat Garcia Park had a very successful ribbon cutting. Houtman described it as a fantastic turn-out.

Meeting was adjourned by President Alejo Cabral at 4:45.

Summary

Summarize the 3 most important outcomes or takeaways from your notes....

- The city is looking at designating city-owned properties – Millwood Park, Delano Greenway, Red Bud Trailway, Riverside Community Garden, Red Bud Trail and Prairie Sunset Trail – as parks for more control, funding and accountability.
- Golf in the city of Wichita is on the rise. First Tee at McDonald Golf Course has developed a robust youth golfer program. The goal is for them to become life-long golfers to sustain and grow the golf community in Wichita.
- Parks officials would like to develop a master plan for the next 10-20 years to grow our city parks and green spaces for future generations. A next step would be creating sub-committees to make sure we have the vision that we need for the future.

Follow-Up Questions

What are you left wondering? Ask up to 3 of your own follow-up questions...

- Where is the city with adding pickleball courts? Since the South Lake Complex has been vetoed by the city council and the Riverside project has also been declined, what is the plan for all of the needs in the city for more courts?
- Would it be possible to have First Tee at other golf courses in the city to partner so that it develops more junior golfers in different parts of the city?

If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at documenters@citybureau.org with "Correction Request" in the subject line.