



Recreation & Parks Department Report March 2012

- Ten (10) groups used the Hughes Center during February for a total of 247 hours. Events included the annual Sweetheart Saturday Hospice Benefit on the 11th, Zumba classes on Tuesday and Thursday nights, The Arkansas Valley Soccer Association held their coaches meeting and the A.A.R.P. tax assistance program continued helping area residents with their tax preparation.
- The Parks Commission met on February 14. The commission decided to pursue adding the Dwight Mission recreation area to our park inventory. We will start that process in March. They also decided that purchasing portable pool lifts to meet the new Americans with Disabilities guidelines would be in the best interest of the city. The fourth of July fireworks display was discussed. The Advertising and Promotion Commission cut their funding for the 2012 display so alternate funding sources were discussed. (February minutes attached)
- The department had five incidents of vandalism in the month of February. The incidents included graffiti at the soccer complex in the men's restroom, illegal dumping of a mattress and box springs at Orbit lane, the light switch in the men's restroom was destroyed at City Park, the fence on field 5 at Hickey Park was cut to gain entry and picnic table straps were bent and torn up at Shiloh Park.
- Mark Lawrence of the Arkansas Department of Labor gave a presentation on mower and equipment operation safety as part of our February 14 staff meeting. We also covered seatbelt and cell phone use in park vehicles, our annual cleanup progress, the securing of the soccer goals and benches and upcoming events in the parks.
- New borders and ground cushion were replaced for the swing set and arch climber at City Park. The new borders are plastic, will not splinter and are more attractive. The fall zone protection is wood fiber and should be easier to maintain. We hope it will also not be used for throwing and piling on the composite play units.
- M. J. Hickey Park was officially opened for the season with the first baseball and softball games being played on February 27. All the utilities were turned on and the park readied for play. The concession at field #6, dugouts and sitting walls were also painted. The old rock barbeque pit was removed from the pedestrian area near the picnic tables between field 7 and concession area. We plan on adding an updated grill later in a more appropriate location that will be safer for park patrons.
- Extensive cleanup at the storage facility on 4th Place, commonly referred to as the old water tower property, continued with the hauling of old scrap metal. Cleanup included removal of trash, debris and general leveling of the area. Wind screens were repaired, with some added on the south fence, and pruning of trees was completed. We plan on doing some landscaping work on the south end of the facility to complete the beautification project.
- The new brush cutter for the backhoe arrived on February 6 and was put into use on February 13. We have used the cutter at Illinois Bayou, City, Shiloh and Pleasant View Parks. It works well and has already exceeded our expectations of its capabilities. It will save us time in the maintenance of our ditches, overgrown fence areas and lake shorelines.

- The wood docks and walkway at Illinois Bayou Park were sealed with a wood preservative. The ornamental garden in front of the dock was refurbished. Brush clearing and cleanup was also completed at the entry way and lakeshore area.
- Dead trees were removed at Circle Drive, Washburn and Shiloh Parks. All of these trees posed a risk to the general public. Several low limbs were also removed and trees pruned in those parks.
- Devin Shaw, an ATU student, was hired to do his recreation and parks internship on February 23. He will be primarily working at the softball complex.

RUSSELLVILLE RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION
Minutes from Monthly Meeting
February 14, 2012 *next*

Present: Marvin Collier, Mayor Bill Eaton, Andy Hatley, Theresa Herrick, Mack Hollis, Mike Johnston, J.W. Stratton, Terry Thomas
Absent: Chloe Lieblong, Mark Tripp
Person Recording: Kelli Nealy
Guests: Adam Sweeney-The Courier

The meeting was called to order at 12:05pm.

Mike Johnston made a motion to accept the minutes from the January meeting. Marvin Collier seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

New Business

A. ADA Required Pool Lift at M.J. Hickey Pool-Recent ADA regulations require that public pools have a self operating pool lift. Two lifts will be needed at M.J. Hickey Pool due to its size. There are in-ground and portable lifts available. An in-ground lift would cost \$3,200 - \$3,800 with an additional expense of approximately \$1,500 for installation because the lifts must be ground to the pool's main power source. A portable lift would cost \$6,000 with a possible price break given if more than one is purchased. A recommendation was made to purchase portable lifts due to the possibility of constructing an aquatic center in Russellville in the near future. Marvin Collier made a motion in favor of purchasing two portable lifts. Andy Hatley seconded the motion, and the motion passed. The recommendation will be presented to the city council during the February meeting.

B. M.J. Hickey Pool Schedule-2012-Information is currently being gathered from various user groups in order to develop a schedule for the use of Hickey Pool that will accommodate the needs of each group. Prior to its closing, the pool at Arkansas Tech University offered aerobics classes, lap swim, and therapeutic classes. A request was made to continue these classes at Hickey Pool. Red Cross recently restructured their organization and would like the parks department to oversee swim lessons. In addition, Pope County Office of Emergency Management would like to use the pool for training purposes. A schedule will be presented to the commission when it is finalized.

C. Fourth of July Community Fireworks Display-In 2010, the department joined efforts with The Journey to present a Community Fireworks Display on July 4. In 2011, the event was moved to Pleasant View Park and was offered at no charge to the community. Last year's display cost approximately \$9,000. In 2011, The Journey donated \$2,500, and Russellville Advertising & Promotion Commission contributed \$6,000. The remaining balance was paid by donations collected in previous years. The current balance in the event account is approximately \$1,600. Beginning in 2012, A & P will no longer fund the event because as was stated "it does not put heads in beds". Collecting from the public is not an option at Pleasant View Park because of potential traffic problems on Highway 7, and if the display is moved back to Old Post Park, The Journey will not participate due to vendor restrictions. A suggestion was made to communicate the issue to the public via The Courier to get input or suggestions then bring it back to the commission in April.

D. Addition of Dwight Mission to the City Park System-The Corps of Engineers will be meeting on 2-14-12 to discuss closing some of their parks and campgrounds. One of the properties being considered for closing is Dwight Mission which is located directly across from Illinois Bayou Park. Park usage would increase at Illinois Bayou Park if Dwight Mission is closed. This would result in an increase in maintenance cost. After reviewing the property at Dwight Mission, the department's maintenance foreman feels that maintenance would be minimal at the park. A suggestion was made to add Dwight Mission to our park inventory. Marvin Collier made a motion in favor of the addition to our park system. J.W. Stratton seconded the motion, and the motion passed. The request to add the property to our existing lease will be presented to the city council for approval after a public hearing on March 12.

E. Proposed Capital Improvements at M.J. Hickey Park-This agenda item was tabled due to lack of information.

General Update

A. Illinois Bayou Park-Clearing work is almost complete at Illinois Bayou Park. Culverts will be installed soon.

B. Splash Pad-The splash pad project is currently on hold. The mayor sent a letter to Junior Auxiliary of Russellville requesting a letter of commitment. No response has been received.

C. Monthly Report-The commissioners received a copy of the department's monthly report.

D. Upcoming Events-A schedule of upcoming events was given to the commissioners.

E. Future Agenda Items- Indoor Swimming Pool/Aquatic Center
Policy on Firearms in City Parks

The meeting adjourned at 12.40pm.