



Recreation & Parks Department Report March 2014

- Ten (10) groups used the Hughes Center during February for a total of 272 hours. Events included Arkansas Hospice Sweetheart Saturday, Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours, an ATU Leadership class and the Progressive Men's Club Sweetheart Dance.
- The Parks Commission met on February 11. The minutes are attached.
- Staff attended a safety meeting conducted by Drew Latch, RPD information officer, on February 14 at City Hall. The topic was speeding and Drew did a wonderful job conveying to us that we need to observe the speed limits.
- Mack Hollis was invited to give a five minute presentation on February 21 before the Trails for Life Grants advisory committee. The Department has applied for a Trails for Life grant in the amount of \$35,000 to complete a portion of the Russellville Connect Trail plan at Pleasant View Park. The trail will be a .2 mile asphalted, multi-purpose trail that will connect to an existing roadway. Pleasant View Park is heavily used by local walkers.
- The AARP began offering free tax assistance to everyone on February 4. The volunteers have worked diligently and have completed 869 returns in February. Operating hours from March 3 to April 15 are Monday through Wednesday from 8:30am to 4:00pm. This a much needed service that helps many people each year.
- The Arkansas Valley Soccer Association began their season at the Russellville Soccer Complex. The group conducted a work day on February 22 to prepare for their spring season. Practices began on February 24 and games began on March 1.
- Russellville High School softball held a benefit game at Hickey Park on February 24. The park was opened for the season in February. The defending state champions are looking to repeat their success this season. Please come out and support your local athletes as they endeavor to continue their championship run.
- All of the city parks buildings were inspected for adequate insulation. Insulation was added to the buildings that lacked the proper amount.
- The dugout roofs at Peasant View Park were replaced. The new roofs are brown metal and should last for twenty five years. This is part of our roof replacement program, replacing old roofs with metal.
- The weather caused some more limb and tree damage to the parks. Maintenance spent two days cutting and cleaning downed brush and limbs.
- The adult soccer fields were striped and set up for the upcoming adult soccer season which starts on March 9.
- The infields at Pleasant View and Shiloh were leveled, crowned and prepped for the first tournament which will be March 15. The restrooms were also prepped and opened for the season.
- The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission stocked the pond at Pleasant View Park with trout the first of the month. Everyone needs to get out and catch a trout or two for dinner. Better yet take your kids out and let them catch dinner.
- Lightning struck Shiloh Park ball fields in the off season and caused a lot of damage to the electrical system. We are working with Thomas Electric to get repairs made by the first tournament date on March 15.
- Clearing brush, pruning low hanging limbs, cutting dead trees and filling low areas along the soccer trail was done in February to get the trail ready for the spring walking season. We also cleaned ditches and culverts to help with drainage. Patching and crack sealing is planned for March, weather permitting.

RUSSELLVILLE RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION
Minutes from Monthly Meeting
February 11, 2014

Present: Marvin Collier, Mayor Bill Eaton, Andy Hatley, Theresa Herrick, Mack Hollis, Spence Roberts, J.W. Stratton, Terry Thomas
Absent: Mike Johnston, Chloe Lieblong
Person Recording: Kelli Nealy
Guests: Hannah Brownlee & Sarah Jane Trusty-ATU students, Gary Knudsen, Michael Oakes, Whitney Snipes-The Courier

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

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

Old Business

A. Soccer Request-Water (June & July)-During the October 2013 parks commission meeting, AVSA requested that the city pay the water bill for the sprinkler system at the park when they are not using them. Due to excessive rain, fields were not watered much in 2013, however in 2012; the water expenses totaled \$6,515.00 for the summer. An estimate of \$7,000.00 was given for 2014 depending on the rainfall levels. Funds were not appropriated in the 2014 parks department budget for this additional expense. If we do pay the bill, we will need to go to council to request the funds. The commissioners were given a copy of the 2013 AVSA financial statement which recorded a loss of \$163.00. After reviewing the statement, if things continue as is, Mack is concerned that AVSA may be unable to pay the utility bills for the new field lighting at the complex. Expenditures are being reviewed with the association president to possibly reduce some of their costs. Water has been disconnected during the offseason months saving the group about \$1,600.00 per year. Additional information is being gathered with AVSA to hopefully reduce their expenses even further. No action is needed at this time.

New Business

A. Waco Basin Park-Waco Detention Basin is an area, approximately 12 acres in size, located on West 12th Street that is being developed by the city. It will include a ½ mile improved trail, as well as picnic tables and benches. Future plans may include a play area and soccer practice field. The street department will mow and maintain the levees and also maintain the water impoundment area for litter. The parks department will maintain the flat area and trail itself. City Engineer Michael Oakes explained that Waco Street, Whippoorwill Lane and Overland Park subdivision will have access to the area. A recommendation was made to make Waco Detention Basin a city park. Marvin Collier made a motion in favor of the recommendation. Andy Hatley seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

B. Community Fireworks Display-The commissioners were given a diagram of Old Post Park showing the shooting site of the 2013 Community Fireworks Display, as well as the proposed site for the 2014 display. The smaller shells were difficult to see last year because they didn't clear the tree line. The Corps of Engineers has approved the proposed site which is 500 ft. west of last year's site in front of the quarry area. Pleasant View Park is the best location; however it is unavailable due to a large softball tournament at the park. Due to a continued challenge in raising funds to offset the event cost, the department has requested that the city appropriate \$10,000 toward the fireworks display each year. Since 2008, the event has been funded in part by the A & P Commission; however the donation amount has decreased considerably. In the past, the department has asked for per car donations to help offset the costs of fireworks, but this creates a traffic flow problem. Marvin Collier made a motion in favor of the city funding the event each year. Andy Hatley seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

C. Christmas Parade 2014-The 2014 Russellville Christmas Parade will be December 4 at 6:30pm. In addition, the parade committee would like to set December 8 as a rain date. Due to the cancellation of the parade last year, a suggestion was made to keep the same theme for the 2014 parade. The 2013 theme was "Songs of Christmas". Marvin Collier made a motion in favor of the proposed rain date and theme. Andy Hatley seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Updates

A. Sales Tax Distribution-A revised sales tax breakdown was distributed to the commissioners which showed a timeline for receiving funds. The projects cannot begin until funds are available, therefore projects will be delayed.

B. L.W.C.F. Grant-The department was not selected as a recipient of the 50/50 matching Land and Water Conservation Fund grant.

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.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40pm.