



Recreation & Parks Department Report May 2013

- Ten (10) groups used the Hughes Center during April for a total of 194 hours. Events included an Arkansas Delinquent Tax Land Sale, the Chamber of Commerce Industry Appreciation Banquet, location filming by the Optomen Production Company, pARTy in the Park and a community band concert by the Arkansas Center for Music Education.
- The Parks Commission did not meet in April. The next scheduled meeting is May 14 at noon at the Hughes Center.
- The department had 8 pavilion reservations, 3 softball tournaments and 24 practice field reservations in April. The three tournaments were youth events that drew 68 softball teams to Russellville. Special thanks to Kevin VanEs who puts in long hours every year to host the Rumble on the River softball tournament.
- The Russellville Recreation and Parks Department began play with 27 teams participating this summer. Games are played on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights at Pleasant View Park and Shiloh Park. Other softball leagues beginning play at the same parks are the Russellville Church League with 21 teams playing and the Boys and Girls Club with 17 teams.
- As the soccer league slowly comes to an end at the Russellville Soccer Complex the boys of summer come out to play at M.J. Hickey Park. The RYBA baseball league began play on April 22 with 45 teams participating. The park is well utilized every evening in some capacity by RYBA or the high school teams.
- The department had two vandalism incidents of major graffiti at the Skate Park at Harmon Park. In the first incident black and white paint was sprayed all over the concrete bowl. The second incident of graffiti was permanent marker on the west end of the skate park.
- The River Valley Arts Center held their annual pARTy in the Park fundraiser on April 27 at City Park and the Hughes Center. The event continues to grow in popularity each year and is well attended by the community. Party in the Park provides area children a day of fun in the River Valley. Betty and the Arts Center staff do a wonderful job with the event.
- Park employees attended a safety/staff meeting on April 11. The safety topic was "Mower Safety". In other safety matters, a fire drill was conducted at the Hughes Center, quarterly vehicle inspections were performed and all fire extinguishers, exit and emergency lights, grinders and weather radios were inspected.
- With the warmer temperatures park use has increased substantially, and grass mowing has been moved to the top of our maintenance schedule.
- New benches were installed at Phase 3 of Hickey Park. This is part our preparation for the 6A State softball tournament to be held May 9 - 11 at Hickey Park. Good luck to the Lady Cyclones.
- Work began on cleaning and preparing Hickey Pool to open for the summer season. The pool will open on Saturday, May 25 for the summer. The pool hours for public swimming are 12:30pm to 6:30pm every day.
- The front entry to the Hughes Center was landscaped with new ground cover, border and general pruning and cleaning. This has enhanced the beauty of our front entryway and created a much nicer look to the front of the building.
- With the onset of spring and the trees blooming, we have noticed that several trees in our city parks are dead. In the next few months we will begin trimming and removal of these trees. We have already removed one large tree at Hickey for safety concerns.

- The infield at Vick Field was leveled and set up for teams to use for practices. Better bases and a good home plate were added to make the field safer for the users. Vick Field is included as part of our program agreement with R.Y.B.A. to help them offer youth baseball for area residents.
- New employee Terry Reed was hired through a Veterans Administration program designed to retrain returning veterans. Terry can work in this program for our department for one year. He will be a much needed addition to our staff.
- We opened the rest rooms at Illinois Bayou Park for the large crowds of fisherman using the park. We hope to have the concrete finished in May.

RUSSELLVILLE RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION
Minutes from Monthly Meeting
May 14, 2013

Present: Marvin Collier, Theresa Herrick, Mack Hollis, Chloe Lieblong, Spence Roberts, J.W. Stratton
Absent: Andy Hatley, Mike Johnston
Person Recording: Kelli Nealy
Guests: Christie Graham-Russellville Advertising & Promotion, Whitney Snipes-The Courier

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

Marvin Collier made a motion to accept the minutes from the March meeting. J.W. Stratton seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Old Business

A. Commission Chairman/Vice Chairman-According to Ordinance 630, the parks commission must elect a chairman and vice chairman to serve one year terms. The chairman, and the vice chairman in his absence, will call the commission meetings to order and conduct the meetings. A motion was made by Mike Johnston, via the telephone, to appoint J.W. Stratton as the chairman of the parks commission for 2013. Chloe Lieblong seconded the motion, and the motion passed. Marvin Collier made a motion to appoint Mike Johnston as the vice chairman for 2013. Chloe Lieblong seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

B. Commission Ordinance/Procedures-A brief discussion was held during the March commission meeting about Ordinance 630, as well as Ordinance 1190. The ordinances detail the appointment of members of the parks commission and the organization of the commission. During the March meeting, a recommendation was made to seek legal advice from the city attorney to clarify the ordinances. City Attorney Trey Smith advised that the meetings must be conducted by the chairman or vice chairman. Meeting minutes may continue to be recorded by parks department staff. Any requested changes to the ordinance must first be voted on by the commission and then presented to the city council by the chairman and council liaison. The City Attorney did not recommend changing the ordinance and felt that the commission should return to operating the way the ordinance was written. Ordinance 1190 states that the commission will consist of six members including a representative of the Russellville Junior Auxiliary that will serve a one year term. Currently, Commissioner Lieblong serves as both a commissioner, as well as the Junior Auxiliary representative. She is a lifetime member of Junior Auxiliary; however she is not an active member. Clarification will be requested from the City Attorney.

C. Capital Projects-During the March meeting, the commissioners chose the next four capital projects to follow the construction of an aquatic center. The projects are Soccer Complex field lights, trails, Shiloh Park restrooms, and backstops at Hickey Park. Commissioner Lieblong was unclear as to how the aquatic center was chosen as the top project. Mack offered to have the mayor speak at the next meeting for clarification. Plans for the Russellville Aquatic Center have been reduced in scale to a \$5.5 million cap. Vick Field and the Hughes Center are being considered as potential sites.

D. Splash Pad-The commissioners were reminded that the grand opening for the Splash Pad at City Park will be held immediately following the commission meeting at 1:00pm. A suggestion was made by Mack to set the hours of operation for the Splash Pad at 9:00am – 9:00pm daily. The commissioners agreed.

New Business

A. Winter Wonderland 2013-Christie Graham addressed the commission about Winter Wonderland 2013. In an effort to reduce expenses, Christie would like to decrease the number of days the display is open. She proposes opening from December 11 – December 22. This reduction in days would also allow fishermen more days to fish. For insurance purposes, park gates are only unlocked when the display is open to the public. Last year, while the display was set up, parks department staff worked at the park several hours each week day and allowed fishermen access to the pond during that time. This worked well, and a suggestion was made to implement a similar schedule this year. Marvin Collier made a motion in favor of the proposed display dates. Chloe Lieblong seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

B. Grants-

1. The department has been awarded a \$40,000 grant thru the Arkansas Recreational Trails Program to complete a trail around the Flying Field to the end of Orbit Lane.
2. LWCF-A 50/50 matching Land and Water Conservation Fund grant opportunity is available thru Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism. Estimated cost for the Soccer Complex lighting project is \$325,000. Mack suggested that a grant application be submitted for \$162,000 and the remaining cost will be paid by revenue from the one cent sales tax. A public meeting will be scheduled to receive input regarding recreational needs.
3. Trail for Life-A 100% Trails for Life grant is available to complete the trail at the Historic Tree Park at Pleasant View Park. The grant application deadline is in October.

C. Bike and Build Request-Jeff Priore requests permission to allow approximately thirty Bike and Build members to spend one night at the Hughes Center as they travel through Russellville on their way to San Jose. Members are riding across the country as a fundraiser for Habitat for Humanity. They will arrive at approximately 4:00pm on June 16 and will leave at 6:00am on June 17. According to the City Fire Marshal, an employee must stay awake through the night because the building is not equipped with a fire suppression system. Mack recommended that the group pay extra labor

costs. Marvin Collier made a motion in favor of the request. Chloe Lieblong seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Updates

A. Aquatic Center-The commissioners were given copies of revenue and expense projections generated by ETC Engineering. The committee is currently working on a plan to cover operations and maintenance expenses for the Aquatic Center.

B. Program Agreements Review-Copies of program agreements for various user groups were distributed to the commission for review and discussion at a later date.

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 12:55pm.