

- Thirteen (13) groups used the Hughes Center during April for a total of 283 hours. Events included a home show, senior health fair, Relay for Life Zumba fundraiser, Taste of the Valley and pARTy in the Park.
- The Parks Commission met on April 8. The topic discussed was the location of the new aquatics center. The meeting was well attended. The minutes are attached.
- The department had 21 pavilion reservations, one softball tournament with 9 teams participating and 30 practice field reservations in April.
- Long time park employee, Ruben Riggs, was injured when straight line winds blew a tree down. Ruben is recuperating at home and we hope to have him back to work soon.
- The Russellville Recreation and Parks Department summer softball league began play with 34 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 23 teams playing and the Boys and Girls Club with 16 teams. The Boys and Girls Club also participates in the River Valley League that has more than 70 teams from Arkansas cities who travel to play each other.
- As the soccer league comes to an end at the Russellville Soccer Complex, the Russellville Youth Baseball Association league begins play at M.J. Hickey Park. The RYBA baseball league began play on April 21 with 41 teams participating. The park is well utilized every evening in some capacity by RYBA or the high school teams.
- The River Valley Arts Center held their annual pARTy in the Park fundraiser on April 19 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. Amy and the Arts Center staff did a wonderful job with the event.
- Park employees attended a chainsaw safety course on April 18 at City Hall. The safety training was conducted by Dwayne Carter with the T-Squared Program. 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 the department has begun their mowing schedule.
- Work began on cleaning and preparing Hickey Pool to open for the summer season. Due to the storms in Arkansas the power can't be turned on at the pool until May 12. While that creates a hardship in getting the pool up and running, maintenance has secured generators for power and altered work assignments to complete the work. Applications were taken and the pool staff was hired in April. The pool will open on Saturday, May 24 for the weekends. After the school year ends, the pool hours for public swimming are 12:30pm to 6:30pm every day.
- The infield at Vick Field was prepared for teams to use for practices. We also did some fence work on the backstop to make sure the area was safe for park patrons. Vick Field is included as part of our program agreement with the Russellville Youth Baseball Association. The park is also used by our citizens for practices and open play.

- Dalton Huffman was hired as a summer intern; Kenneth Chandler and Gail Jones were hired to assist us as building attendants. They are much needed additions to our staff and will help us better serve the community.
- Pediatrics Plus began a Community Connections soccer program for area youth. The program will be conducted on Monday nights at the soccer complex.
- The new Ford F350 flatbed crew cab pickup was put into service on April 29. This much needed addition to our fleet will be used to haul mowers, men and hand equipment to parks as well as hauling materials.
- Boy Scout J. D. Robertson selected Confederate Mothers Memorial Park for his Eagle project. The project included clearing, leveling and applying pine bark to construct a trail. The trail begins on the north side of the parking lot follows the bench side north east around the mountain and turns back south up the hill to the rocks east of the monument. There the trail heads southwest back to the parking lot. This is the beginning of what we hope will be several trails in the park.
- During the storms on April 27 lightning struck at Pleasant View Park. The damage looks to be confined to contactors and key controllers on two fields. The needed work to fix the electric controls has begun and no interruption in use is expected.

RUSSELLVILLE RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION
Minutes from Monthly Meeting
April 8, 2014

Present: Marvin Collier, Mack Hollis, Mike Johnston, Chloe Lieblong, J.W. Stratton, Terry Thomas
Absent: Andy Hatley, Theresa Herrick, Spence Roberts
Person Recording: Kelli Nealy
Guests: Jeanette Anderton, Bucky Croom, Bert Fleck, Danya Johnson, Jason Johnson, Gary Knudsen, Lyle Manning, Dan Nicholson, Whitney Snipes, Chad Weisler

J. W. Stratton called the meeting to order at 12:10pm.

Marvin Collier made a motion to accept the minutes from the March meeting. Chloe Lieblong seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Old Business

A. Aquatics Center-A special called commission meeting was scheduled for Thursday, March 27 in order to gather additional information about the three potential sites for the Russellville Aquatic Center. The meeting was cancelled due to scheduling conflicts. Commissioner Stratton hopes that a site recommendation can be determined at this meeting. Boys & Girls Club Board Member Bert Fleck addressed the commission about the city purchasing land on 19th Street from them. The Club will sell 5 – 11 acres at \$10,000 per acre which they feel is approximately 50% of the appraised value. They are also willing to discuss additional property for possible expansion of the facility. A proposed site development plan was given to the commission which showed two potential sites for the aquatic center at the property on 19th Street; however they are willing to work with the city on its location on the property. Mr. Fleck said he thought the analysis of the three sites performed by ETC Engineering & Architects was biased. The commission received copies of an analysis developed by the Boys & Girls Club. Mr. Fleck said that flooding potential and the ability to expand should be the two major factors in choosing a site. As stated in previous meetings, RHS Swim Team Coach Gary Knudsen prefers the North Phoenix Avenue property. He thought it was bad business for the city to purchase land when they own property that will work. Boys & Girls Club Board Member Chad Weisler said the property on 19th Street and the site on North Phoenix Avenue will work, but the decision needs to be the best for the city. He said a firm price for the land on 19th Street has been offered, however a price for connecting utilities on North Phoenix Avenue has not been determined. The question was raised about whether a municipality can purchase property at a price below fair market value. Commissioner Stratton said from a business standpoint, it would be nice to purchase land at a discounted price and let the city keep the Phoenix property for future development. Marvin Collier made a motion to recommend the North Phoenix property to the City Council. Chloe Lieblong seconded the motion and added that the Phoenix property was her selection because the majority of people she spoke with chose that site. Commissioner Collier said the ETC analysis should be given some consideration because the firm is unbiased. Commissioner Stratton said he likes the visibility at the North Phoenix site and the ability to expand at the Boys & Girls Club property. He said an overwhelming majority of the 150 – 200 people he asked preferred the North Phoenix property. The motion passed 3 - 1 recommending the North Phoenix site. Mike Johnston voted against the recommendation. J.W. Stratton made a motion to select the property on 19th Street as the second choice for the center. Chloe Lieblong seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Updates

- A. Monthly Report-**The commissioners received a copy of the department's monthly report.
B. Upcoming Events-A schedule of upcoming events was given to the commissioners.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40pm.