

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
PARK COMMISSION
CITY OF UNIVERSITY CITY, ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2023**

Agenda Item A: Call Meeting to Order

Park Commission President, James Wilke called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

Agenda Item B: Roll Call

Those in attendance included Commission President James Wilke, Commission Members Carl Hoagland, Su Schmalz, Amy Gascon and Lisa Hummel. Also, in attendance was Council Liaison Steve McMahon, Staff Liaison Darren Dunkle, Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry, Todd Strubhart, Deputy Director of Maintenance, and Lynda Euell-Taylor Deputy Director of Recreation Services.

Agenda Item C: Approval of the Agenda

Commission Member Hummel motioned to move Agenda Item J - New Business - #1 to be moved up after Agenda Item E - Citizen Participation and Commission Member Hoagland seconded. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item D: Approval of the Minutes

Commission Member Gascon motioned, and Commission Member Hummel seconded to approve the January Minutes. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item E: Citizen Comments

See Comments under Unfinished Business and New Business.

Agenda Item J - #1: U. City Youth Athletic Club

Mr. Dave Edwards representing the U. City Youth Athletic Club, a 501C 3 non-profit organization addressed the Commission on the make up of his organization stating that the organization is mainly made up of kids within the University City School District and that 135 of the 138 participants were university City residents, and that they do not turn anyone away from participation. Mr. Edwards stated that due to the fact that they must charge \$120.00 per participant to participate in the City of Clayton baseball league, and that they have to purchase insurance to use the City of University City fields, the cost of running the program was becoming prohibited, and has asked the University City School District for assistance and are asking the City/Commission for a reduction or a waiver of fees to use the City owned fields for practices. Furthermore, Mr. Edwards stated that he was told that he missed the field reservation deadline and that fields might not be available etc.

Ms. Lynda Euell-Taylor, Deputy Director of Recreation Services stated that staff had sent out notices to all of last years rentals detailing their previous use and advised the organizations of the deadline date to reserve the same fields as last year etc., and that the U. City Youth Athletic Club did not and has not turned in any field usage request. Furthermore, Ms. Taylor stated that the City along with the School District offered a free youth baseball program that was sponsored by Cardinals Care "Redbird Rookies" for free and that anyone could sign up for the program.

Discussion by the Commission took place in regard to the fees and the use of the fields, and a motion was made by Commission Lisa Hummel and seconded by Commission Member Gascon to support a recommendation to City Council to waive the fees for field usage for the U. City Youth Athletic Club for the season as the majority of the kids were University City residents. Mr. Dunkle asked for clarification on the motion and wanted to know if the

Commission wanted to change the policies as there were to policies that governed fees and affiliated organizations. The Commission said that they did not want to change the policies but wanted to make a recommendation to the City Council to waive the fees for field usage for the U. City Youth Athletic Club only for the season. Mr. Dunkle and Ms. Euell-Taylor stated that the current policies didn't allow for the waiver of fees for a particular group and that only Affiliated Groups could currently receive a discounted rate.

The Commission proceeded to vote unanimously to support a recommendation to the City Council to waive the fees for field usage for the U. City Youth Athletic Club only for the season.

Agenda Item F: Department Report

Mr. Dunkle reported that staff continued to provide the day-to-day operations of the department and that he would comment on other report items later as they would pertain to specific Agenda Items that were scheduled to be discussed.

Agenda Item G: Council Report

- 1) Flood Recovery Efforts – Mr. McMahon reported that at the last Council meeting a report was made on the recovery efforts being taken by the City and that the Council wanted to move forward as soon as possible on the efforts. Mr. McMahon stated that the City Manager was to provide costs associated with the recovery efforts and that Council may move forward without FEMA funding.
- 2) Recreation Offerings - Mr. McMahon stated that recreation offerings are of a priority to the residents and thus should be a priority to the City Council.
- 3) Richmond Heights – Mr. McMahon stated that the City of Richmond Heights had been very gracious with allowing members of the Centennial Commons to use their facilities, however, February 28th will be the last day University City members would be allowed to use the Richmond Heights facilities.

Agenda Item H: Commission Members Park Inspection Report

- 1) Lewis Park (Amy Gascon) – Reported that there were tree limbs down near the stairs at the Delmar entrance.
- 2) Ruth Park Woods (Lisa Hummel) – Reported that with the removal of invasive species from the area it has uncovered an old, abandoned vehicle that is located off a side trail.
- 3) Rabe Park (Lisa Hummel) – Reported that the park looked fine.
- 4) Millar Park (Lisa Hummel) – Reported on the erosion along the trail. Mr. Dunkle stated that staff was working to obtain a cost analysis for the repair project.
- 5) Ruth Park G.C. (Su Schmalz) – Reported that the course was in good shape, however, there was some erosion issues along hole #2.
- 6) Flynn Park (Carl Hoagland) Reported the erosion on the hillside near the playground was causing dirt to wash down on the playground surfacing. He further stated that the areas beneath the swings were beginning to show wear.

Agenda Item I: Unfinished Business

- 1) Park Priorities – Commission President Wilke stated that the Commission should put off any further discussions or set priorities until the flood restoration efforts became clearer and the Commission could revisit as more information becomes available.

Citizen Comment - Mr. Kevin Taylor a resident at 7022 Canton asked if the plans and priorities changed, and has the Commission seen the plan if so? Council Liaison McMahon stated that the Council has identified Jack

Buck Field, Heman Pool, Dog Park and Centennial Commons as Council priorities. Commission President Wilke stated that as a Commission there isn't enough information at this time to make any decisions.

- 2) UCity 100th Birthday – Commission President Wilke reported that the Committee was looking into having four to five events in various park locations.

Citizen Comment - Mr. Kevin Taylor a resident at 7022 Canton asked if there is a plan and has the Commission seen the plan for these events? Commission President Wilke stated the idea was to have 4-5 events in parks etc. and that no city funds would be used as it would be funded by private donations.

Agenda Item J: New Business

- 2) Recreation Programs and Activities – Commission Member Schmalz asked about youth programs at the golf course and the use of University City kids to work as lifeguards at the pool. Mr. Dunkle stated that staff would continue to work on the programming as the driving range reopens this spring/summer. He further stated that all University City residents would be considered for lifeguard positions.

Citizen Comment - Mr. Kevin Taylor a resident at 7022 Canton spoke about the City Managers Grade B program and asked the Commission if they have seen or reviewed program? He further asked has or is there going to be Commission involvement or a recommendation? Council Liaison McMahon stated that the City Manager had a discussion with the University City School District, but nothing has been approved at this time.

- 3) Flood Recovery and Restoration – Mr. Dunkle reported that the city had submitted Scopes of Work to FEMA for the recovery and restoration of city facilities and parks, however, the city had not received approval to move forward at this time and that if the city were to move forward with the process, they would not be eligible for reimbursement for those funds.

Commission Member Hoagland asked Mr. Dunkle what the departments priorities for the recovery and restoration were. Mr. Dunkle stated that the priorities were the same as what Council Liaison McMahon had reported earlier: Jack Buck Field, Heman Pool, Dog Park and Centennial Commons. Commission Member Hoagland asked Mr. Dunkle again what the departments priorities were, Council Liaison McMahon interjected and stated that residents set priorities, City Council listens and then will direct staff.

Commission Member Schmalz asked if staff was working towards brining back part-time staff to expand hours. Ms. Euell-Taylor stated that she was working towards the expansion of hours in March.

Citizen Comment - Mr. Kevin Taylor a resident at 7022 Canton spoke about the University City High School Baseball Team and that they had to travel 12 miles for practices and games because the Jack Buck field was closed due to the flood. Mr. Taylor further stated that something could have and should have been done to have the baseball field repaired or the City could have done more to assist the University City School District as the City has provided free parking in the LOOP and the EDRST gave \$1 million to assist in developments.

Mr. Taylor went on to state that don't put it on Mr. Dunkle as he can only make recommendations on the priorities and needs. Commission Member Schmalz asked Mr. Taylor why the High School Baseball Team had to drive to practices and games. Mr. Taylor stated that it was because staff didn't do anything to assist the School District.

Mr. Dunkle and Mr. Strubhart stated that the city offered other fields within the park for practices and reached out to neighboring communities and organizations regarding game field availability and passed that information on to the school's Athletic Director.

Agenda Item K: Commission Comments

- 1) Park Rules and Regulations – Commission Member Hoagland stated that he didn't understand why it has taken the City Attorney so long to review and comment on the park rules and regulations.

Agenda Item L: Adjournment

Commission Member Schmalz motioned, and Commission Member Hummel seconded at 8:30 pm to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved.