



**PARKS COMMISSION  
Heman Park Community Center  
975 Pennsylvania Ave.**

**Tuesday, February 25, 2025  
6:30 p.m.**

**Minutes of the Meeting**

**A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order by James Wilke at 6:34

**B. ROLL CALL**

In attendance: Commission President James Wilke, Commission Members Amy Gascon, Josh Winstral, John Solodar. Also, in attendance was Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry Darin Girdler, Deputy Director of Recreation Lynda Euell-Taylor, and Deputy Director of Parks Maintenance Todd Strubhart.

**C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Josh motioned to approve the agenda, John seconded, all in approval.

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- 1) January 2025 – there were some typos in the minutes and

**E. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

Kevin Taylor, 7022 Canton Ave, commented on the city investment in Millar Park to upgrade the baseball field to utilize for the high school baseball team. The school district is investing in a baseball field for the high school to use, which would be complete in September 2025. Mr. Taylor's question is: will the Millar Park baseball field be ready for April play for the Red Bird Rockies.

**F. DEPARTMENT REPORT**

- 1) QR Code Project – No update on this item since the last Commission meeting.
- 2) Millar Park Sidewalk Improvement - Putting a crosswalk at corner of park at North and South and improving sidewalks.
- 3) FY2026 Budget – in the works, will have an update for Commission at the next meeting, Darin has been informed by city management it's going to be a lean year.
- 4) STL SC – Storage Pod & Mini-Pitch Program – Storage pod is approximately the size of one parking spot and they have 4 goals, size 18 x 6, which get chained together at the end of the night. Currently in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> season of the Play On program in University City, it's a 12 week free soccer program for University City children. Looking to build 11 mini-pitches in St. Louis before world cup in 2026, built 5 so far, 6 more to go. Cost of install and the mini-pitch is covered by funding St. Louis City already has. There is a 10-year lighting warranty. St. Louis City is planning to do periodic events at the mini-pitch to get and keep the community engaged.
- 5) New Basketball Courts – Heman Park – wanting to put in 3 new courts, in discussion with the Department of Natural Resources about adding additional pavement to the park.
- 6) Greensfelder Park – Master Plan (discussion) – There was a needs assessment done in November 2019. Darin has been in discussion with one of the ministers at the adjacent church about repaving the parking lot that is partially owned by the city and partially owned by the church. The city will be repaving the portion of the lot that the city owns. The minister expressed concerns about the lack of anything going on at Greensfelder Park. The 2019 master plan cost \$3.1M to execute and there was push back from the surrounding neighborhood regarding the improvements to the park. Todd Strubhart estimated the current cost of the 2019 master plan to be about \$5.0M
- 7) Gimme Golf Proposal – Currently operating at approx. 19 local courses, it would be a way to drive more traffic to the course. The contract with Gimme Golf requires discounted pricing to their

members. Conversations are taking place between the Parks Department and Gimme Golf to understand if this would be beneficial to the city. Darin Girdler mentioned that Gimme Golf might reimburse Ruth Park Golf for the difference between the normal charge and what their members would pay. Some discussion was had about lost cart rental revenue, but Gimme says that most of its members are walkers.

- 8) Millar Park – pre-construction meeting to take place next week. The original time was to be done by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Darin has spoken to the high school athletics director about utilizing field 6 for practice, the high school will have all their games away this year.

#### **G. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT**

Steve McMahon was not in attendance; therefore, no update.

#### **H. COMMISSION MEMBERS PARK INSPECTIONS REPORT**

With weather not being great, Commissioners haven't been to their parks recently.

#### **I. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- 1) **Annual Report**– no updates
- 2) **Rules & Regulations** – no updates
- 3) **Budget** – no updates

#### **J. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

#### **K. NEW BUSINESS**

- 1) Farmers Market – Heman Park – was looking at using Parking Lot 4 in the loop for the market, but that isn't available due to surround area construction. 6:30-8:30 set up time (2 hours) takes about an hour and half to break down, so completed by 1:30. Concerns about parking in Heman Park, there would be maybe 2 hours of overlap with ballgames and pavilion rentals. Farmer Market Storage is 10 x 30 ft storage unit for the storage of tents, portable water station, electrical items. Farmer's Market has monthly inspections by the food inspectors. Farmer's Market takes place on Saturday mornings (8:30-12:30) and one evening a week (4-7pm).
  - a. Mr. Taylor (citizen) provided comments on the Farmer's Market – he expressed concern about an independent entity making money off city property.
  - b. Lynda Euell-Taylor clarified that the Farmer's Market is utilizing the community center for winter market, and they pay rent to utilize the community center
  - c. Some discussion was had about new losses of parking space due to soccer pitch, new basketball court and now having the Farmer's Market storage taking up space. How much space do we want to lose? One idea proposed by commission member is to move Farmer's Market to Greensfelder Park. Lots of space for the market, but it is far from their current location and the loop residents who walk to the market. On the other hand, about 50% of market customers are from farther away and follow the market wherever it is located.

#### **L. COMMISSION COMMENTS**

None

#### **M. ADJOURNMENT**

Motioned to adjourned was John and Josh seconded at 7:57.