



TULSA PARK & RECREATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 5, 2024

The Tulsa Park & Recreation Board met at Ben Hill Community Center on March 5, 2024.

A meeting agenda was filed with the Tulsa City Clerk's Office on March 1, 2024. Teresa Meinders-Burkett called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

ROLL CALL:

Teresa Meinders Burkett	Present
Lauren Landwerlin	Absent
Rodrigo Rojas	Present
Brandon Oldham	Present
Shane Fernandez	Absent

Others Present:

Approval of minutes: Rodrigo motioned to approve and Brandon seconds. Minutes approved.

Directors Report

Anna America - We have a lot of the same issues, I feel repetitive, you may have seen some coverage, Oxley is closed as there were human remains found in Mohawk. It will be closed until TPD clears the area.

Teresa Meinders-Burkett – where in the area?

Anna America– Sorta where the gun club is

Teresa Meinders-Burkett – so not right at Oxley

Anna America – No, it was two hikers that found the remains. It doesn't directly impact any of us other than just doing what we can. We will take our cues from TPD on this issue. We continue to struggle with vandalism. The graffiti is a big one, we lost a playground to a fire at Dream Keepers Park. It is going to be replaced. The issue with the homeless encampment is still an issue, we will be working with DCE, TPD and Housing Solutions tomorrow to clear out

the area at Chapman Green. I have not gone back there as I was advised not to. I've been advised it's a dangerous place for the homeless. This issue is an ongoing issue and hitting parks pretty hard. On the good side, we keep talking collaboration and building, this building is a good example. You heard the presentation a few months ago with Bike Club and it will start moving forward soon, they have raised all the money needed. It's going to be a great partnership there. We are also looking at the contract to expand to trail development in other parks, East Tulsa area. The Outdoor classroom is working together and collaborating and working with our staff on the campout at Mohawk. We will be weather permitting in the next month or so we will start on the first round of sports courts. Next week we will go out on site visits. All construction is based on weather of course. The playground plan that you all reviewed has made its way through council so we will be going out on that soon. We plan to put QR codes out to get feedback to shape those playgrounds. We talked before the meeting started; we have 2 really cool things going on. We have a partnership with Dream Keepers on a grant it's a 1 to 1 match. We have been working with Cheryl Cohenour. It will be a match of City funds and in-kind funds. The funding from Woodward will be moved to Dream Keepers and we would like to have gardens that represent the three major tribes. It's been a really cool experience to see these coming together. The goal is to incorporate a trail to connect Stickball and Council Oak. Another thing we will do is from the first drop of IOT3 funding we are excited for the potential on working with public partners and assets. The Rudisill Library is moving over by B.S. Roberts there is also stormwater maintenance trail, you have Carver Middle school there too and the Housing Authority over there as well. We are going to work together with Partner Tulsa on a major grant to connect these assets. We planned to work with the neighborhood on the park, but it makes more sense to see what they want in the area. Councilors had community funding from the last package and a lot of them have been wanting to invest in parks. Council Bellis wants to put money in Dream Keepers, others want to invest in trails etc. We have a new position that started Tarah Moutray is our new Sports manager working with the user groups. We are going to do an RFP on Carl Smith. We want other events than just softball. It's a large space and on the cusp of a lot of development. Volleyball at Helmerich, we have gone back and forth at moving it South for more access to parking. There is a lot of interest in that space, right now it's just rentals. We really want someone in there to maintain them. The golf contract is old, and we will go out for RFP, we hope it will get multiple submissions. It will start next January.

*Introduced Coach Reed – who manages Ben Hill. This building had a lot of damage and Keith came in and really has done a lot of work. When I came in, I was told it needed to be torn down.

Coach Reed – has been at this center for a long time, I heard the building was going to be torn down so he did all he could to get in here. This is not just a building; this is about the kids. It's a great spot, off the expressway and we get all kinds of kids in here. We have a soccer team from the south side and kids from the east side. It's a piece of mind when you come here. I am so happy that the kids have a place to go. It's not for me, it's for me to show that I care. We need to save this next generation, I teach them manners, yes ma'am, yes sir. We have a mirror on the wall that says, "thank you for your kindness". All the kids know the motto here. We are trying to make a difference here. Anna said that she never hears reports from the center, we are doing good things here. My goal is to make a difference. Anna gave us an opportunity to

make this thing work. We appreciate all the support. There was a kid that said, "coach Reed everyone is bringing their dad to school, but I don't have a dad, he's in jail" Coach asked if he could be the kids dad. I watched as he walked in and saw me, he got so excited when he saw me and said, "thank you for your kindness" He announced me as this is the father to the fatherless.

Anna America – Coach do you do after school programming and summer programming?

Coach Reed – we have an afterschool program, we feed them, help with homework, STEM. We have volunteers that help as well. We have sports, and we teach them manners and respect here. A lot of kids in north Tulsa need a place to go.

Tersa Meinders-Bukett – great presentation, thank you for what you're doing

Anna America – one last thing on events, the Lacy Mural posters we have – communications worked on them, and they turned out so good. The community celebration was last week. There were all kinds of speakers, and it was very interesting. It really highlighted the mural, and it really matters to the North Tulsa community. The conservationist who worked on the mural, he said this is as an important of a piece that he worked on anywhere. We are hoping to find some way to use this print similar to what Gilcrease did on prints in the neighborhood. We have an accessible egg hunt coming up that we worked with the Little Lighthouse, we are also bringing back the kids triathlon. Stacie will give an update on trails, we talked that we are getting 5 more miles of trails from ODOT by Gilcrease, there is another piece that we are also getting transferred near here. We have a little money to help us.

Stacie Martin – spring is here the bikers are out on the trail and we are getting a lot of feedback on the trails. They are aging and we have talked about them before specifically related to budget. The issues remain the same, vegetation crowding, not enough light, encampments near trails – as a result of vegetation and we also have aging pavement. It's not unique to our trail system, it reflects the issues in our maintenance area. At Ute park we had excess vegetation growth, and an encampment was found. We had some funding from budget last year we got about 20k from last year which may get us some of the trail work done around a mile. We have 20k in chat and gravel supplies more for loop trails like Whiteside. We also have about 20k in gravel and asphalt supplies. We did not get the additional positions we asked for to help with trail work.

Tim Thornton – roughly parks has 22 miles of loop trails, Gilcrease, Osage, Mingo Valley Trail, and Creek. Along the Osage in particular we started working last week. We identified our needs through community and security, we sent the guys out from 56th st N to 46th St N. We found an encampment on private property, so we got help to clean that up. We are working with Asplundh to help us clean that as well. The encampments tend to be near waterways as they are heavily brushed and wooded for hiding. They are starting to leave the shelters and move into the park. When we clean those up it costs us roughly 10k to send my crews out. We can take out 3-4 truck fulls of trash. It takes away from what we need to do and then we get behind on other tasks. We are trying to develop a program to keep this up. We have roughly 160 acres along trails that we are responsible for. We do contract mowing on those areas, but a lot are heavily wooded. My crew goes in in the winter months to clean them out. We didn't get

that opportunity this year as we really didn't have a winter and we had that Father's Day storm. We have a big area behind Lowes at Chapman Green, Social services will be there, asset management.

Tersa Meinders-Burkett - when the Tulsa chamber went on their visit to Austin, when I was doing my time there, we heard of some solutions to reduce trash, I would like to have the people from TPD come and talk about those. We don't have enough housing. They have lockers in Austin for them to keep their stuff in and bins for them to keep their stuff in provided by the City. There are some solutions other cities have found. I've been out to the Chapman Green and the hardest part was seeing children's toys. They are also chopping down trees to stay warm, and that's a huge hazard. The ultimate solution is housing, but if we can help reduce trash that would be helpful.

Tim Thornton – we have found all sorts of things, bathtubs, pools etc.

Rodrigo Rojas – in our housing dept there is a request for a homeless coordinator for encampments, that position will be the coordinator for internal depts. We hope to bring this person in to scale the encampments and help the depts.

Teresa Meinders-Burkett - River Parks has the same issues the city does.

Anna America – one of the worst sites I've seen was in the Cyrus Avery Plaza under the bridge. It was a biohazard area. There were a lot of people in there and didn't leave. Part of the challenge is we aren't equipped for it and there was a lot of other owned property near the area. If you move them out of the park, and it's in the neighborhood, then they move into the neighborhood. It has to be dealt with more collaboratively. A lot of the people who are not allowed in shelters are finding places in our parks to go.

Stacie Martin – this isn't limited to these areas, Creek Trail, Carl Smith and Savage, and we had one up the hill from here. It's just a schedule of where we are going next to work on. The vegetation isn't the only issue.

Anna America – the playground fire we are certain someone started it to stay warm. When you're at the stage there is no concern for anything else.

Stacie Martin – with the lighting, vegetation, and encampments. Another issue is pavement.

Jason Boyd – just like streets in Tulsa, our trails and our parking lots, and sidewalks are deteriorating rapidly and have been for a while. In the last few days, we got MVT trail and Creek Trail. The warm weather people are getting out and finding issues that need to be addressed. With the dept, we have a need to create our own contract. There are ODOT stipulations that we have to abide by for streets, that we don't feel we need to abide by. We are in the process of working through that with Purchasing. Once we get through that we will better be able to serve our needs. It's a small amount of money, but we will work with it to get repairs made.

Stacie Martin – this is for our regional trails and loop trails as well as parking lots with asphalt. We know there are areas that need drastic repair. We have to be conciliant of making repairs.

We have 3 million for the trails, 2 million for parking lots and 1 million for loop trails. Our outstanding parking lot is 28 million.

Anna America – You can plan this stuff and not maintain them. Everyone loves our trails system, but there has never been money put in for maintenance on them. We will keep asking for funding.

Stacie Martin – community grants for lights at Osage.

Teresa Meinders-Burkett – are we limited to the lowest bid, there are materials that are more durable?

Anna America – we don't build the trails so a challenge for use is what happens like the Gilcrease trail we heard about it when it was almost done. Engineering will make a deal with ODOT or a grant then build a trail based on what they engineered. We have had 0 involvement in the trails. We get them to maintain afterwards.

Stacie Martin – like re sealing etc.

Teresa Meinders-Burkett – what process can we put in place so we can get the correct materials?

Anna America– there's a reorg in the city and there are parts we hope that we need to focus on user first and maintenance. For example, River Parks does their trail – grants won't be given unless there is asphalt around the border.

Steven Lassman – that's the standard they expect now, with the grant money we are spending 2 x more. The upfront cost is what gets us. We maybe can only get a couple miles.

Stacie Martin – all of those things need continued maintenance and funding, that's the biggest issue.

Lindsay Hutchison – Record breaking month in February 52k people attended. We had our two single attendances in spring break. We did the education recap for last year. We had 211k outreach and conversations with people, camp, programs etc. It was one of the highest years we've had. Highlights from camp, they like the behind-the-scenes tours. Feeding etc. It's fun to get feedback from camps. Zoo team program has been around for many years, that has 44-50 students, and they start freshmen year and go through senior year and learn how to be a zookeeper. Coming up is a giant bug exhibit. Animatronic bugs – black widow spider, beetles etc. A unique way for kids to learn about bugs. New elephants preserve barn, we got the keys last week. We are now training our elephants and hope to have that open soon. This is the first phase of 3 phases. 10-acre yard is being worked on now. Our elephant went right in the shoot.

Anna America - what do you attribute that jump in attendance to?

Lindsay Hutchison – break in sports season, nice weather etc. That helped with attendance. January was a tough month, so this really helped.

Anna America – how's the baby giraffe?

Lindsay Hutchison – she's doing great, really independent. Excited for us to see the new preserve. The bug exhibit is a way for us to really connect to kids. For them to learn about the animals that they would actually see in their home. We are working on a grant for new programs to be more accessible.

Board Reports

Rodrigo Rojas - I took my kids to Hope playground and it was a great time. It always is. There are so many people there, not just at the park but using all of Whiteside. Soccer, tennis, and the community center. It was nice to see everything being used at once.

Anna America – when you see stuff like that it's like this is why we do this.

Brandon Oldham – the bathrooms, they learn not to lock the door at Whiteside. We are always finding our way to Lacy and B.C. Franklin and Chamberlain – glad to hear about the construction there. Thank you for paying attention to the glass at the parks.

Teresa Meinders Burkett – hiking at Lubell, Bales and Moosercreek. Those are great assets for Tulsa. You need to pay attention as there are also biking trails that can be used for walking. With spring coming it's going to be gorgeous. Enjoying Oxley as well, the full moon walks are really magical. We heard a bobcat, and owls. One thing that was reported is that we had poachers on the full moon walk, they were shooting towards the hiking group. We need to keep our security on that, we don't want our patrons or ducks shot.

Anna America – a deer was shot on one of the golf courses last month.

Teresa Meinders-Burkett – do we have security to patrol at night?

Anna America – security is doing an awesome job, but there is no way to patrol at night. It would be a good point that when there is a night event that security knows about it. Ex for the campout etc. They don't stake out, but they can check in and respond to calls. The security and bringing them onboard and embedded in parks has been amazing. I do laugh sometimes; we get some funny reports.

Teresa Meinders-Burkett - We got a tour of Ben Hill. Williams has provided funding for Coach Reed and the outdoor classroom is also looking for funding.

Teresa Meinders-Burkett adjourned the meeting at 10:12 a.m.

Anna America, Park Director
Secretary

Teresa Meinders-Burkett, Chair