

CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE MINUTES

April 7, 2015

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a conference at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room on the 7th day of April, 2015, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray, and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Allison, Castleberry, Heiple, Holman, Jungman, Lang, Miller, Williams, and Mayor Rosenthal

ABSENT: None

Item 1, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE FOLLOWING COMPONENTS OF A CITIZENS' QUALITY OF LIFE INITIATIVE ENTITLED "NORMAN FORWARD":

- PARKS MASTER PLAN
- WESTWOOD POOL COMPLEX

Mayor Rosenthal said the Parks Master Plan (PMP) is an enormous document that had a lot of public input when it was developed.

Mr. Jud Foster, Director of Parks and Recreation, said the City of Norman adopted the PMP in November 2009. The PMP process included an evaluation of the current parks and recreation facilities as well as future needs in both short term and long term recommendations. The recommendations in the plan were based almost entirely on public input that was gathered during the planning process. A Citizen Steering Committee and Stakeholder Groups were used to help guide the public input process. Extensive survey research was completed and information was gathered from a scientifically valid mail-out survey, an internet survey, and a survey conducted through the Norman Public School System.

Mr. Foster said key recommendations of high priority included renovation of key existing parks; Citywide trail development; new state-of-the-art indoor recreation center in a regional location; Phase 1 of Ruby Grant Park; the purchase of floodplain lands for a Canadian River Park and Little River Corridor Preserve; soccer and football improvements at Griffin Park; baseball and softball improvements at Reaves Park and indoor aquatic center; initial development of Saxon Park; Westwood Park Tennis Center improvements; and new neighborhood parks in developing areas. He said all recommendations are being addressed except for the indoor recreation facility. He said Norman Forward is not addressing this in their plans either, but there has been discussion of an indoor facility to be located at North Base. He said what has not been addressed for such a facility is arts and crafts, dance studio, walking track, or a senior citizen component. He said acquiring floodplain land has yet to be addressed as well.

Mr. Foster said the highest rated project in the PMP is the renovation of existing neighborhood parks in the amount of \$6.5 million to include items such as new signage, a decorative fencing, new site furnishings, walking trails, tree planting, playground shade structures and new synthetic turf safety surfacing, additional playground equipment, picnic pavilions, and additional soccer goals and backstops. He highlighted the parks being renovated and what is proposed for each.

Mr. Foster said \$2 million is set aside for new neighborhood park development for Cedar Lane, Southlake/St. James, Summit Valley, Bellatona, Redlands, and Links neighborhoods. He said development will most likely include construction of walking/fitness trails, shaded playgrounds with synthetic turf safety surfacing, sports practice facilities, site furnishings, a gazebo or picnic shelter, park lights, and security lights as needed. He said these funds are in addition to neighborhood park development funds that are generated through land development and dedicated to the construction of basic park improvements.

Mr. Foster said Norman Forward's Initiative is very similar to the PMP project plans.

Mr. Foster said the proposed initial development phase of Ruby Grant Park will cost \$6 million that will consist of utility infrastructure improvements, park signage, parking areas in southwest and northeast corners, playground area, restrooms, Ruby Grant memorial marker, park maintenance area, walking and running trails, practice fields in the northwest corner, picnic pavilion, and site furnishings. He said future development will include a splash pad, Community Center, cross country track (accommodates 2K/3K events - K=kilometers), amphitheater, skate board area, dog park, disc golf course, Legacy Trail connection, park/City monument, display gardens and sculpture area, a wildflower/native grass meadow, and additional parking. He said the University of Oklahoma (OU) has been assisting the City with the design of all the cross country courses.

Councilmember Holman said Norman has quite a few skate boarders and the skate park in Andrews Park is heavily used. He asked if the Ruby Grant skate boarding area would be concrete and Mr. Foster said the plan is to construct a concrete, bowl-type structure which seems to be the public's preference.

Saxon Park Development, Phase I, is almost complete and included new turf surface for a cross country course, entry drive and signs, park sign, tree plantings, entry drive bus loop, west parking area, vinyl post and rail fence along property line, east playground, restrooms, trail head kiosk, event shelter, concrete trail to event shelter, water and electrical service, and tree and underbrush thinning. Mr. Foster said the existing roadway easement and existing barbed wire fence will remain. He said the cross country course is open and available, but is not quite finished. He said Phase II will cost \$2 million that includes additional parking, concrete fitness trail, fitness stations, concrete trail to trail head kiosk, new dams for proposed recreation lake/pond, landscaping, recreational lake, and a special events shelter.

Andrews Park proposed improvements totaling \$1.5 million includes splash pad enhancements (expanded seating and shade structures, updated spray features, and enhanced picnic party areas), removable shade feature for amphitheater seating area, skate park upgrades that includes demolition of old water storage tank and construction of a new concrete bowl-type skate facility south of the existing skate park, and additional tree planting.

Westwood Tennis Center proposed improvements is estimated at \$1 million, which includes converting two existing courts to an indoor facility and constructing two new outdoor courts with lighting and associated site furnishings. This project will require the development of new court use fees that will be associated with the indoor courts to help offset operating costs. Mr. Foster said charging a fee for use of the indoor facility is normal and generally based on an hourly rate. Councilmember Heiple would like Staff to look at installing multiple-use floors for the indoor facility so other sports such as basketball can make use of the facility.

Legacy Trail proposed expansion is \$6 million that includes the completion of Legacy Trail's central loop, connecting trail segments from Ruby Grant Park across Interstate 35 and State Highway 77 (North Flood Street) heading east along the Little River corridor and then south along Stubbeman Avenue to the Robinson Street/Railroad corridor trail section.

Councilmember Holman said the Tecumseh Road Bridge/Overpass has a narrow “sidewalk” that is only big enough for a single pedestrian, and he would like to add a multi-modal path with the Legacy Trail Project if possible. Mr. James Briggs, Park Planner, said there are ways to add a multi-modal path and asked Mr. Shawn O’Leary, Director of Public Works, if that was possible from an engineering standpoint. Mr. O’Leary said when the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) built the bridge, the design did not include a multi-modal path, but the City could generate a request.

Mr. Foster said Westwood Pool improvements are projected to be \$12 million. He said the existing pool and bathhouse facilities built in 1966, will be demolished and replaced with a new family aquatic center, freeform recreational pool with zero depth entry, play/spray features, water slides, plunge pools, lazy river, lap pool and diving area, large shaded deck, special event area, new bathhouse and concession facilities, and additional parking. He said the existing pool’s cast iron pipes are rusty and corroding from the high chlorine content of the pool and the City has to replace and/or repair parts all summer long.

Mr. Foster said the City requested a planning report to provide additional and more detailed information. Questions to be answered include the cost of building and operating a new pool, comparing renovation with replacement, deciding what key features are needed for income generation, and the impact of local aquatic competitors.

Mr. David Schwartz, Waters Edge Aquatic Design, displayed and described three pool concepts for Council’s consideration. He said the designs are family focused with family fun, but is not at the level of a commercial water park. He said a basic formula for a successful pool includes a shallow play area, lap swimming and diving, lazy river, and water slides. The formula can be scaled according to budget, site size, population, and project goals. A profitable facility must have an adequate nearby population and “must have features” for a successful pool facility is a lazy river and a couple of thrill slides. Enhanced features include a wave pool and Flow Rider (surf in place). These features will result in the highest attendance and best opportunity to reduce operating subsidy. He said the Westwood Park site is adequate to accommodate any of the three designs.

Mr. Schwartz highlighted the design concept comparisons and costs as follows:

Features	Layout 1	Layout 2	Layout 3
Pool size (square feet)	12,851	18,694	19,762
50 meter x 25 yard	No	No	No
Short course	Yes	Yes	No
25 yard by 25 meter	No	Yes	No
Diving	Yes	Yes	Yes
Deck area (square feet)	21,937	21,572	37,953
Lazy River length (feet)	439	505	555
Bathhouse	Yes	Yes	Yes
Concessions	Yes	Yes	Yes
Special Events area	Yes	Yes	Yes
Shade	Yes	Yes	Yes
Project Cost	\$8,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$12,000,000
Operating cost/season	\$300,000	\$360,000	\$420,000
Number of slides	3	4	3
Future additions			
Wave pool	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000
Flow Rider	\$1,800,000	\$1,800,000	\$1,800,000

Mr. Schwartz said the National Recreation Park Association (NRPA) recommends one pool for every 20,000 in population so by that standard Norman should have five pools and maybe be planning for a sixth. He is not recommending that and from an operation subsidy recover point of view it is better to build one of the three designs then look at spray pads or other areas to develop in the future.

Councilmember Miller said Council has had many discussions regarding water and water conservation and asked if there was any type of conservation planned for the pool water or if it could be reused. Mr. Schwartz said yes to both questions, a pool can contain anywhere from 200,000 to 400,000 gallons of water and one-half inch per day can be lost from evaporation and swimmer splash or drip. He said decks are usually sprayed down to clean, which can be a thirty minute using ten gallons of water, but that does not have to be done every day. He said the one thing there can be improvement on is the filters. Usually, big filters are flushed using 15 gallons of water per minute per square foot for three to five minutes once a week so the City would lose 15,000 to 25,000 gallons of water every time it flushed the filters and that water would go the sanitary sewer and cannot be recycled. He said there are filters called "regenerative medium" that would use 200 to 300 gallons of water when flushing tanks once a month. In some facilities the filters are flushed once or twice a season, which is a significant savings. He said these filters are more expensive, but save a lot of water.

Councilmember Heiple asked if there is any consideration to a different type of surface and coloring other than concrete. Mr. Schwartz said his company stains the floor to create paths and uses a stain that does not absorb heat. He said heat absorption is the biggest problem. He said coatings could be used on the pool deck, but they are very high maintenance because they collect dirt and when washed the coating peels off. He said grass can be used because it is cooler and less expensive, but it has to be fenced and a shower/wash off area to go in and out of the grassy area would need to be provided. He said the City can install square grids that snap together that allows water to drain and does not allow algae to grow so there are choices other than concrete although there will be concrete underneath adding to the cost. He said an option for keeping cool is adding misters along the path where people walk and providing shade intermittently.

Mayor Rosenthal asked the difference in capacity between the existing facility and potential facility in terms of the number of people that could be served at any one time. Mr. Schwartz said capacity is regulated by the State of Oklahoma's Health Department. He said the City will have larger capacity with more shallow water because the Health Department does not want a large number of people in the deep area at one time. He said the potential facility will have more shallow water so there will be more capacity than the existing pool. Mayor Rosenthal felt it would be helpful to look at the options in terms of the number of people served.

Councilmember Castleberry asked the capacity of the existing pool and Mr. Foster said current attendance is 500 per day and 28,000 for the season. Mr. Schwartz said attendance really depends on the right features, the population around the pool facility, the right management, etc. He said it is difficult to predict capacity. He said cities that were operating in the red hired outside companies to run the facilities and he would not recommend doing that.

Councilmember Allison said the more capacity, the more the operational costs. Councilmember Lang asked how the designs would impact operational costs and if that cost is factored into the cost estimates and Mr. Schwartz said the cost estimates are based on the construction costs only and his company only looked at designs and features that would be best for Norman. Councilmember Lang asked if those costs would be taken into account once construction started and Mr. Schwartz said yes.

Councilmember Allison asked if estimated costs includes additional parking and Mr. Schwartz said the proposals include 100 parking spaces.

Councilmember Williams asked if the demolition of the existing pool and construction of a new pool could be done in the off season and Mr. Schwartz said yes, but work would have to start the first week of August so design and bidding would have to be completed by then.

Ms. Joy Hampton, The Norman Transcript, asked the depth of the shallow pool and Mr. Schwartz said zero to two and one-half to three feet. Ms. Hampton asked where the lap pools are located because there does not seem to be any lap swimming in the designs and Mr. Schwartz said there will be designated lap lanes open all the time. She asked how many lap lanes will be available and Mayor Rosenthal said these are operational questions and have not been discussed at this point.

Mr. Bill Hickman, 517 Macy Street, asked if any dog parks are being planned in any of the projects and Councilmember Castleberry said Ruby Grant Park will have a dog park.

Mr. Hickman said he lives near Eastwood Park and believes the City is constructing a trail in the park near Bishop Creek and he is concerned about a possible concrete trail being constructed so close to Bishop Creek. Mr. Foster said he would be happy to speak to Mr. Hickman about the trail after the meeting.

Councilmember Allison said during a recent Norman Arts Council Roundtable meeting there was discussion about possibly adding a percentage to all the Norman Forward Projects that would go toward public art. He said he did not know what percentage would be appropriate, but one to two percent was discussed. He felt this would get the support from all areas of Norman. Mayor Rosenthal said adding a percentage to the projects would add a way to help finance some of the projects the Public Arts Board would work on. She asked Staff to include what other communities are doing in terms of percentages for public art in future presentations. Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager, said Staff has found some information in Oklahoma as well as other metro cities and the general amount is one percent. He said Staff would need to look at what types of projects this would be applied to, if there is a threshold for the amount of the project, and if it would apply to public buildings and parks.

Councilmember Allison said he was not proposing this for all future projects right now, just specifically Norman Forward projects.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated April 2, 2015, from Jud Foster, Director of Parks and Recreation, to Steve Lewis, City Manager
2. Norman Forward Parks Master Plan Projects narrative
3. Legacy Trail Master Plan location map
4. Ruby Grant Park Master Plan location map
5. John H. Sutton Jr. Memorial Park Concept Plan
6. A Legacy For The Next Generation – The Norman Parks and Recreation Master Plan, The Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Norman, Action Plan 2010-2020
7. Pool Concept Planning dated February 26, 2015
8. PowerPoint presentation entitled, “Norman Forward Park Master Plan Projects:

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The meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor