

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Leawood, Kansas, met for a Work Session Meeting at City Hall, 4800 Town Center Drive, at 6:00 P.M., on Tuesday, January 21, 2014. Mayor Peggy Dunn presided.

Councilmembers present: Lou Rasmussen, Carrie Rezac, Jim Rawlings, Julie Cain, James Azeltine, Tom Robinett, and Andrew Osman

Councilmembers absent: Debra Filla

Staff present: City Administrator Scott Lambers City Attorney Patty Bennett
Public Works Director Joe Johnson Finance Director Dawn Long
Comm Dev Director Richard Coleman City Clerk Deb Harper
P&R Director Chris Claxton Assistant City Clerk Pam Gregory
Superintendent of Recreation Kim Curran

Others Present: Dave Coleman, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Lorrie Hamilton, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Chris Camp, Lose & Associates
Dave Lovetere, Leawood Stage Company
Teri Schaefer, Kansas City Star
Susan Grogan, Leawood resident
Richard Brown, Leawood resident
Ellen Brown, Leawood resident

Presentation of Park Master Plan—Phase I

Mayor Dunn called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. Introductions were made by those present.

Opening Remarks – City Administrator Scott Lambers

Tonight’s meeting is intended to review the City’s existing parks facilities. Staff will need guidance from the City Council on some of the recommendations in the presentation. Staff will review the recommended improvements to incorporate a schedule and costs into the Capital Improvement Plan [CIP] for 2015. Plans are to bring this back before the City Council for input within the next 60 days. This is the beginning of several meetings of a multi-phase Park Master Plan, which will need to be evaluated by priority in comparison to some of the other projects in the City and CIP.

Presentation - Chris Camp, Lose & Associates

Park Classifications

Mini Parks (M)

Mini parks are generally ½ to 1 acre in size and serve .5 acres per 1,000 citizens. They are usually walk-up parks with no parking because of their size.

Neighborhood Parks (N)

Neighborhood parks are 5-20 acres in size and serve people usually living within ½ mile. These parks serve 10,000-20,000 citizens or 1-2 acres per 1,000 citizens and can have active sports facilities. It is not uncommon to have a swimming pool, walking paths and shelters.

Community Parks (C)

Community Parks serve 50,000-80,000 citizens or 5-8 acres per 1,000 citizens. The size can vary greatly. Leawood's City Park is the best example of a true community park with soccer and baseball fields, a swimming pool, tennis courts, walking trails, etc. These parks have a diverse mix of facilities that serve all different age groups and interests.

Regional Parks (R)

Regional Parks are larger than Community Parks serving 50,000-250,000 citizens and can be 1,500 - 1,600 acres in size. These parks often have very unique facilities, such as a water park or zoo that will attract people to drive a further distance.

Greenways (GW)

Greenways are linear parks that link a community. Most communities currently build their greenway system with hard surfaced paved roads. Most greenways are 12 feet wide, with recommendations in high use areas to go to 16 feet because of demand. There is an overcrowding issue during peak usage. Greenways generally have a right-of-way [ROW] or an easement that divides the boundaries because they are public facilities that cut across different property owners.

The City of Leawood has 636 acres of park land with a good mix of park systems with several lakes, ponds, creeks and art, which provide more aesthetics and recreation opportunities.

- Ironwoods Golf Course 227 acres
- Ironwoods Park 115 acres
- Greenways 147 acres
- City Park 100 acres
- Tomahawk Park 25 acres
- I-Lan Park 11 acres
- Gezer Park 9 acres
- Brook Beatty Park .5 acres

New ADA standards for access routes in parks are now in place. These requirements call for all park facilities to have an acceptable hard surface path connecting parking areas to the facilities. An example would be connecting parking lots to bleacher areas of the soccer fields. Currently, none of the soccer fields have hard surface paths to bleacher areas.

These same ADA guidelines state that you must accommodate wheelchairs at serving windows, picnic areas, and aquatic facilities. Currently, these accommodations are not being provided.

Review of City's Existing Parks

City Park

The east half of this park will have a new Dog Park; otherwise, this park is fully built-out.

Mr. Lambers noted several years ago, Johnson County thought they would be abandoning the wastewater treatment plant and shipping everything to Kansas City, Missouri. Preliminary conversations took place regarding the City taking over that property; however, due to their projected continual rate increases the County has decided not to do this. The wastewater treatment plant will remain in place. There is no opportunity in the near future to consider any facility expansion to City Park.

Tomahawk Park

This park has a baseball field and picnic shelter. The park is flood prone, which has been an issue in the past regarding any additional development. This park functions as a major trailhead on the City's greenway system.

I-Lan Park

This Sister City Park is heavily used and has 3 unique shelters, a playground, public art, garden area, restrooms, and a pavilion. Citizens noted inadequate parking during peak use.

Gezer Park

This Sister City Park is visually outstanding with a lot of activity and variety to reach several user groups. The park includes a nice play structure, plenty of trees, a water feature, fire pit, and outstanding architecture. With only 20 parking spaces, this would not meet the demand during peak use. This park does not provide a lot of opportunity for expansion.

Tomahawk Creek Greenway

This is one of the City's major trail systems for bicyclists, walkers, and runners. Citizens have expressed their appreciation with the City keeping the greenway clear when it snows. They need to consider more parking access points because the trail system runs several miles.

Ironwoods Park

This park has wonderful architecture that works well in its setting and includes sports fields, which double as parking for the amphitheatre, a climbing tower, the Lodge, The Old School House, Nature Center, and cabin area. He felt a second Lodge-type facility at another location would be booked as heavily as this one because of high demand. There is room for expansion at this park, including expansion on the recently acquired additional acreage.

Key Findings and Recommendations - National Recreation and Park Association [NRPA] standards

They need to address ADA issues including properly signed parking spaces, providing and marking access routes, and bathhouse renovations in most parks.

Greenways

- Repave older trail sections
- Standardize trail width at 12 feet
- Provide more signage at trailheads
- Solutions where flood prone
- Treat sides of trails

Playgrounds

- Consider alternative surface to mulch due to costly maintenance
- Provide rubber mats at high impact areas

Vehicular and Pedestrian Conflicts

- Provide signage at crosswalks
- Provide pavement marking at road crossings

Drinking Fountains and Restrooms

- Provide more throughout park systems
- Provide at all major trailheads

Signage

- Provide interpretive signage throughout park system
- Provide directional signage in all parks

Turf Management

- Consider installing irrigation in all high impact use areas

Programming Space

- Indoor programming space is limited
- Lodge cannot meet demand for rentals
- Golf clubhouse expansion will help with rentals but not programming space

Park Expansion

- Ironwoods Park is the only park with expansion possibilities
- Parking should be expanded at I-Lan and Gezer Park
- Restrooms should be provided at Tomahawk Park and the trailheads

Discussion

Councilmember Osman asked how soon they need to address the ADA issues. Mr. Camp replied Civil Law guides this. The best way to approach this is to identify the deficiencies and prioritize the needs.

Parks and Recreation Director Chris Claxton noted most citizens prefer bringing their own chairs instead of using the bleachers at the soccer fields. Mr. Camp replied if they determine not to use the bleachers, one path could serve 2 fields on each side. The pathways cannot be more than a 5% grade unless handrails are provided.

Mr. Camp stated there are opportunities for playgrounds along the greenways. The new trend is to provide amenities along the trails. Because of trail user conflict issues, the recommended standards by the Federal Highway Administration Design Group should be a minimum of 10 feet wide; however, 12 feet is recommended. Some communities have designated lanes for bicyclists and walkers.

Mr. Camp confirmed they plan to return with recommendations for the parks.

Mayor Dunn noted they have held meetings regarding usage for the additional acreage at Ironwoods Park. Mr. Lambers stated they would prioritize the list of uses prior to the initiation of Phase II of the Master Plan. ADA compliance would be top priority of all parks.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the work session was adjourned at 7:20 P.M.

Pam Gregory, Recording Assistant City Clerk