



# City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center  
300 S. Church Street  
Jonesboro, AR 72401

## Meeting Minutes Public Services Council Committee

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Tuesday, October 17, 2023

4:30 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

### 2. ROLL CALL (ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE) CONFIRMED BY CITY CLERK APRIL LEGGETT

**Present** 7 - Chris Gibson; Joe Hafner; Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[MIN-23:093](#)

Minutes for the Public Services Committee Meeting on Tuesday, September 19, 2023

**Attachments:** [Minutes](#)

**A motion was made by Brian Emison, seconded by Joe Hafner, that this matter be Passed. The motion PASSED with the following vote.**

**Aye:** 6 - Joe Hafner; Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

### 4. NEW BUSINESS

#### *RESOLUTIONS TO BE INTRODUCED*

[RES-23:215](#)

RESOLUTION BY JONESBORO CITY COUNCIL TO AMEND THE CONTRACT AGREEMENT WITH HALFF ASSOCIATES INC. TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES TO INCLUDE A SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH ACCELERATOR PLAN INTO THE MASTER PARKS PLAN FOR THE JONESBORO PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT.

**Attachments:** [Jonesboro PRMP SCHEDULE 10.02.23](#)  
[Jonesboro PRMP Exhibit D-1st AMEND 10.02.23](#)  
[First-Amend MEMO 10.02.23](#)

*Parks and Recreation Director Danny Kapales approached the podium and said, so, yes. Obviously we have been working on the master parks plan all year, and the Grants Department did a great job to receive this CDC grant; and as we were digging into the grant, we kind of realized that they both coincided. And it made sense to go ahead and get the company that we were working with go ahead and look into this grant instead of us doing it in house and trying to look at the parks and see where those ADA connections were. Go ahead and have the professionals that are already doing that and looking into our park system just take that next step, and look at our*

*parks, and just add that to the contract that we currently have. Since it is a grant, it is being paid for through that grant. To me, it just made a whole lot of sense to just add it to what we are already doing.*

**A motion was made by Joe Hafner, seconded by Anthony Coleman, that this matter be Recommended to Council. The motion PASSED with the following vote.**

**Aye:** 6 - Joe Hafner; Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

## **5. PENDING ITEMS**

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

[COM-23:052](#)

### MONTHLY UPDATE FROM PARKS & RECREATION

*Parks and Recreation Director Danny Kapales approached the podium and said, so as far as this past month, to kind of dig back in, we have had a soccer, football, softball, a couple of baseball tournaments, so a lot of activity as far as our sports programs have been going on. So it has been a really good heavy month for that. If you had a chance to go out to the softball fields this past weekend, you would have seen ten college teams from around Arkansas, Tennessee, Missouri, and Illinois. They were here in town. But alongside those ten softball teams, we also had ten high school level teams that were out there playing showcase. They were able to see those college teams play, but the college coaches were also able to see those players. So it was a chance for them to be able to see each other, and get a chance to potentially see that next step, maybe connect with a coach, see what their next level of play could be and go on to college. It's just something that we have added the last few years and it's continuing to grow and be something good for our community. If you were out and about, you would have seen a lot of college players. I know I was out Saturday night. I went to one of our local restaurants, and we had two of the college teams that were in there both eating. So it took a little bit longer to get into the facility, so I know that right there in itself just showed how much activity we are adding.*

*Outside of the sports, obviously you all have seen some of our grand openings, ribbon cuttings, and things that are happening. You know, we have some movement actually happening in Jonesboro, and I think it is exciting for Jonesboro. If you had a chance to go out to Joe Mack right now, you will see that there is grass getting stripped off of a couple of soccer fields, getting ready to do the turf. Earlier today, I was out at Parker Park and you will see that the dirt was getting dug out, getting ready for the pool to be installed. The concrete that was currently there for the splash pad is gone, and just a lot of construction and activity happening within our park space. I know the trail company that had been working on the trails out at Craighead Forest, they are slated to be back here in just a couple of weeks, first of November. So they will be back there to finish up the last phase of the trail system, which has been extremely popular. I know this past weekend we had a DARE race, and I shouldn't say 'we'. I give all credit to Jonesboro Police Department and the DARE organization for that. They did a wonderful job hosting that event and continue to do that each year. But they used the new trails, and from what I understand, there were a whole lot of comments on what it was last year to the trail system this year and being able to use that facility. So just quite a bit of activities. I am open for questions at this point.*

*Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, Dan, thank you for the report. Good job.*

Question, so I just thought about this when we were approving this prior resolution. So about this master parks plan, what is the timeline especially with adding that piece? I know we are still doing so much, and I want to see how it was tying in; and are we having conversations with them as they are developing this? Mr. Kapales said, yes, actually every other Tuesday, I have a standing meeting with them just to go over where we are, and that is a face to face meeting with them. Now we are communicating back and forth either through email, phone calls, and things of that sort with the plan as we are moving forward. I believe we are currently sitting somewhere about the 80% mark as far as the plan being complete. So we are pretty well on timeline to have what we have asked in the original plan to be complete; and we were looking at the end of October, sometime in November, but really by the end of the year for sure to be done. I don't know if this really throws us off that much. They are going to get that piece done for us that we have asked for. This may take a little longer because it is going to involve a few trips for us to go look at some other facilities to just basically see what, you know, currently we know we have ADA accessible facility like the Miracle League. But how do you take current facilities that we have make them fully ADA accessible without taking away what the facility is supposed to be like? So I think that is what we really have to do is go see other facilities and make sure that we are staying in what the facility is supposed to be. I think you all have probably also heard us. We have talked about new parks that are using our topography of the landscape, and I want to make sure that it says we make these ADA accessible and it still has that. It still has the features of if it slopes down, that we have slides sliding down that slope and climbers coming back out, but it is still capable for all children to be able to play on. So the only way to do that is for us to get out and visit, and so that is part of this. So looking at the time frame, I know Alejandra has been digging into it. She has been in some of our meetings, and has gotten really close working with Half & Associates. I am speculating that we are probably going to add maybe 60 days to the time frame of our overall master parks plan.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, I just think it is prudent that we, especially on the record, that we are actually asking and talking about the fact that we know we have this master parks plan that is being developed, but then we are doing all of these things with the parks and so on and so forth and make sure that they are meshing. Mr. Kapales said, no, I think you are absolutely right. The thing about putting a master parks plan together is that you can't just freeze on what you are doing. You have to continue forward. A lot of things we already had in play that we are doing now we were working on; and I think you continue those. The company that we are working with, they looked at those plans that we already had down. They looked at the projects that we had slated, and those are being included in that master parks plan. So as they put that together, they go, okay, here is where you are. Here is what you have planned over the next couple of years already, and here is what you need to be doing also on top of that. So it is all being evaluated in depth. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, that is all I have. Thank you, Chairman.

Patti Lack, 4108 Forest Hill Road, approached the podium and said, so last week Danny was at the A&P meeting; and I know that they brought up the idea of how the artificial turf was going to be more expensive. So you asked A&P for some of the money, but the city was going to pay for it. Can you tell me how that works out? That is just one question, and then I want to talk about turf. Mr. Kapales said, okay, so I think what you are referring to is similar to what we did when we did the baseball turf. Obviously A&P gets money over the years, it builds up the account; and this project is a little bit larger project than what A&P receives over each year. So what they have done is they dedicated the next few years of what they will be receiving to this project. So what happens is the city will pay for the project up front, and then each year as

*A&P receives, they will pay back the portion that they agreed to until that portion is paid up. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, Danny, is that money just coming from that extra one percent? Mr. Kapales said, yes sir, it is only coming from the extra one percent that was dedicated to parks projects.*

*Ms. Lack said, next question to you. So I watch a little bit of football, and I know that there has been a lot of articles talking about the injuries on artificial turf. So just kind of Googling some of the questions like, what are the cons of artificial turf? What are the negative effects? How many injury rates and all that? And the injuries are 37% on grass versus 62% on artificial turf. And what percentage are we using it, and are we liable for any types of injuries? I understand that it is really a popular thing, but the NFL is kind of backing away from artificial turf now. So are we doing something that maybe we are going to look back and say maybe it wasn't the right idea? Just a thought. Mr. Kapales said, no, I think that is a great thought. So one of the reasons we looked at the fields that we did to add artificial turf is because they were our lowest, wettest fields. They were the worst fields in the park. So what we have done is we are taking fields that are in horrible shape that can't be used until the middle of summer when it is finally dry, and we are making those fields usable by adding artificial turf to it. We are retaining the rest of the complex as natural turf, because you are right. There is a love for using natural turf, especially when you deal with soccer. Soccer players really do like natural turf for the most part, but we are also at a point where we get a lot of rain in the springtime, we get a lot of rain a lot of times in the late fall. Through the winter months, we can't. Well, this artificial turf is going to add a lot of time frames that we normally didn't have to be able to have outdoor activity. Springtime, we will be out there on that turf to have practices. During the winter months when we normally wouldn't be able to be out there at all, but a lot of times we have those Decembers and Januaries where it is actually pretty nice outside and kids can get out and actually utilize the facility. So that is going to add that opportunity. As far as the injuries, yes, we can do the NFL comparison, but we are talking about much larger, faster athletes in comparison to younger, smaller athletes. It is like comparing a peewee football program to an NFL program. You don't have the same injuries because you don't have the same speed, or the same velocity of impact when you come to those types of plays.*

*Ms. Lack said, so the insurance, the liability insurance? Mr. Kapales said, the liability insurance. When you start looking at programs in use, all of these programs have their own liability insurance. So they actually have their own coverage when they use facilities. City Attorney Carol Duncan said, the city doesn't have coverage. Mr. Kapales said, so it's the programs themselves that are actually using it. They have with who they are sanctioned under. Ms. Lack said, okay. Well, one good thing that I found about artificial turf is that mosquitoes do not like artificial turf, so I guess we are pretty good on that. So that is all for those questions, and then I was wondering if you can give us an update on the kayaks. Mr. Kapales said, yes, I wish I could give you a full update. I asked that question earlier today myself to get a timeline, and I have not gotten the timeline yet. But as I know, we have gotten two placements, two spots in the park where they are going to be placed. It is supposed to be done this year, but I just do not have a defined timeline of when they are going to be placed yet. The product is on order. It is one of those things that once you finally go through our process and get everything ordered, get it paid for, then they start actually doing their part. They have to get the equipment, get everything ordered, get it delivered. They have to get somebody here to install it. So it is a little bit of a process. I just don't have the timeline yet.*

*Chairman Chris Gibson said, one quick comment and then one quick question; and it*

is in regard to Ms. Lack's question in regard to the turf project. I was in Oxford, Mississippi this last week, and had the opportunity to talk with the local soccer coaches and regional soccer coaches. They are all excited about us getting the turf fields up in this area, and I think it will be a good draw for us, so kudos on that. One comment, and this is just for my ignorance, one comment that was made was in regard to our grass fields. Do we use a turf mower on those, or do we just use a regular bladed mower? Mr. Kapales said, we just use a rotary mower. Chairman Chris Gibson said, okay. Is there a reason for that? Mr. Kapales said, yes, first off, using a rotary mower, it does keep it cut shorter. But with the wear and tear and the use that we actually have, I know people don't realize, but we have a lot more use on that complex than probably most other facilities do. We would not be able to maintain that facility unless we wanted to maybe double the size of the facility and have more soccer fields, so we can shut down weekly and give it rest. We can't give it rest, so we have to grow the grass a little bit taller so it will have a little more cushion and survive. Chairman Chris Gibson said, it was just a question that I had and didn't know the answer. Mr. Kapales said, that's why we choose to do it. We just grow it a little bit taller so it will survive.

#### Read

[COM-23:053](#)

#### DISCUSSION WITH TRAIL COORDINATOR RYAN PARSON

Trail Coordinator Ryan Parson approached the podium and said, hi, how are you all doing? Chairman Chris Gibson said, doing well. And yourself? Mr. Parson said, doing good. I will just start with an introduction to myself and my background. My name is Ryan Parson. I am the new trail coordinator. I am from Farmington, Missouri. I have a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from University of Missouri, Kansas City and a master's in engineering management here from A-State. While I was in college, I ran cross country and track for both universities; and I am still a runner and avid trail user myself.

So far, for the city of Jonesboro, I have been catching up on our current trail projects. Those include our Johnson multi-use path across from Stadium View and the university, our Culberhouse project and our Aggie project. I've been learning the process of what it takes to complete one of these projects for the city, and everything that goes into that. Other projects I have been working towards and working on are the dog park over in Ridgecrest, our Highland multi-use path which is connecting our Culberhouse trail to the dog park, and the Craighead mountain bike and ATV park projects, expanding our soft surface trails out there and give them more opportunity for trail use. I've been working with the connectivity committee. This is a group of local stakeholders and it is led by Andy Shatley. We are prioritizing what trails are being built and what trails need to be built next to provide access to our city parks and around the city itself. I want to thank you guys for the opportunity to meet you, and the opportunity to work for the city of Jonesboro, and make some improvements to our trails.

Chairman Chris Gibson said, welcome aboard, Ryan. Any questions for Ryan? Councilmember LJ Bryant said, Mr. Chairman, I would just say, you have only been here a little bit, so I don't want to hit you with any questions. It seems unfair. I know Brian and I have chatted. I know you are working hard to kind of put some stuff together, so I just kind of look forward to seeing where we are going to go, particularly as the budget process comes as I know we are working on putting this bigger piece together on some funding. So I look forward to seeing the fruits of your work.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, I will add something. I can't remember when we first

*met, but the connectivity committee has had two meetings so far. So Andy Shatley is going to be the chairman of that committee, and we will have standing meetings each month. Hopefully the connectivity committee can help him with his job, and we come up with some good things. Chairman Chris Gibson said, and this group will be getting input from them on a regular basis as well. Thanks, Ryan. I appreciate it. Mr. Parson said, thank you.*

**Read**

## **7. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion was made by Joe Hafner, seconded by Brian Emison, that this matter be Adjourned. The motion PASSED with the following vote.**

**Aye:** 6 - Joe Hafner; Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter