



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes Public Services Council Committee

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

4:30 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

Election of a Chair

Councilmember Joe Hafner nominated Chris Gibson as Chairman. Councilmember Ann Williams seconded the motion. No other nominations were considered. All councilmembers were in favor by saying Aye.

1. Call To Order

2. Roll Call by City Clerk April Leggett

Councilmember Brian Emison came in at 4:32pm

Present 4 - Joe Hafner;Chris Gibson;Ann Williams and Brian Emison

Absent 1 - Bobby Long

3. Approval of minutes

[MIN-20:111](#)

Minutes for Public Services Committee on Tuesday, November 17, 2020.

Attachments: [Minutes](#)

A motion was made by Councilperson Ann Williams, seconded by Councilperson Joe Hafner, that this matter be Passed . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 3 - Joe Hafner;Ann Williams and Brian Emison

Absent: 1 - Bobby Long

4. New Business

5. Pending Items

Parks and Recreation Director Danny Kapales approached with an update, "Parks and Recreation updated basically from 2020 and 2021. On Projects I am just going to go down a quick order of what we have done, what we are looking of doing and just basically update you where we are.

Joe Mack Campbell Park, we are in the middle of the pump house, if anybody has ever been out there, we had no pump house in place that irrigated the park and it was in a location that was flooding. What we have done is, we are building up a spot with a

retaining wall and putting a new pump and box on top of that retaining wall and re-plumbing it. Just getting it up out of the water and making it more attractive looking along with safer for folks that are out there. We have also added a walking path that connects the parking lot that's in front of my office and the Urban Parks Shop, there is a parking lot there that's just to the side of the Joe Mack Campbell entrance. What we have is when the park is shut down, we have a walkers gate, so what happens is people have to park in that road to be able to get in and use the walking trail. By adding this little path, people are able to park in our parking lot and have a dry access to get into the park in the early mornings, evenings and weekends when the park is shut down. It makes it easier for them and much safer parking location. CWL has come in and built a chat road through the woods right there on Lacy Park side to be able to get to their lift pump. There is a lift station on the backside. In the past they had to use our sidewalk to get to it, which was not an ideal situation if you had walkers using the sidewalk and you had a CWL truck coming down it. It just wasn't an ideal situation for them so adding this trail has helped out for them getting in and out. We have also added some drains under the sidewalks; we had some spots that when it would rain water would build up and sit on top of the sidewalks, so we have added some drains to get those sidewalks drained off so when walkers are out they didn't have to bypass those spots or walk through water and get their feet wet during that time period. We are also going to resurface the batting cages; this year we have that in the budget. The entrance walls and signs are going to get the precast pulled and have bricks put in place of them. If you go out there now you will see were the precast is falling apart and crumbling and its got a lot of white wash coming down the red brick, so we are going to update those and clean up the entrance. Obviously perception is reality, if you are pulling into the park and the entrance signs and walls don't look good you are going to think the rest of the park doesn't look good, so we want to make that look right as you are pulling in. Also, we have been working on a cross country trail in Lacy Park which will be good for our high school and college to use that location and be able to run and practice, and have something that feels like theirs; a place to get where they don't feel like they are dodging soccer or baseball while they are out there trying to practice and run.

Southside we have added new walking paths and concrete around the small and the large quads, so when you go out there you will have good and safe walking to get into the park. We've also updated the entrance at the large quad; now when you come into the entrance it's not just a double chain link gate at the large quad. It looks like what we done to the youth quad last year, so both of them have a really professional look when you come to the park. You feel like you have actually arrived somewhere. We have added landscaping and just made it look really nice. We have also added fencing on Caraway Road side in front of the Miracle League, so at this point we pretty well have the entire park secure. Even like when we had this snow storm, we were able to lock the park down and keep people from getting out there in the open fields and tearing up our facilities, which we have had in the past when we have had snow on the ground. Obviously folks like to get out there in 4 wheel drives or atv's and things of that sort in the open fields, and we didn't have that this year since we were able to protect it. Also with adding out there, we done fencing around the electrical boxes. As far as an update this year we're budgeted through the city budget and also A&P is putting money in to turning field 10 around. Field 10 is a field that is kind of turned awkward to the rest of the park. It's not really available for folks when we have tournaments; they have to come outside of our normal location and walk to it. With this update we will be able to change that and put it within the park and make it more usable for folks; update the lighting, score board and just make it represent what the rest of the park it and much more usable space.

Craighead Forrest we're finishing up the siding updating, putting all new siding, putting a nice 4 foot high rock siding around the base of the band shell, so it's a real nice change for the Craighead Forrest band shell. We have also added an overlook, basically a wooden deck overlook, right behind the Joe Martin pavilion, so if you actually go out to Craighead Forrest and go out behind the Joe Martin pavilion you can walk out over an overlook. There is a standing counter at the end so say if you are having a quick lunch meeting; you go out there open up your lunch and stand there having your meeting over looking the lake, it's just a really pretty sight. Along with that we have had all the restrooms resurfaced, we have had this epoxy resin put in, the floors were all cleaned and partially up the walls were cleaned and this epoxy resin was put down on the floors and the walls. It seals out for any liquid or anything of that sorts to soak into the concrete or the walls, so it makes it easier for our folks to go in and clean and sanitize the facility. It makes things look that much better when you go into them. We have also be cleaning out the disk golf course. We have two 18 hole golf courses; we just finished up the second one. If you go out there you will see there was a lot of underbrush and limbs pulled out and cleaned up, moved out to the old firing range, we have a nice big pile we are going to have to clean up and burn out at some point. Along with that we are currently clearing out the underbrush between the loop road and the lake, so as you drive through you'll see that there is a lot of that brush and the growth that was underneath is cleaned up. We have taken out a lot of the damaged or dead trees and just making the park more open, much more inviting for folks. When you are driving around Loop Road you can see through to the parking lots; I think it makes people feel a little bit safer when you are out there walking the trail and you know you can see the cars and people moving around the park. I just think it makes it much more inviting for folks to utilize.

Along with Urban Parks we have added new back stops at Stalling Park. In the past we have had a couple wooden post with some chain link fence on it; it just wasn't a very safe option, so now we've added actual back stops so it makes it much more safe for kids to go out and utilize for practices or just neighborhood kids to have a ball game in that park.

We are in the process of finishing up walking trails at CWL Park that was added. That came from a grant that the west end group had worked on, so that is going to have a full quarter mile loop around that park which makes it nice for parents if they are there with their kids on the playground or at practice they also have a place to walk around and exercise at the same time.

We have added a fence around the parking lot at Langbrook Park to kind of keep people from driving out into that park. We were having issues with the same thing like trucks or atv's getting out there and damaging that open space so this will put people were they are supposed to park and let the kids and the folks that want to utilize the park on their feet using it.

The skate park was complete other than getting some of the dirt work and a couple of the rails put in place, but the skate park was doubled in size. If you haven't had a chance to go look at it, it was a big change, we have basically added a lot of flat surface and some corner ramps that basically a lot of beginners can get out there and now skate board. That skate park was not really a skate park for beginners in the past and now it is, so now it is going to be a lot more useable and that much more beginner friendly.

We have also, as far as park clean up, the guys have been doing a lot of cleaning up ditches, underbrush, things that they haven't been able to get to in the past and we are

really working hard to get those things cleaned up around our local Urban Parks.

We did get the Outdoor Recreation grant for Union Park. That was approved so we are going to be updating that park right there on the corner of Union and Monroe. A plan is adding a 60X40 pavilion/band shell that will be utilized for everyday use for people downtown but also if we have concerts and things of that sorts under the band shell. During the month of December it will a setting for the ice skating rink to go under so we'll actually have a covered place for the ice skating rink, be able to wrap it in Christmas lights and make that very inviting. We are also looking at adding a playground at the same location. One of the pieces we are looking at adding is called a global motion, which is a really large climbing ball that you can spin. Doesn't spin real fast but it spins fast enough that kids can have fun on it and enjoy it. I think that would be a really nice feature for downtown for the folks that live downtown or just for folks visiting downtown and have a place to go and enjoy a green space.

As we moved on to Northside Baseball Complex, we did a lot of clean up out there last year, we still have a lot left to go. We are hitting that as we can between other projects, but the goal is to get the four main fields in the middle much more useable for practices. We have got kids over in that neighborhood that are needing places to practice right now and getting ready for some teams. I have got some local citizens that are developing teams in that area, and I want to make sure they have access to a park close to them to be able to practice, so that when they do take their teams out to Joe Mack that they are prepared to be able to play and compete and have fun in a game that they are developing a love for.

ASU link, that trail has been in design, we added another piece to that as far as a grant, so we have rolled that design into the original design and the plan right now is for that to be finalized this fall. Hopefully we will see construction start this fall, and that whole section will go from the corner of Church and Creath all the way down to Marion Berry. There will be a full accessible trail from downtown to ASU at that point.

The Shooting Sports Complex restrooms right now are under construction, and the range building and the maintenance building will be advertised for bid on March 28th.

The tennis facilities, those will be getting resurfaced this April. The company will be here right after Easter. They will be starting on Joe Mack Campbell Park doing that 2 full tennis courts and then adding 6 pickle ball courts on top of it so that will be universal. Then while they are doing Joe Mack they will be patching Earl Bell. There were some layers there that need to be fixed so will be patching that. Once they complete those two they will transition over to Allen Park and do a full resurface to those 12 courts. New surfacing, new nets, new poles and just making that whole court look like a brand new court. We are changing coloring a little bit. We are going to that medium blue and the green you see when you watch professional tennis across the country. That is what we are going to make it look a lot more professional and what much more people are seeing.

As you move on with Programs, I'll try to make this a little bit quicker, as far as the programs. Covid was tough last year. We still had programs but the Covid was tuff. We had to re-evaluate basically everyday how we were going to do things, but we still had things. We had softball, we had some soccer, basketball, we were not able to do a lot of basketball last year but we are now this year. As we look at softball, we have got 25 tournaments on schedule right now and plan on adding in a few more. We have the spring league consisting of youth, junior high, adult league, church teams, men's league, co-ed, and also this year we will have miracle league. You know last year we

didn't have the spring or the fall, that was just something with Covid that we were not going to be able to do, but we are still in the conversation of how we are going to do the miracle league but we are going to have the miracle league this year. Soccer, right now we are roughly at 1100 children signed up for soccer, which those numbers are down and we know why they are down, but they are down but 1100 kids is a lot of kids playing soccer. We will be doing that starting in April. We have the Play it Again Classic April the 24th and 25th. We will be doing a 3 B 3 soccer program through the summer along with 3 B 3 tournaments and then the Riceland Foods Harvest Cup will be August 28th and 29th. The other programs we did run last year were elementary tackle football, flag football, cheerleading, City Stars basketball, elementary basketball, rugby, rockwall climbing club, target golf, volleyball, we also partnered with NEA tennis and that program is just continued to blow up. I would say there probably is close to 500 participants in that program. It's just amazing to see that you take a program and put the right people running it what can actually happen, and that's just a testament to what Pat Malone and his team has been able to do for our community; I am really proud of what they have been able to do. The Jonesboro baseball, we've actually done some changes there, or should I say they have done some changes there. They are going to have reekly junior high league and travel league this year and right now they have on schedule 5 tournaments. One is this weekend and to even go back to softball, we have a tournament this weekend. We have 42 high school teams that are going to be at Jonesboro Friday and Saturday, which is the largest high school tournament in the state of Arkansas and it will be right here. It is the Bearcat Classic and so very proud of what Brookland Schools; their coaches done a wonderful job of building that tournament over the years and it's a great partnership for us and to just see those high school kids get to come to our park and be able to utilize it and enjoy that facility.

After that we have the pool. We ran it at 50% capacity and it just showed the need we had in Jonesboro, because even running at 50% capacity we had a line every day. There was a line of people waiting outside to get into that facility. It showed what we need. We need more pools, we need more access for people here in Jonesboro, more water access. We need more places to give swim lessons; there are kids out there that need to learn how to swim and one pool is not enough to teach them.

And then last, big event that's happening here in the next few weeks is the Jonesboro Open. It has over 300 participants signed up for it coming from, I believe, 36 different states, so you are looking at those folks coming here and spending over a week in Jonesboro. Whether they are going to be at the campgrounds or staying in a hotel; spending money right here in Jonesboro for an entire week. This is also an event that last year had over a million views online watching this event. That is over a million views of people going, Jonesboro. There is not anything else that we do here in Jonesboro that we can say that about but this event is. It's pretty amazing to see and if you get a chance, we are looking at April 12th-18th, come out and enjoy it. It's going to be at Craighead Forrest at both of the courses there and out at This side of Heaven there at the end of Casey Springs Road. All 4 courses will be packed throughout the week, activity going on. Any Questions?" Chairman Chris Gibson asked, "Danny can you give me a quick update, I know you and I had talked earlier in the year on some heaters for the city pool, can you give me an update on that?" Parks and Recreation Director Danny Kapales answered, "Yes, I know I passed along a quote on 1 heater and currently, with working with the JETS program, they are the ones really wanting the heaters in place, because it is going to benefit, as far as making sure that our kids that are on this travel program, I am kind of letting them lead the way on finding the appropriate heater to me and right now we have got 1. I am needing more than 1 to be able to move forward, so until they get the other quotes to me I'm at a road block on

getting you anymore information.” Chairman Chris Gibson states, “Ok, thank you.” Councilmember Joe Hafner comments, “I did think of one question I had, Danny I don’t mean to blind side you with this, in the restricted funds there’s about \$27,000 in dog park funds. What are the future plans for maybe improving the dog park we have or maybe adding another dog park or two? Have you thought about that much?” Danny answers, “Yeah, currently I don’t have a specific plan for where that money would go, but we are in discussions. I actually have got a meeting setup with some students about a potential dog park, not saying that is exactly where we would put it, we’re we are discussing, but their ideas will help maybe where we may find a spot and take their ideas and put it there. Councilmember Joe Hafner commented, “Ok, thank you, I don’t have anything else.”

JETS Director Michael Black approached with an update, “It’s been a challenging year, just a little comparison between 2019 and 2020. In 2019 our total ridership overall was 132,866 and for 2020 it was 99,351. It breaks down to our fixed route was 27% down between 2019 and 2020. Overall we were 25% down but our paratransit increased by 2%, so the none emergency medical is still very much a necessity even during a pandemic. In 2020 when the pandemic was announced, JETS started requiring wearing a mask on April 6th and we also went fair free that same day to help protect our drivers and customers alike; get the people on the bus and get them toward the back of the bus because we did wrap off the front 2 rows of seats to insure driver safety. Our buses, of course we were cleaning them every night, but we began using antimicrobial sanitizer that after we clean it’s fogged into the bus once it’s parked and sets and sanitizes itself over night. We do that every single night after we run the buses. Shortly after that we came up with an idea to build, what I call a COVID compartment, it actually isolates our driver, using a crystal clear shower curtain from the customer area and it’s turned out to work pretty good. Right now we are still limiting our bus capacity to 9 with our driver that includes 10 due to such a confined space. We will re-analyze that towards the end of the month depending on what the governor does with the emergency order, but our mask mandate will still remain in place whether customers are vaccinated or not according to the federal mask mandate on all mass transit whether it be public or commercial; mask must be worn at all times. We actually went fair free from April 6th to October 3rd. Our fixed route logged 35,672 rides and paratransit was 4,262 rides with a total of free fair of 39,934 rides. When we began we thought that we could go fair free on fixed route and not have our paratransit do that but once FTA got back me they said if you are going fair free due to the pandemic you have to all the way across the board, so we were fair free on both services. Our fair box revenue was down 54%; as you can imagine being fair free for half a year. In 2019 we brought in \$80,987 just strictly through the fair box and in 2020 we brought in \$36,619.

Moving on to 2021, JETS began operation using the 100% funded Cares Act money on January 1st. I do expect a replacement paratransit vehicle to arrive late April or early May, and expect 2 new buses approximately midyear. Our sidewalk projects that were discussed during the Cares Act funding with the council will begin upon FTA approval. We are very much expecting ridership to grow approximately mid 2021 due to the rising cost of fuel prices. We’re in process of trying to come up with a plan for that. Hopefully we will be able to be back to full, our buses have a capacity of 23 passengers plus driver, and if we can do that we can handle it. We may need to add additional service, of course that would make our operational side of the Cares Act funding go away a little quicker but it may become a necessity if fuel prices reach what they are possible predicting at \$4-\$5 a gallon. That’s all I have at this point. Any questions?”

6. Other Business

7. Public Comments

8. Adjournment

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

Aye: 3 - Joe Hafner;Ann Williams and Brian Emison

Absent: 1 - Bobby Long