

COUNCIL MINUTES
SPECIAL WORKSHOP MEETING

September 6, 2011

A special workshop meeting of the City Council of the City of Jacksonville was held Tuesday, September 6, 2011 beginning at 5:00 PM. Present were: Mayor Sammy Phillips, presiding; Mayor Pro-Tem Michael Lazzara and Council Members: Jerry A. Bittner, Fannie K. Coleman, Randy Thomas, and Bob Warden. Councilman Jerome Willingham was absent. Also present were: Richard Woodruff, City Manager; Ron Massey, Assistant City Manager; Tim Chesnutt, Recreation and Parks Director, Carmen Miracle, City Clerk; and John Carter, City Attorney. Mr. Jerome Smith, Recreation and Parks Commission member, along with various members of Recreation and Parks and Communications Division were also present.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sammy Phillips called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

TRANSIT TOUR OF PARKS

The purpose of this meeting was for Council to take a transit tour of four of the City's Parks along with information and proposals as outlined in the Recreation Master Plan. Recreation staff distributed a document summarizing the proposals inclusive of various site plans. This document will be retained in the September 6, 2011 workshop exhibit file in the City Clerk's Office.

Council departed City Hall at 5:00 PM via transit bus and proceeded to the Jack Amyette Recreation Complex. Mr. Chesnutt reviewed the current status and use of the facilities and site and then outlined the proposals for future redesign and improvements.

Mayor Phillips asked about the potential to receive grant funding for the improvements. Mr. Chesnutt said staff was researching options, however, there was less chance of receiving a grant for improvements to this Park because a portion of the property was owned by the adjacent school and used jointly. Following discussion, Councilman Bittner suggested they might want to talk with the County and the School Board about the feasibility of donating the property in order to increase the chance of receiving a grant. The improvements to the property would benefit the school and City residents.

Council discussed the proposed improvements, which included expansion of the baseball field, relocating the basketball courts to the front of the site, redesigning the parking lot area and

removal of the old activity centers along the road.

Councilman Warden asked if the Boys and Girls Club were aware of the plans to remove those structures. Mr. Chesnutt said that the Boys and Girls Club typically used the space for administration and minor storage and that Mr. Marks, Director, had been advised of the plans.

Council departed Jack Amyette and traveled to Phillips Park. Prior to arriving, Mr. Chesnutt pointed out a vacant City owned lot on Queens Road which he felt would make a very nice entranceway when the Park was redesigned. Mr. Chesnutt reviewed the current site and the proposals for the future. This included removal of at least one ball field, possibly both, or revising one of them into two smaller little league fields. Proposals for improvements also included increasing the Park's water access feature and family usage. In this regard water activities such as canoeing and kayaking were suggested as well as additional picnic shelters and possibly an amphitheater. In addition, parking was a problem for the events that were scheduled at this Park. Council departed Phillips Park.

Council arrived at the Jacksonville Commons. Mr. Chesnutt briefly reviewed the proposals for the area which included a second Lacrosse field to be located behind the Toys R Us site. He pointed out the area proposed for the Bypass and reviewed the amenities of the Richard Ray All American Park.

Mayor Pro-Tem Lazzara stated that he noted a large number of walkers and visitors to this site from early morning to late in the evening. Mr. Chesnutt confirmed this was correct. Council departed from the Jacksonville Commons Recreation Complex.

Council arrived at Northeast Creek Park. Mr. Chesnutt discussed an idea to fill in two large lagoons that were no longer necessary. Filling in the lagoons would render them as future usable space. Discussions were held on the disc golf courses and their uses including national tournaments that had brought a large number of visitors to the area. Signage issues were briefly discussed and Mr. Chesnutt agreed there were issues and that staff was working on it. Council reviewed the boat launch area and discussed the replacement of the launch, bulkhead and boardwalk improvements. Mr. Chesnutt pointed out the path of destruction of the tornado that had touched down in April as well as the current hurricane debris. Adult softball fields were discussed as well as plans for another picnic shelter.

Council departed Northeast Creek Park. Mr. Woodruff reminded Council that the Recreation Master Plan was an item on their Regular Council Meeting agenda for consideration. He said that if Council desired to approve the Plan, they could adopt the Plan 'as a guide.'

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Warden, seconded by Councilman Thomas, and unanimously adopted to adjourn the meeting at 6:27 PM.

Adopted by the Jacksonville City Council in regular session this 20th day of September, 2011.

Sammy Phillips, Mayor

ATTEST:

Carmen K. Miracle, City Clerk