

LEAWOOD METROPOLITAN RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT
Meeting February 19, 2025

The Leawood Metropolitan Recreation and Park District (LMRPD) Board meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

Attendees: Carole Gottlieb (President); Amanda Halbert (Treasurer); Carrie Dupree (Secretary); Kyle Sargent (Director). Park Manager Dave Padilla was also present. Other community members included Ken Leaf (resident and Park Manager candidate), Tom Bryant, John Bottlemy, Mike Shaw, and Greg O'Leary.

VP Judy Anderson was unable to attend.

Location: Leawood Elementary

Approval of Agenda – Amanda moved to approve the Agenda as presented via email on February 17, 2025. Carole seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes – January minutes were approved as amended.

Public Comments – Public comments provided during meeting are referenced below.

Treasurer's Report – Amanda presented part of the Treasurer's Report. All invoices and documentation were provided in advance of the meeting. With some public comment, we primarily discussed the cost overrun on the election notice and flyer mailing project that Amanda was researching: \$1,000 was initially approved, with final expense amounting to \$2,390.96 (supplies, postage, and \$1,199.98 expedited labor). Given time constraints and other challenges (including printing delays that impacted our ability to hand-deliver notices), Amanda engaged 2 family members to assist with the project to get the letters mailed prior to the February meeting. Extended discussion of labor cost appropriateness ensued, with general agreement that this situation should be avoided in the future. Carole moved to approve all project expenses, Carrie seconded, and the motion passed 3 to 1.

Other bills paid or to be paid this month included Xcel Energy, Waste Management, Denver Water, Doggie Bags, Honey Bucket, Newsletter Connections, E-file tax forms, CO Special Districts, SDA, Jefferson County DMV, Weston, Seter, Vander Wall & Mielke P.C., and Dave's invoice. Checks were signed as applicable.

Park Manager Report – All parks were inspected, doggie bags checked and replenished as needed. Weston completed snow removal as needed. Walkthroughs occurred with Mile Hi (flood control), Arbor Force (tree trimming quote), and Weston arborist to gather information to address Board member questions and get pricing information.

- (A) Weaver Park – Hopper Construction damaged a tree, some of the native grass, and concrete at the park (West of the Pavilion). Dave met with a business representative and they will make repairs and replace tree.
- (B) Racoon Hollar – Rich started trimming the Xeriscape.

(C) Leawood Park – playground equipment damage noted, and Dave will contact Recreation Plus to inquire about repair or replacement. He expects it will be over \$1k to replace.

The discussion included brief comments around mulching practices, the need for some fresh mulch and various mulch options; distinguishing between the trimming that Rich Alarcon has done instead of Weston (smaller trimming jobs outside of the Weston contract); the approach to trim Racoon Hollar on a fairly regular cycle but considering needs – large storms often require immediate clean-up and trimming needs; creek erosion in Racoon Hollar, and probable delays to complete work (work with Mile Hi on creek issues); discussion of dead trees and new tree plantings, contractor warranties on new plantings, and effectiveness of the drip lines; and the board's historical strategy to prioritize safety and minimize board liability. A community member also mentioned a pile of tree limbs near Racoon Hollar that has been there awhile and is an eyesore. No actions were voted upon.

Vote to engage new Park Manager (PM) – Ken Leaf, who previously expressed interest in the PM position, was present at the meeting to engage in discussion. Discussion occurred related to the PM contract, which is in-process, with draft provided to the board in advance of meeting for review and comment. Carole motioned to engage Ken Leaf as the PM (in-training), and Amanda seconded the motion. Ken will serve on a temporary basis for the next month, pending final contract. Ken will complete some training with Dave, at a pay rate of \$35/hour. Carrie will email Ken the PM Responsibilities document and park map. Once the contract is finalized, we will formally vote upon it; the board and Ken will execute the contract. Ken will require insurance prior to contract finalization. The motion to engage Ken on a temporary basis for training, pending contract, passed 3 to 1.

Legal Counsel – Seter, Vander Wall, & Mielke, P.C. resigned as LMRPD legal counsel based on feedback from a director that the firm was not meeting the needs of the board and the expense was too high. A new attorney will need to be identified and engaged. Some board members expressed the desire to retain Seter as the Designated Election Official (DEO) since they have already started the process and their contact info was on the flyer that went out to all district residents. Kyle moved to engage Seter on a more limited basis to be our DEO in 2025, and Carrie seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Website Update – did not cover this topic.

Management “Open Items” list – did not cover this topic.

Financial Forecast – Open Discussion – No actions were voted upon.

- Weston & ArborForce quotes – both were high. Weston came in 30% higher than prior year for similar scope of work (around \$56k compared to \$43k in 2024). ArborForce quote for extensive trim of Weaver Park came in at about \$118k. A board member suggested providing a maximum budget to Weston or other service providers and see what scope we can accomplish per budget. Ideas to reduce costs

included reduction in mowing. Weston will be at the regular March meeting and we can discuss the contract with them directly.

- The board needs to get quotes for concrete work in the parks, because our budget item for this is “ballpark” and we need more precise information. Tom Bryant volunteered to help the board with this task. Judy may have some relevant information from prior work completed.
- Arborist – Board agreed to move forward to get opinions from arborists. Kyle to reach out to CSU, Carole in communication with Savatree, Mike Shaw has an arborist friend who can also provide opinion.
- Landscape designer – the board is interested in getting information on engaging professionals to help with landscape design. We will need to get quotes.
- There was discussion of trends identified in financial spreads and analysis prepared by President (based on historical financial information).
 - Adjustments were made to better capture the specific use of funds received from Vintage Reserve (fees in lieu of land), which over many years helped pay for ongoing maintenance expenses as well as park projects.
 - **The communicated take-away is that LMRPD has been relying on the VR funds to help pay for ongoing maintenance items, and once funds are depleted (likely in the next few years), the board will not have enough tax revenue to maintain the parks to a reasonable standard.**
 - Various factors have resulted in higher/increasing costs, such as accounting/legal and election costs, weather variables and cost impacts, inflation and increasing expenses for park maintenance contracts, etc.
- The board briefly discussed the Arcadia development, which will include concrete pathways connecting the development to Weaver Park. While the developer would cover initial cost, ongoing maintenance would fall to the district. There are some legal challenges in process between Fox Hollow (an adjacent development) lawyers and the Arcadia developers, centered on changes to Christensen Lane and access.
- The board briefly discussed irrigation issues given the age of the systems in the district, and this may be an opportunity to upgrade and save on water costs.
- We also have about 1,500 left for safety items. We discussed the possibility of using funds to purchase cameras to deter theft and vandalism.
- There was brief mention of Racoon creek erosion and possible need for fencing, as well as beaver presence and related issues (will leave the beavers alone for now).

Options for Park Management (financial considerations) – Considering the long-term health of our parks and ability to manage expenses, the board discussed options of either raising the mill levy rate or merging with another park. The pros and cons of each approach were discussed. No actions were voted upon.

Insurance Claim Update – Carole to file, received information that she can pursue the insurance claim without a lawsuit. Not sure yet how all logistics will work. The basis of the claim is that the prior board failed to properly maintain park and failed to follow reasonable

process. The goal is to get some funds to cover needed maintenance items as well as achieve greater parity on the board. No actions were voted upon.

Water Leak Adjustment – Judy submitted required documentation to Denver Water and was able to get the board refunds of over \$4k.

Location/Return of Historical Documents – Kyle will collect LMRPD boxes from former Board Secretary, Debby Baker. Carrie expecting to get minutes from Debby. No actions were voted upon.

Limited discussion – no actions were voted upon.

- The board briefly discussed the benefits of using DropBox to store historical documents, including the items that are on the hard drive (the project that Maggie led in 2024 to digitize some documents). This would allow the board to access all documents in one central location. There are currently a lot of paper documents held at various places in the community, with some items digitized. We need to get better organized.
- Some board members commented that the board should have a procedure in place to address board changes and access issues. There are various legal items to consider in moving to a more technological approach to running the board.
- US Bank has been problematic when it comes to ACH payments, and Amanda wants the Board to consider changing banks and will look into options.

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Carrie Dupree
Secretary

Future Meetings:

Wednesday, March 12, 2025, 6:00 p.m., at Leawood Elementary.

Wednesday, April 09, 2025, 6:00 p.m., at Leawood Elementary.

Wednesday, May 14, 2025, 6:00 p.m., at Leawood Elementary.