

CITY OF ROELAND PARK, KANSAS
GOVERNING BODY WORKSHOP MINUTES
ROELAND PARK CITY HALL
4600 WEST 51ST STREET, ROELAND PARK, KS 66205
October 21, 2024, 6:00 P.M.

- Michael Poppa, Mayor
- Benjamin Dickens, Council Member
- Jan Faidley, Council Member
- Emily Hage, Council Member
- Jennifer Hill, Council Member
- Matthew Lero, Council Member
- Tom Madigan, Council Member
- Kate Raglow, Council Member
- Jeffrey Stocks, Council Member
- Keith Moody, City Administrator
- Jennifer Jones-Lacy, Asst. City Admin.
- Kelley Nielsen, City Clerk
- John Morris, Police Chief
- Donnie Scharff, Public Works Director

(Roeland Park Governing Body Workshop Meeting Called to Order at 7:30 p.m.)

I. MINUTES

A. Governing Body Workshop Meeting Minutes September 16, 2024

The minutes were approved as submitted.

II. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Presentation on the Nall Park Master Plan

Project Manager Greg Van Patten from Lamp Rynearson provided the presentation on the updated Nall Park Master Plan. He said it all began with a framework session in November 2023 to establish goals for the plan. This was followed with several meetings and a public workshop with the final design presented to the Parks and Tree Committee in September 2024 who have since recommended approval by the Governing Body.

The first goal was determined to be sustainability. Also, accessibility to the park that will accommodate individuals of all abilities, which is a challenge with topography. Then increased awareness and connection as well as increased options for children. Mr. Van Patten said there are several parks in Roeland Park with different amenities and Nall Park has an opportunity to offer different play structures to a wide range of children, especially incorporating the topography. They want to make the park fun, educational, and challenging.

Mr. Van Patten also showed a proposed layout of the finished park. They want to create different zones with Zone 1 that will include the mountain bike trail, the trailhead, and hopefully will include pump tracks. Zone 2 will be where the playground features are located. Zone 3 is the arboretum focusing on nature, the native plantings, have trails, and benches for sitting, an opportunity for quiet and reflection. There will be access to the park from Nall Avenue where they will install a wayfinding sign.

Mr. Van Patten reviewed the order of the park updates with Phase 1 setting the scene and will focus on Zone 2. This will hit the widest range of people to get them to come back to Nall Park. It will also include the park access and signage. Phase 2 will be expanding that access as well as the mountain bike trail enhancements. Included is the arboretum, more trails, planting, and signage.

Mr. Van Patten said they have applied for a TAP (Transportation Alternatives Program) grant for \$800,000 in funds. They are waiting to hear back within the next couple of months on that request. Also, an application has been submitted for an LWCF (Land and Water Conservation Fund) grant for about \$1.4 million funds but are unsure when they will hear back on that application.

CMBR Dickens asked about the accessibility of the slide and whether that would be an inclusive element. Mr. Van Patten said there will be other features that would appeal to those children and using a netting and stone feature to climb the hill for a slide is a challenge.

CMBR Madigan asked about the installation of the carousel and whether that would be ADA compliant with chairs. Mr. Van Patten said that it would be.

CMBR Stocks asked if there has been any experience with the grant-giving organizations in the past. Mr. Van Patten said he has worked to receive those grants before. City Manager Moody said they have received a LWCF grant for improvements at Nall Park in the past. The provision when accepting those funds is that the land will be used in perpetuity for parks. TAP funds are federal funds for alternative transportation and the bicycle component of the park is geared more directly to that. The funding is for the 2027-2028 years. They have received \$600,000 towards Phase 1 but stated it will be more challenging to secure funding for the second phase.

CMBR Hage how long they anticipate the first phase to take. Mr. Van Patten said the design portion will take four to six months, and they would have to partner with another firm who designs playgrounds. City Manager Moody said if the resources are available, they should be able to complete all phases in one season, but they do not know if they will have all resources put together. They have set aside \$1 million in capital improvements in 2026 for Nall Park. CMBR Hage noted that lighting at the park is contemplated. Mr. Van Patten said that it is something they talked about, and they would have to use solar.

CMBR Lero asked if they have access to the grant funds, then would they be able to change the phasing of the development. City Manager Moody said knowing what resources are available would shape how they phase the improvements. CMBR Lero also wanted to know if there would be a significant change in cost doing the entire project at one versus phasing it out. Mr. Van Patten said it would not change to any great degree since there would be separate groups working on several aspects of the project either way.

CMBR Madigan said they are planning construction to begin in 2026. City Manager Moody said they have resources available and plan to start in 2026 unless the timing or availability of grants would make it possible to begin sooner.

Mayor Poppa said the conversation is only to discuss the plan and not its implementation because they have not yet secured the needed funding.

CMBR Hill asked about the likelihood of having solar and would definitely prefer that option. Mr. Van Patten said that Evergy does have a line through the park, so there are options.

CMBR Faidley said that sustainability of the park was at the top of the list and CMBR Hill is correct on the preferability of solar. She did say they will get pushback from the residents on any light pollution. She added that this is long overdue in creating a new master plan as the last one was completed in

2007. She said the park is getting more use and thanked Lamp Rynearson and for everyone who has worked on the Parks and Tree Committee that have given good ideas and citizen input. They have a wealth of material to draw from as they try to make Nall Park a destination.

There was agreement to move the Master Plan to the November 4th City Council meeting.

2. Review Tree Planting Program and Information from Heartland Tree Alliance

City Manager Moody said there has been a lot of discussion about what they can we do to encourage the preservation of Roeland Park's tree canopy. Heartland Tree Alliance is a partner with communities to replace trees that have been taken out. They have the ability to work with them to develop a scope of what they would like to do.

Cathy Justice is a program manager at Bridging the Gap, the organization that created the Heartland Tree Alliance Program. She reviewed the history of the program and noted that they do a lot of public tree planting in the right-of-way as well as private tree plantings in both Missouri and Kansas. They also implement the City of Mission's program. Heartland also helps to maintain the trees they have planted and provides education.

CMBR Raglow asked about the success rate with the trees they follow up with. Ms. Justice said that it is successful most of the time and that out of the 80 planted last season only 4 needed to be replaced. They do have a year guarantee on them and their quarterly check-ups ensure the trees are being properly maintained. If there is a problem with the tree itself, they do not charge for a replacement. She added that in Merriam most of the tree damage they have seen is from the deer population.

CMBR Faidley said the recommendation for discussion came from the Sustainability committee and the task force who felt it was important to have an expert opinion and advice as to the selection of the species of trees, their location placement, and care after the tree is planted. She said it is suspected that it is more successful than a tree giveaway with no follow-up.

Mayor Poppa asked if they consult with the homeowner. Ms. Justice said that in Merriam they check in with the homeowner and check on the trees quarterly. With Mission, they are there to answer questions when they pick up their tree. She added that anyone can send them questions, but they do not specifically follow-up after tree adoption events where people plant for themselves. Mayor Poppa asked if they had the possibility to design their own program and whether they could take different components from other programs and customize something that would be suit Roeland Park. Ms. Justice said they want to create a program that fits their community and there is that flexibility.

CMBR Faidley said this is a commitment that will go out into future years and hopes that future councils will continue this effort as it will take a while to maintain their tree canopy.

CMBR Raglow said she would like the Governing Body to think further on this and to have the Parks and Sustainability committees review the information and bring their feedback to them.

3. Task Group to Present Tree Fund Policy and Mitigation Fee Recommendation

CMBR Raglow, CMBR Lero, CMBR Stocks, and CMBR Faidley made up the task group regarding the mitigation fee. Their recommendation was \$500 for a protected tree that was removed from the front yard and not replaced.

CMBR Hill wanted to clarify that the fee for taking down a tree applies only if the tree is healthy and does not need to be removed. CMBR Raglow stated that it is correct.

CMBR Madigan said he did not find the three-tree calculation confusing as stated in the presentation language. He understood it to mean if someone had three or more trees and one needed to be taken down, then they would not have to pay to replace it. Mayor Poppa clarified that the recommendation section in the packet included his request to the task group and that was his language. The recommendation language from the task group that is being discussed is in blue. CMBR Madigan added that the one size that fits all approach does not fit with him, and that people believed the \$500 mitigation fee was too much.

CMBR Faidley said the mitigation fee is for someone who takes down a healthy tree and does not want to replace it.

CMBR Raglow added that they cannot not treat developers differently than residents and that is why there is one singular fee of \$500.

CMBR Madigan suggested adding language in there that pertains to those who do not want to plant a tree as it reads that regardless there will be a \$500 fee for removal of a tree. CMBR Raglow agreed to that sentiment and said that what they are reviewing is just for discussion by the Governing Body and not the final language.

Mayor Poppa provided additional context in that the mitigation fee is already in the ordinance and only comes into play if someone were to cut down a healthy tree and did not want to replant/replace it. The ordinance already lays out what the mitigation fee is and when that would be triggered. This conversation is to determine the amount of the fee and upon prior agreement, it will be added to the fee schedule at an upcoming Council meeting.

City Manager Moody clarified if someone were to remove a covered tree and do not wish to replace it, it only applies to a tree in the front yard or public right-of-way along property and not the side yard or back yard. The tree also must have a diameter of 12 inches making it a mature tree.

CMBR Madigan said he was reading this as the policy, and Mayor Poppa added this was what was asked of the task group to discuss.

CMBR Stocks said they also had feedback from three different committees, Parks, Sustainability, and DEI. He said he hopes the context of the language helps them understand what they were trying to establish.

There was majority agreement of a maximum \$500 mitigation fee.

The discussion moved to the Tree Fund Policies and Procedures. They reviewed the purpose of the program, the benefits to the community, when, how, and at what level the City will fund the initial

balance. The task force talked about options and suggested that \$25,000 be set aside. They want to promote and make it easier for people to maintain their trees.

CMBR Hage said this program reminds her of Contain the Rain. She asked if the actual installation of a tree is eligible for a 50 percent cost match. CMBR Faidley said they did not discuss that specifically, but that an invoice would need to be submitted for the work done. She believed that cost could be covered. CMBR Hage said she would like to see it included as they want the trees to be planted properly.

Mayor Poppa asked what the maximum award would be per applicant. There was a recommendation that it would be a 250 match as that would equal the \$500 mitigation fee.

CMBR Lero talked about the expense of trimming, and even with a 50 percent match, the fund could be depleted quickly.

There was general discussion of the potential costs of tree trimming and how to fund that.

CMBR Hill said they want to have people thinking about taking care of their trees and being proactive.

Mayor Poppa asked what the max is on Neighbors Helping Neighbors. Ms. Jones-Lacy said it is \$2,000.

City Manager Moody asked why not make the program income qualified to be able to access this assistance program. CMBR Raglow said the goal was for all residents to have access to funds and have the City back them.

CMBR Hill said a lot of people are in a situation where they do not have the money to trim a tree.

CMBR Hill asked if anyone had talked to Evergy and presented to them that Roeland Park is maintaining their trees, so it causes less damage to their lines. She suggested that they could get buy-in from them and money towards this program. City Manager Moody said it does not hurt to ask, but it is not a tariffed expense for them, which is a focus for them. He added that they must maintain the trees around their lines anyway.

Ms. Jones-Lacy said that having a bucket of money that is not related to income is the same as the Contain the Rain program, which covers trees, native plantings, and rain barrels. The county covers those costs. Public Works Director Scharff added that a city award is up to \$15,000 and Roeland Park typically gets three to \$4,000 per year.

CMBR Hage said they do have the opportunity to build their own program, and it should be its own contained conversation in terms of what they want to build with Heartland Tree Alliance. She said if there is no opportunity to cover tree trimming, then they should take that out.

There was majority agreement to focus on tree trimming with \$10,000 set aside and a 50 percent match capped at \$500 for trimming and combine the program with Contain the Rain.

Mayor Poppa said they need to put in the qualifications of why the tree needs to be trimmed.

CMBR Raglow added that the Tree Alliance could help with what would be necessary.

CMBR Faidley said normally the reason to trim a tree is to maintain or support the health of a tree.

CMBR Madigan added that their tax rebate program, Contain the Rain, and Neighbors Helping Neighbors all have different income qualifiers.

CMBR Raglow said this item will go back to the task group and asked the Governing Body to submit their questions to them.

4. Chapter 4 – Fire Code

Ms. Jones-Lacy stated all the changes are recommendations from the Fire Marshal from Consolidated Fire District No. 2. It will update this code to the most recent language and there is also one comment from the DEI Committee.

Mayor Poppa said these are administrative changes and recommended moving this to the 11/4 Council meeting for discussion.

Ms. Jones-Lacy will prepare an ordinance in anticipation of a vote.

CMBR Faidley noted that Section 7-203 is a duplicate sentence.

III. COMMITTEE MINUTES

- 1. Ad-Hoc Historical Committee Meeting Minutes September 26, 2024**
- 2. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Meeting Minutes September 24, 2024**

IV. ADJOURN

CMBR Raglow adjourned the meeting.

(Roeland Park Workshop Adjourned at 8:56 p.m.)