

Sherwood Parks & Recreation Meeting
March 13, 2023
6:00 pm

The Sherwood Parks and Recreation Committee met for their monthly meeting on Monday, March 13, 2023. Charlie Harmon called the meeting to order. Committee members present: Charlie Harmon, Mike Sanders, Shelby Thomas, Scott Gann, Bruce Mason, Denny Tipton and Leonard Smith. Also in attendance: Blake Calloway, Sean Pennington, Mayor Mary Jo Heye-Townsell, Sonny Janssen, Mandel Brockington, Dawn Darter, Tonya Bell, Ed Williams, Chris Tafner, Greg Frantel and Dianna Price.

Minutes:

February 13, 2023 minutes were read for approval. The motion was made by Shelby Thomas to approve the February 13th minutes. Bruce Mason seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by Charlie Harmon, Mike Sanders, Shelby Thomas, Scott Gann, Bruce Mason, Denny Tipton and Leonard Smith.

New Business:

Greens at North Hills – Blake Calloway said what he would like to bring to the table for discussion is the Greens at North Hills. There has been a lot of rumors circulating as to what we are doing and not doing. He wants to know exactly what the plan and procedures are with the golf course. He could not find any definitive answers on what we're doing for the kids, teams that come in and things of that nature. Blake said he met with the Mayor and Dawn Darter and talked about a plan to be consistent on what we're doing.

One of the items discussed was days of operation. We are closed all day on Mondays; however, people are playing. There is no way for us to police this. People who play on Mondays live on the course, close enough to drive their golf cart or walk. They have the ability to get out there and play. We are not charging for it. There are about nine people that come out and have been allowed to play. It does not make sense to be closed but yet open. Mayor Heye-Townsell said the course is closed to the public on Mondays. Blake said they are proposing to open at noon. Blake said Mandel Brockington was here and he takes care of the greens. This will affect Mandel because he uses Monday to do maintenance on the greens. Blake said he is proposing to open at noon on Monday, so if people want to play, they can in the afternoon. This is not a definitive thing; they want to discuss it with the committee. If we do this, it will be closed July 3rd for the July 4th celebration. We are moving the July 4th celebration to the Greens and shooting off fireworks. Mike Sanders said he did not have a problem with opening Monday at noon. Mandel Brockington said it would be a challenge. Mondays are their big day, especially when we get into season. We are always putting sand on the greens and vertical cutting the greens. They can usually get it done but the weather plays a big part in it. Mandel said there are only five on his crew and he is at the ballpark at least two days a month. Mandel said it makes them more efficient being closed on Mondays. If opening on Mondays is what they want, he will make it work. Shelby Thomas said we are putting extra stress on our staff. Mayor Heye-Townsell said it's like having two standards. If you live on the golf course, you can play whenever you want even though we are closed on Mondays. This is not right, we are not a country club anymore. She said we are a public course; we are either closed or we are open. We should not be open to a little select group. Shelby said he understands but he is thinking of the stress on the staff. Mandel said it is not just the greens it also includes the fairways. Dawn said they did not drive enough revenue to cover the staff on a continuous basis. They are open on holidays, which are the big days. The people that are playing on Mondays pay an annual fee. Blake said he is trying to figure out exactly what we are doing, when we do it and how we are doing it. Whatever is decided is what we are going to do. He is a big believer in what you say, what you see, is what it is. He just wants to know what we are doing. There was more discussion on this.

Dawn said there were two gentlemen in attendance that live on the golf course. Blake said he would love to hear their thoughts. Ed Williams said he lives on the course, works from home, and loves his view of the course. He knows Mandel and his team are always moving. He said people that live on the course know Monday is maintenance day and if they are playing, they move out of Mandel's way. As far as the rules go, if they are set you abide by them. If Mandel or Dawn say don't, you don't. He said having Mandel out there all

the time, Dawn living there and the neighborhood keeping an eye on the course, that's what keeps the golf course safe.

Blake wanted to clarify; this is not an indictment of our staff. Mandel and Dawn do a phenomenal job. Blake said he wants to know what we are going to do and how we are doing it. He said if someone calls him and asks him questions, he will know how to answer, it needs to be consistent.

Charlie said Mandel says the way we are doing it works. Charlie said we have a few people on the course late in the afternoon and if they are in Mandel's way, he asks them to move and they comply. Charlie said we are not losing any fees because they are annual members. He understands what the mayor is saying about a vagrancy issue. The mayor asked about the ramifications what do we do when we get the calls from people asking why there are people on the golf course, I thought it was closed. Charlie said he has never heard of this problem until now. Blake said how he found out about it, people were calling saying they heard we were shutting down the golf course, kids are not able to play on Mondays. What he found out was from people hearing rumors on the street. He started looking into it trying to find out what they were talking about. Blake said he has had some interesting phone calls about the golf course.

Chris Tafner who lives on Spyglass spoke to the committee. He said he lives on the golf course, that was the reason he moved to Sherwood. He has a son that plays. The youth program is what brings people to Sherwood. If we do not raise our youth in the game, there will not be a need for a golf course ten years from now. Mondays offer Dawn the opportunity and flexibility as far as the youth program is concerned.

Sonny Janssen lives on Club Road, he said it was close to the golf course. He said Mandel and Dawn do a fantastic job. They both worked for him 28 years. Dawn has the most wonderful junior program that he knows of in the state of Arkansas. She just got honored being PGA Pro in the junior program for the southern region. Taking care of the kids is her number one task, but we need some accountability. This is what Blake and the mayor are trying to do. They need guidelines on what to do. Sonny told the committee they needed to decide on guidelines so Blake will know how to handle situations.

Dawn said they do have Monday events and tournaments. The junior events are held on Monday. She will teach sometimes on Mondays. This is after Mandel and his crew are done and left the premises. She said she sent two kids home today. She told them they could not play because Mandel was busy. The thing about Monday when we first opened the golf course, it was a blank slate. It was decided that Monday was the time for maintenance. People that go out on Mondays usually walk and the carts are usually out after people get off work. She understands what the mayor wants to do and she respects that. She is telling both sides. It is the committee's decision to make.

Charlie said the golf course is closed on Mondays unless Dawn says otherwise. The committee members agreed. Mandel said they will do whatever the committee wants to do. It is not rocket science; we know who is doing what in the afternoons. Blake said if Mandel or Dawn sees something wrong to let him know and they will take of it.

Fees - Blake said fees were brought up to him and he looked on the website and there was no youth price, but there is now. It is \$10 for youth play up to 4pm, after 4pm no charge. We will flip-flop it in the summer to 12 - 3pm at no charge, it is a little hotter this time of day and the kids can stand the heat better than some of the older players that tend to play in the mornings and evenings. Denny Tipton said his main concern is the golf team, when they can practice or play. It is his understanding talking to Dawn that they cannot play until there is an open time. The 4pm time during the school year is fine, they get out of school at 3:30. Denny said the issue with the summertime hours is some of the kids work. Why are we putting a set time on it when they can only play when the course is not being used anyway. Denny said they give a list to Dawn and there are twelve players on the team. Denny said why do we have such time frame when they can only tee off when no one is using it to begin with. Blake said they can tee off at any time.

Blake said if we come up with a different agreement with Sylvan Hills High School it will be a whole different thing. We have agreements for swimming, they come in as a team, and use it at certain times. They are not allowed to come back any other time and it be free. It is the same way with tennis, they have a couple of sessions at certain times and if they come back, they pay a fee. Blake said it needs to be consistent across the board. We are not necessarily trying to charge the high school for playing. Mike said he thought if they were on the team they should play for free. That's showing we support the kids, the teams and the high school. Denny is thankful for what the city does for them. He does not think a youth golfer should try to get a 1:00 tee time during the middle of the day on a Saturday. He thinks paying \$10 is fare. If the course is not being used that would be his issue, August - May they are in school. He is concerned about the holidays when they are out of school, like the teacher workdays. Mike agreed.

Blake said we need to relook at how we are doing tennis and swim. If you do for one you need to do it for all. The mayor said basketball too if they come to the center and they are the Sylvan Hills Basketball team they come in and pay a day pass. Denny said they have the facilities for basketball. The school does not have a pool, tennis courts or a golf course on campus.

It was discussed about the free play time available to all kids. The mayor said she thinks it should be available to Sherwood kids only. Dawn has a list of the school team and they also have school badges. We do not want other schools to come and not pay. This is funded by taxpayer money. Blake said if we let the kids come they will play forever. Denny likes the idea of the kids playing free. The only way the school team will get better is if they play when they are young. If they begin playing in the ninth grade they probably won't be as good. He agrees it should be free for kids from Sherwood.

The mayor asked if they wanted to vote on this. Dawn can individually work with the Sylvan Hills team. We can come up with a specific contract that addresses the Sylvan Hills specific players. She asked if the committee if they are okay with it. Bruce Mason said they have talked about a lot of things in a short amount of time and he would like to see this on paper.

Bruce Mason made the motion for Blake to come to the next meeting with the specifics for youth free play. Mike wanted to add that we separate the high school team from this. Charlie said that has been set. Mike Sanders seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by Charlie Harmon, Mike Sanders, Shelby Thomas, Scott Gann, Bruce Mason, Denny Tipton and Leonard Smith.

Parking Lot Update – Blake said the plan is to renovate the parking lot. He was hoping to give the committee a time frame when the renovation would begin. He will bring this back to them next month.

Sports Complex Field 1 usage – Blake said they have had a few problems with field management on field one. Sylvan Hills has a vested interest and money in that field. We have a couple of other teams utilizing the field such as Lisa Academy and Abundant Life. It has been questioned about who has priority on the field. Sylvan Hills has invested in our program. We do not receive anything from Lisa Academy or Abundant Life. Blake said if there was a conflict in scheduling, he would give the field to Sylvan Hills High School. Blake said he's bringing this to the committee to know how to handle conflicts on schedules. He and Austin Spears would like to know how to let these people know there could be a possibility they could be moved from the field. He wants the committees' ideas on how they should prioritize the usage on field one. Denny said the city has been awesome and they have always partnered with the city on projects they need done. They helped paint the wood wall, when the tornado hit they helped paying for reconstruction, in 2021 Sylvan Hills, itself, not the high school, strictly the baseball team paid \$22,000 on field one because they did not want rainouts. Denny said we need some guidelines on practices. He is not against them playing or practicing. Today they had nowhere to practice because Lisa Academy was practicing because they had a game cancel. These schools schedule time, then they cancel. Denny said they have forty-four on their team. Abundant Life is not a AAA school anymore. Denny said he needed to know exactly what the plan will be so he can let his new coach know. When it rains, we want to be able to use the field. In the past two weeks it has rained a lot. When it

rains we are having to move games. Denny said they tried to move three dates and the dates were taken. They end up losing games.

Mike said Sylvan Hills has top priority. The mayor said Sylvan Hills gets priority with practice time and the schedule. The two schools get the leftovers. It's when the leftovers are scheduled and Sylvan Hills gets rained out is the problem. Bruce said he understood bumping the practices. He did not think the games should be bumped because it effects another team. When setting the game schedules, Sylvan Hills has first pick and can schedule as many days they want. Abundant Life and Lisa Academy can pick from the slots that are left over. The game schedule should be honored. On the practice schedule, if the two schools have practices and Sylvan Hills has a makeup game then the game takes priority. Denny said in his twenty-five years they have never bumped a game. Denny said when a game is rained out, they have the next day to play, sometimes they have to call all over to find a place to play. In the past they had a buffer but now everyone wants to play. Denny said we should have contracts set for the two schools, so they know what is going on. The mayor said Sylvan Hills and Pulaski County School district has put in money and so should the two schools. Blake asked about when Sylvan Hills gets on the game schedule book them for two days. Denny said he hates for the field to sit there, and no one is playing. He said if they had an away game, they might book that date in case the other field is rained out. He says they have three teams. Denny said field one is the only field in Sherwood that meets high school regulations.

Blake said they need to iron out some schedule dates. He wants to be able to tell everyone what we are doing. The dates are already in line for this year. This is something we can put on the table for later.

Old Business:

Sherwood Tennis Update - Blake asked Tonya Bell to tell them about the programs that are coming up. Tonya said people were asking for longer hours. She said if they could extend the hours on Friday, Saturday and Sunday that would be great. Mike Sanders asked if there was a significant increase in tennis players since Alex had arrived. Tonya said yes. Blake said they would look into extending the hours.

Indianhead Renovation - Blake said they are waiting on the final figures for the pickleball, basketball court and lighting. The courts will be post tension concrete slabs. We are also, wanting to redo the parking lot. Hopefully we can get this started and get open relatively quick.

Sports Complex - The restrooms are gutted right now. We have portable toilets out. The floors are jackhammered up, moving toilets to make them ADA, move some waterlines and do some electrical. They are hoping to be completed by opening ceremonies. Opening ceremonies will be Friday, April 14th, at 6:00.

Old Henson Park - We should be pouring concrete Wednesday. Scott Gann asked between Indianhead and Henson how many pickleball courts will we have. Blake said ten.

With no further business, Bruce Mason made the motion to adjourn.



Charlie Harmon

Attest: Dianna Price