

Meeting Minutes
Parks and Recreation Board
June 3, 2025, at 9:00 AM
Oxley Nature Center | 6700 Mohawk Blvd | Tulsa, Oklahoma 74115

Attendees:

MEMBERS		
<i>Name</i>	<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>ABSENT</i>
Meinders Burkett		X
Savage	X	
Reese-Tipton	X	
Fernandez		X
Miller	X	

- I. Vice-Chair Savage called the meeting to order at 9:23AM.

- II. Savage asked for review and approval of the regular May 6, 2025, and special May 13, 2025, PRB minutes. No corrections or revisions were requested. Reese-Tipton moved to approve the minutes; Miller seconded the motion.

- III. Reports
 - a. Parks, Culture and Recreation Department Report – Stacie Martin

Martin: Welcome to Oxley. We have an artist in residence who will be here today. ONCA supports the artist in residency. We are starting a new naturalist program. We are transitioning to summer programming. Its been raining a lot, we soil and wind is not a good combination for trees. We had the biggest damage at Reed Park. We are a bit behind in the Natural resources area. We do have some exciting news regarding Natural Resources and the Garden Center. The Horticulture staff will be moving into the Carriage House. We are working with the Garden Center also for master planning for the rose garden. Dream Keepers we were able to select TSW as the landscape architect. On the Admin topic we are partnering with PSO to evaluate all of our tariff lights which are rented lights n the parks. They are converting them to LED and being put on a communication system that alerts when the lights go out.

The cost will be reduced as well. We received a TSET grant Healthy Initiative grant, a maintenance grant on the Osage Prairie trail.

Savage: What is the length of the trail

Martin: Four miles. We start at Greenwood to 56th Street

Savage: It’s highly utilized.

Martin: One of the things that keeps the trail in use longer is the surfacing.

Savage: We also have BS Roberts and the Library. Do you coordinate with storm water

Martin: Occasionally we do to a certain degree. We are about to start our next round of sports courts renovations. Playground updates – we completed Rose Dew, Lakeview, and in the middle of Aaronson, then Boeing. Pools and splashpads are open and camp has started. We are in full summer swing.

Savage: Mention the announcement that the mayor made for the inclusive playgrounds at Hicks and Bales.

Miller: I want to thank you and acknowledge the struggle of keeping up with the mowing. You all are doing a good job keeping up.

b. Recreation Update – Dustin Jagers

Splashpads opened on the 23rd. Pools opened this past weekend. The first day was free, and it was busy and had no issues. Summer camp is a big program we offer. We have three types of camp. Traditional everyday camp, art camp and specialized classes. They get to go on a lot of fun field trips. If we are at full capacity we will serve about 1800 kids.

Savage: What are the age ranges?

Jagers: 6-12 year old. The specialty camps are older age – middle to high school. We have a lot of outreach happening this summer. 12 dates scheduled with THA. We will offer sports clinics, art, and education. We will be at the Senior Life Expo again this year. We are working with senior life services to bring programming to Lacy. We will be at the Dicks Sporting Goods Day of Play to receive our 5k grant. Kids Triathlon June 14. Hicks partnered with TPS to offer an end of school year party. Fishing Derby at Braden park, we had over 30 kids come out and caught 50 fish. We got to participate in Mayfest this year in the kids zone, we offered many different fun activities.

Reese Tipton: You mentioned at capacity you would serve 1800 are you at capacity.

Jagers: Most camps are full yes.

IV. ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION

- a. *Discussion and possible action on a recommendation to abandon the park use of a portion of Newblock Park to allow for a transitional housing program- Mayor's Office or Designee

Savage asked that legal counsel explain what the Board's role is.

Guerra Wolf explained that the Board is advisory and that the Board provides recommendations and does not have the final say. Guerra Wolf explained that the Board is discussing today whether to abandon the park use of this portion of

Newblock Park. She explained that the Park Board is not a land-use board, like the Board of Adjustment, and that Council makes the final decision on abandoning park use.

Savage asked if this was similar to what the Board did on May 13 regarding Roddan Park.

Guerra Wolf responded yes, that is correct.

Acebo explained that the site is on Charles Page Blvd and covers 2.5 acres. He stated it has sewer and water access and is not in a regulatory floodplain. He said there are typically tank cars parked there and that there are no park amenities located there. Reese Tipton commented that on the last issues the Board considered, there was language that stated why it wasn't suitable for park use.

Acebo stated that he did not know if there was any future planning for that space for park use, but that part of the reason this location was chosen was due to it having water and sewer connection.

Miller asked if there were any upcoming plans for this area for recreation. Martin answered no, there are not.

Miller stated that at the last meeting at the park facility, he went out and looked at the parcel and could not see any of the park. He stated that he could see the train, the private business, and the vacant adult facility across the street.

Reese Tipton stated that a report was sent out about the dollars spent on parks per resident by city, and that Tulsa is already behind. She stated that we need to take it seriously regarding abandoning parks.

Savage said she is not clear that they were comparing apples to apples. She stated that she read it as how we are using parks.

Public Comments:

Larry Mitchell stated that he was a long-time Crosbie Heights and was requesting that no vote be taken today while Anna America and the Board Chair are traveling. He felt it had not been fully vetted yet. He stated that the business owner only found out about this yesterday. He stated that if we go forward, this has decades-long repercussions.

Savage stated that they would not be considering a continuance now. Mitchell went on to say that Crosbie Heights was a rough neighborhood when he first moved in, and we have worked hard to get the neighborhood back up. The neighborhood has the highest connection to the unhoused community. He said that allowing this housing will push us back towards blight. The neighborhood around Mohawk was positioned for this community as well. He said there are other options to consider without abandoning park locations.

Savage pointed out that Mr. Miller is the Mayor's designee.

Yvette Wiley stated that she grew up in the Crosbie Heights neighborhood and comes with 20+ years as an environmental scientist. She said she went out to the property and that FEMA maps show it in a floodplain. She said she noticed three sanitary sewer manholes and that they are built up not level with the ground. She pointed out the train tracks, which she said would create a noise problem, that could lead to a vibration problem. The transmission lines are also a potential issue. There is not much space there to put buildings there. She said she is in support of Mayor Monroe, but this is an unsafe and inappropriate location. There is also a 3-5% canopy cover and a diversity of tree species, and with that comes a diverse collection of animal population. If there is a workaround it still wouldn't work. She said it would still flood and cause an increase in runoff.

Miller commented that they had raised some good points, but that he wanted to remind everyone that the decision today is about whether to continue to use it as a park. We stated that the Board has no say in what the future use will be.

Linda Collier: My family and I have owned 2 properties in Crosbie Heights including the cave house. In the park where we say are unused that area has trees and a table. I do see a lot of activity there. Its not specifically on the land but its in front of it. If you turn that into housing it will get rid of all that. The trash will increase and be a damage to the storm drain. I collect a lot of trash throughout that area. The City has a hard time maintaining that area already, if we build that up there will be even more trash. People come to the cave house from all over the world I would hate for that area to be the front yard of transitional housing. For the neighborhood to have done so much, this would be detrimental to our neighborhood. That park is a crown jewel, none of it should be abandon. A lot of us have special memories of that park.

Deb Cramer: I will address the neighborhood. I am a real estate resident realtor. I know the families there and the investors there. Housing is basic human need and I support solutions to homelessness. We need to consider where and how these resources are placed and what effect they can have on the neighborhood. Homeless encampments near houses it reduces the home value by up to 24%. Major big cities have seen negative effects of putting in this type of housing. If buyers don't feel safe or confident in their future they move on. That confidence is waning in Crosbie Heights. Investors are pulling back already until this decision is made. I urge you to protect Newblock park and the Crosbie Heights neighborhood.

Dallas Livingston: I own a property to the west of Newblock, directly impacted by something like this. You have the power and foresight to see what will take place as the Board. My investment in the future is at risk. I ask that you consider the impact.

Savage: you say you have 15 acres adjacent to Newblock?

Livingston: yes from Charles page all the way to the river.

Chris McCabe: I believe deeply in the future of Tulsa's westside. The space is not vacant it is vital. To give up land use is a breach of civic trust. I am part of the growing community. We are turning buildings into functional spaces. To carve out

part to transitional housing is not a solution when there are already unhoused encampments on the property. We are not against helping people, but we can't do it by compromising City Parks. We have tools, we need courage to use them.

Richard Phillips: I have lived in Riverview neighborhood and it's difficult for people to walk from our neighborhood to Newblock due to the unhoused encampments. What is the impact that this will have on WaterWorks Art Center. There are lots of unused buildings including the detention center that could be used. There are talks about building a model of Our House. This parcel that you would decommission is not large enough to put something like this on. I have never seen any services over there.

Miller stated that he would like a clarification on what the Board is voting on and what their role is.

Guerra Wolf stated that the Board's role is to make a recommendation on whether or not to abandon the park use.

Reese Tipton commented that the agenda item does mention housing. Savage commented that it doesn't preclude the property from being used for another purpose if it is abandoned.

Guerra Wolf explained that it would ultimately come down to the Council resolution.

Miller clarified that what is recommended today will be brought to Council.

Savage asked, from a process standpoint, if this would go to the Board of Adjustment or to Council if it is proposed for some other use.

Guerra Wolf answered that it would likely go to Council first.

Acebo added that it would be "surplus" by the Council first and then the Mayor would determine the proposed use of the land.

Reese Tipton asked if Guerra Wolf could speak to legal precedent concerning Helmerich Park.

Guerra Wolf explained that one of the issues the court found in that case was that the park was still being used as a park despite the City declaring it abandoned.

Savage added that another issue was that the park was held by the Tulsa Public Facilities Authority.

Miller stated that this is something the Board had done last month.

Savage asked if Acebo could describe the amount of park land in question.

Acebo answered it was 2.5 acres.

Reese Tipton stated that she had heard people speak to the fact that it is being used as a park space, and that she had not heard why it isn't used as a green space

Acebo said that he is unaware that this is used as a park space as there are no amenities there. He said he was unsure that it was used at all.

Martin confirmed she was unaware of it being used as a park space.

Savage said she knows Charles Page well and that she traverses that area. She commented that this area is almost segregated from the rest of the park, that it is almost carved out.

Miller moved to abandon the park use and let the process continue for more discussion on the use of the property.

Savage seconded the motion.

Miller and Savage voted "yes"; Reese Tipton voted "no." The recommendation passed 2-1.

b. Board Member Reports

No reports were given.

V. New Business

{NOTE: "New business" is restricted to any matter not known about or which could not have been reasonably foreseen prior to the time of posting. Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, 25 O.S.2001, §311(9)}

VII. Next Meeting – July 1, 2025, at Lacy Community Center.

VIII. Adjournment at 10:25AM.