

Parks, Recreation + Tree Commission

January 2025 Minutes - DRAFT

Monday, January 13, 2025

The Parks, Recreation + Tree (PRT) Commission met at the Powell Community Center (PCC) on Monday, January 13, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

In attendance: Chair Nicole Sullivan (Ward I). Commission Members Katie Anderson (Ward I), Dustin Wolfe (Ward I), Sarah Grittmann (Ward II), Sam Komosa (Ward II), Chris Schlenker (Ward III), Dylon Sease (Ward III), Jacque Gameson (Ward IV), Lindsey Kratzberg (Ward IV), and Cindy Long (Ward IV).

Council Liaisons: Councilmembers Debbie Kring and Brian Schmid.

Staff: Penn Almoney, Parks + Recreation Director.

Guest: Daniel Lassman, Restoration Ecologist.

Not in Attendance: Vice-Chair Sarah Emanuels (Ward III).

Call To Order. Chair Nicole Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. We welcomed Daniel Lassman and new Commissioners Chris Schlenker of Ward III and Lindsey Kratzberg of Ward IV. The Commissioners then conducted a round of introductions.

Approval of Minutes. The Minutes from the Parks, Recreation + Tree Commission Meeting on December 9, 2024, were reviewed. **Katie** motioned to approve the minutes; **Jacque** seconded. **Amended Minutes were approved 9-0.**

Positive Improvements:

Chris shared his appreciation for those who shoveled the path around Broadmoor Park as **Nicole** added that Water Works Park was also shoveled.

Katie attended the Noon Year's Eve event at the PCC and reported a great turnout of children and parents. **Penn** said there were 635 people in attendance.

Sam shared that the 2025 Adventure Guide was mailed out this week. **Penn** said that this is one of three guides that will be generated throughout the year. Two guides get mailed and the third guide is available for pick up at the PCC.

Sustainability Liaison Q1.

Nicole requested that a liaison attend the February or March Sustainability meeting. **Cindy** volunteered to attend the next meeting on Monday, February 3, 2025.

Presentation by Daniel Lassman¹²

Daniel Lassman is a restoration ecologist who provided a 5-minute presentation on his work, resources and programs available regionally. Restoration ecology is restoring native ecosystems of a given area to provide more ecological stability³. **Daniel** explained how a lack of restoration ecology can diminish

¹ https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.ser.org/resource/resmgr/custompages/standards-tools/8principles_06082019_3.jpg

² <https://www.danecountyparks.com/natural-areas-program>

³ <https://ser-rrc.org/what-is-ecological-restoration/>

environmental stability that acts as a buffer against invasive plants, tree species, and natural disasters. He recommends that we partner with local initiatives such as Master Gardeners, KC Wildlands, and the Heartland Conservation Alliance for resources. **Penn** added that connecting our plans with the Heartland Conservation Alliance is a logical next step.

Maintenance.

Penn noted that we have one bench to repair at Broadmoor Park that **Dylon** noted and three benches to replace – one at the Transit Center off Johnson Drive and two benches at Legacy Park.

Katie shared that the new women’s restroom stall door at PCC needs to be fixed. She added that the new restroom doors at Water Works Park have a “soft close” function. This means that there is no way to slam the door shut, which may be a hinderance for patrons seeking safety or shelter in an emergency.

Chris noted the bridge at Broadmoor Park is in disrepair. **Penn** has gathered bids from contractors and said his hope is to get this addressed this year. **Councilmember Kring** recommended that we invite the local scouting troops to contribute, adding that it could be an enticing Eagle Scout Project. **Sam** agreed, stating that local scout troops would be thankful to be alerted to the project.

In response to a question from **Dustin**, **Penn** shared the Parks and Recreation snow removal plan. The plan calls for the PCC to be plowed first, then park parking lots, then park trails. **Penn** added that Water Works Park is the first park to have snow removed due to its proximity and pathway to Rushton Elementary. He also noted that staff does not put ice melt down on the trails. Commissioners commended the efforts of the department with **Katie** recommending that we post on social media how many miles of park trail was cleared.

Action Items & Work Session:

Penn shared that the filter at the Mission Family Aquatic Center (MFAC) is due for maintenance and part replacement. The current filter is 12 years old, and the replacement parts take about two months to order and install at cost of \$10,000. **Penn** also added that the green slide will be resurfaced – something that must be done every three years.

Chair & Vice-Chair Nominations:

Nicole shared that she is willing to accept her renomination for Chair. In response to a question from **Chris**, **Nicole** explained the chair works with Penn on formulating the agenda and acting as spokesperson for the PRT Commission at city-wide events and occasional Council meetings.

Sarah G. motioned to approve **Nicole Sullivan** as Chair and **Sarah Emanuels** as Vice-Chair, **Katie** seconded. **The motion carried 10-0.**

Subcommittee Volunteers

Nicole announced that we want to have more defined subcommittee roles for all Commissioners to create greater investment and participation. Some potential subcommittees are: Chair Training, Trail Connectivity, Arts in Parks, Restorative Ecology, Master Gardeners, Adopt-A-Park in addition to previously created subcommittees. **Nicole** referenced previously created ad hoc subcommittees like the Tree ID program, Tree Drive, and Arbor Day Poster Contest and Arbor Day Celebration.

Dustin suggested we form a subcommittee to implement restoration ecology and master gardener programs. **Katie** suggested that we create a public art subcommittee.

Review/Discuss Goals and Objectives in 2025

Nicole reviewed the 2024 Goals and Objectives and requested commissioners to familiarize themselves with the document as we draft the 2025 Goals and Objectives.

Dustin recommended that we include the development of a demonstration garden to the Goals and Objectives. **Dylon** noted that since additional improvements are upcoming at Broadmoor Park, it would make sense to include a demonstration garden in that park plan.

Sam suggested we ponder what role the PRT Commission can play in capitalizing on the influx of tourists for the FIFA World Cup in 2026.

Arbor Day Poster Contest.

Jacque provided an update on the Arbor Day Poster Contest. Due to the weather-related closures at Rushton Elementary, **Jacque** requested from the Kansas Forest Service, (and after the meeting received), a one-week extension to the deadline. **Katie** said she would follow up with the 5th grade teachers to ensure the poster contest is properly implemented into the spring art curriculum.

Upcoming Notes and Meetings

City Council Meeting is January 15, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Community Development Committee Meeting is Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

Next PRT Meeting is Monday, February 10, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Adjournment:

Dustin moved to adjourn the meeting; **Cindy** seconded the motion. **Motion passed 10-0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Faithfully submitted by Sam Komosa, secretary pro tempore.