

Contact: Nick Hernandez
Phone: (620) 441-4415
Fax: (620) 441-0869
nhernandez@arkansascityks.gov

City Manager's Office
City of Arkansas City
118 W. Central Ave.
Arkansas City, KS 67005



Press Release

Beautification and Tree Advisory Board discusses park adoption

Process for request for qualifications proposed; changes to bylaws needed

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (December 4, 2015) — The Arkansas City Beautification and Tree Advisory Board met Thursday at City Hall to begin outlining a new process for groups wanting to adopt City parks.

After discussing the matter for more than half an hour and hearing input from two interested citizens, as well as Parks and Facilities Director Tony Tapia, the board voted 5-0 to ask staff to draft a policy.

The basic concept outlined in the discussion is that civic groups, nonprofit organizations or residents interested in “adopting” a park — helping with maintenance, mowing or tree planting, or raising funds for new playground equipment, shelters, benches or other improvements — would submit an application.

It would be patterned after a standard request for qualifications, with each applicant outlining its plan for the park and pledging a certain amount of annual volunteer hours and/or funding contributions.

The beautification board then would be responsible for evaluating the applications and making a recommendation to the City Commission of Arkansas City as to which group is best suited for that park.

The final say would rest with the City Commission. Staff would be responsible for maintaining a list of park adoptees and their contact information, and ensuring they follow through on their commitment.

A draft of a proposed application and necessary changes to the ordinance that establishes the board's bylaws will be presented and discussed at the board's regular meeting in January.

The idea of park adoption arose out of 1 1/2 months of discussions at the City Commission level, spanning multiple meetings, after playground equipment was removed from Catalpa Park, 1824 N. 11th St. A group of neighborhood residents and concerned citizens protested the action at several meetings.

One of the residents, Allen Fisk, attended Thursday's meeting and said the group hopes to raise money for new playground equipment, but would consult with Tapia to ensure it met national standards.

For immediate release

more

Also present was Richard Humphrey, lead pastor for Ark City Church of the Nazarene, which is just north of the park. He was there to gather information for the church body, which is interested in adoption.

Board members also picked the Nelson Sensation Award and Yard of the Season award winners for the month of December. The recipients will be announced each week on Facebook and in the Traveler.

The Nelson Sensation Award winner for December is Traver's Furniture and Carpet, 221 S. Summit St. The board wished to recognize owner Traver Herman and his staff for remodeling the store recently.

Citizens may nominate a yard for the board's consideration for either award by emailing the address — and, if they like, a photo — of the yard to Andrew Lawson at alawson@arkansascityks.gov.

Prior to five new citizens' being appointed to the board by the City Commission in May, the Beautification and Tree Advisory Board had just one member and had become largely inactive.

All five board members — Michelle Dykes, Bob Foster, Candace Stephens, Steven Walker and Jill Wineinger — were present Thursday.

The board's next meeting will be at noon Jan. 28, 2016, in the city manager's office at City Hall.