



*Sedgwick County...
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District 4 Citizens Advisory Board Meeting
Minutes

Monday, August 12, 2019
6 p.m.

McAdams Recreation Center – Club Room
1329 E. 13th St. N.

Board members in attendance: Paul Davis III, Sara Dixon, Nalini Fraser, Philip Fraser, Stephanie Kohlhoff, Melody Miller, Madison Shriner

Chairwoman Kohlhoff called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

1. History of McAdams

Commissioner Cruse introduced architect and local historian Charles McAfee, who spoke on the history of McAdams Park. Since its creation in 1921, the park has been a gathering place for the African American community in Wichita. Many homes and businesses owned by African Americans sprung up around the park over the years. Children from the neighborhood flocked to the park for games and sporting events, especially tennis matches.

After returning from the Korean War, and finishing his architecture degree in Nebraska, McAfee opened a design firm in Wichita. At this point, McAdams Park had suffered from a lack of funding, and in was need of maintenance. McAfee, recognized how essential the park was to the neighborhood, and set out to reinvigorate McAdams. His new design for the park included baseball diamonds, basketball courts, and improved tennis courts. The tennis courts would go on to receive awards for their design.

With the new facilities, McAdams was able to start hosting annual sporting tournaments, many of which still attract top players from around the state.

McAdams Park is scheduled to receive a new pool in 2019. It is one of three locations the City of Wichita has budgeted pool funds for. McAfee hopes the pool leads to more improvements and has designs prepared to present to City leadership. He presented two of these possible designs, one of which included an Olympic-sized pool.

McAfee closed by reiterating the positive impact the park has had on young African Americans. “The McAdams neighborhood has produced doctors, lawyers, architects and engineers,” he said.

Larry Dennis, the Recreation Director of McAdams Park, addressed his recent work to bring more families to the park. He said the park was set to close due to a lack of revenue, but he began sending letters to neighborhood residents, and attending church events to inform people of park facilities and programming. Dennis has spent 42 years working at different parks throughout Wichita and says McAdams is unique because of its connection to the neighborhood.

2. The State of Water

Susan Erlenwein, Director of Environmental Resources, addressed the issue of flooding around Sedgwick County. The substantial amount of rain received throughout the spring and the summer raised the water table, along with leaving large pools of surface water. Both contributed to flooded basements and streets around the county.

Erlenwein presented a PowerPoint slideshow outlining several topics. First was the history of flood control in Sedgwick County. The “Big Ditch” surrounding the city of Wichita has been crucial to managing flood water since its completion in the 1950s. Erlenwein went on to discuss the dangers of flooding outside of the flood waters, including dangerous chemicals leaking into water sources. Proper drainage methods were covered, such as sump pumps and designated routes to make sure water that has already been pumped from a basement does not flow back into it.

The director segued into dewatering wells, their uses, and their costs. On average, a dewatering well large enough to serve a neighborhood costs \$2.1 million. The wells are usually paid for through a special improvement district tax levied on the residents of the neighborhood. The cost of an installation almost always prevents a city from moving forward with one. A community near Haysville recently attempted to place dewatering wells to alleviate flooded basements but they were unable to convince the needed 51% of residents to agree to the additional special tax.

Melody Miller asked about water encroachment in housing developments and the somewhat vague definitions of “flooding.” Erlenwein explained that “surface water flooding” is damage created by water left over after a rain, whereas “ground water flooding” is damage created by the rising water table. Depending on coverage, insurance may not cover the various types of flooding. Erlenwein said some flooded basements are the fault of housing developers and City officials ignoring recommendations and building homes with basements in areas where flooding is likely. The introduction and use of more restrictive building codes has reduced the number of basements susceptible to flooding.

In closing, Erlenwein said there are few ways to remedy a basement prone to flooding, and all are costly. Most commonly, a homeowner will strip any damage, and rebuild despite the possibility of another flood. Some homeowners chose to fill their basement in with sand, though this effectively leaves them without a basement.

3. 2020 Budget Adoption

Commissioner Cruse quickly broke down elements of the adopted 2020 budget she is most satisfied with: COMCARE and senior services will receive a funding increase; all County employees will receive a 2.25% raise; six new positions focusing on behavioral health will be created; and an audit will be run on tech services to maintain costs.

Madison Shriner asked if any significant cuts were made to County programs or services. Commissioner Cruse said, in her opinion, nothing was greatly affected. Nalini Fraser expressed gratitude for increased senior funding.

4. Meeting Minutes from June 10

Sara Dixon noticed Chairwoman Kohlhoff's name was misspelled in one section of the June 10 minutes and motioned to amend the misspelling before adoption. Paul Davis seconded the motion.

The vote passed unanimously.

Chairwoman Kohlhoff made a motion to pass the June 10 minutes and was seconded by Paul Davis.

The vote passed unanimously.

5. Other

Commissioner Cruse announced that the October, November, and December advisory board meetings would likely be taking place at the McAdams Recreation Center.

Kohlhoff adjourned the meeting at 7:38.

Next Meetings

- September 9 – Maize Career Academy – 11700 West 45th Street N., Maize, 67101
- October 14 – McAdams Recreation Center – Club Room – 1329 E. 13th St. N.
- November 12 – McAdams Recreation Center – Club Room – 1329 E. 13th St. N.