



Youth Commission Minutes: November 9, 2023
City Hall, Galesburg, IL

Meeting Called to Order: Chairman Eciel Burns called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

Attendance:

Members Present:

Eciel Burns, Mia Haneghan, Chantiara Jackson, Jackie Smith-Esters,
Maddy Springer, Courtney Wallace

City of Galesburg:

Elizabeth Varner, Director of Parks and Recreation

Absent: Reverend Andrew Jowers, Zakary Warfield

Guests: Reverend Antonio Franklin

Minutes: Minutes from October 2023 meeting were approved, with motions from Mia Haneghan and Courtney Wallace.

Welcome: Chairman Eciel Burns introduced new member, Maddy Spring. She told the Youth Commission about herself and how she is now a Senior at Galesburg High School, plays tennis and works for the City of Galesburg Parks and Recreation. She just finished teaching a Tennis Camp and is now instructing private lessons at Lakeside Recreation Facility.

Eciel then introduced the guest speaker, Reverend Antonio Franklin. He attended the meeting to talk about the Community Center Task Force and hear the Youth Commission's ideas. He is a Pastor at Full Gospel and is a West Virginia Native. Tony wants to hear the youth perspective at the Youth Commission.

Commission members also introduced themselves.

Galesburg Parks and Recreation Report

Director of Parks and Recreation, Elizabeth Varner, provided a variety of activities in the report to the Youth Commission. Teen activities included Hawthorne Municipal Pool open swim, Lifeguard Training, Craft Night Out, Tennis, You + Me Paint Night, Second Saturday Nature Program, Special Open Swims, and Creative Connection for Teens. The Creative Connection for Teens will be painting tennis shoes this month. Most programs are free or at a low cost. She also provided an update on the Dale Kelley Tot Lot and H.T. Custer Park Renovations.

Mia Hanegahn asked about Cooke Property Park Project. Elizabeth explained that an OSLAD grant has been submitted for 2024 to add a playground, restroom, shelter, walking path and pollinator garden. Mia asked about the flyer that was sent out. Elizabeth explained that an interested group, led by Gayla Pacheco, was spearheading a fundraising campaign to raise money for the Cooke Property Park Project. She is asking for 500 donations at \$500.00 each as her campaign theme, 500 for \$500.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Mia Hanegahn clarified that she will be providing a report for October and November 2023 to the City Council at the November 20th, 2023 meeting. Eciel provided direction based on how he has presented in the past.

NEW BUSINESS:**GUEST SPEAKER:**

Reverend Antonio Franklin provided information about the Community Center Task Force. He mentioned the former Community Center was at Iron Spikes. The goal is to have a Community Center that is for the entire community, with programs involved. Antonio explained that a survey was done at the schools, in which two Youth Commissioners had completed the survey. He explained that their input is valuable. A Community Center is a place to hang out, socialize, recreate, mentor, tutor, etc... Antonio recommended that the Youth Commission attend and recommend to the City Council to support a Community Center. A question was asked if the Community Center would have memberships. Tony explained that the goal is to provide a free service or a minimal cost. Jackie Smith Esters stated she is also on the Community Center Task Force and that there needs to be a variety of opportunities for everyone, not just athletics. Antonio further explained that the purpose is to build community, so it is very inclusive, fun, safe and provides broad opportunities in one shared space. Jackie wants the Community Center to unite the community. Antonio invited members to attend the November 21st meeting, and the December 4th meeting when he takes a proposal to the City Council. Jackie encouraged members to send emails to Elizabeth Varner if they have any ideas that come to mind for a Community Center.

New Business:

Courtney Wallace explained that she helped organize the current structure of the Youth Commission to address more youth related concerns and topics, not just problems. She stated that Mayor Peter Schwartzman revamped the Youth Commission and provided a stipend. Antonio Franklin commended everyone on the Youth Commission. Courtney also asked Reverend Antonio Franklin to say a few words about Reverend Jon Sibley Sr., of whom the underpass is also named to honor him on Main Street. He was on the board at Carl Sandburg College, State Police and a Streaks Dads. He explained how John had tremendous interest in youth and helped feed others in Galesburg through a garden and food baskets. Reverend Jon Sibley is also Courtney's cousin.

Additional Business:

Elizabeth Varner handed out the structure and information about the Youth Commission. She stated there are currently three youth member openings. Jackie Smith-Esters stated that the Youth Commission has the ability to amend ordinances such as the number of youth, time of meetings, etc...

Jackie asked that a new agenda item be included to discuss the Community Center at the next meeting.



Meeting was adjourned: The meeting was adjourned at 5:24 p.m. with motions from Chantiara Jackson and Courtney Wallace.

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 14, 2023

Elizabeth Varner

Director of Parks & Recreation, Elizabeth Varner