

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

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



# Press Release

## City commissioners approve Wilson Park master plan contract

*Wichita-based LK Architecture will provide survey of site, artists' renderings*

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (September 2, 2015) — The City Commission of Arkansas City voted 3-1 on Tuesday night to accept a \$33,500 grant from the V.J. Wilkins Memorial Foundation and approve a Wilson Park master planning agreement for the same amount with LK Architecture.

Commissioner Brandon Every opposed the action. Mayor Chad Giles was absent.

The Wichita-based firm will provide architectural and boundary surveys, computer modeling, a cost estimate of the proposed improvements and a corresponding phasing plan, perspective renderings of the final design, an animated flythrough, and a master plan rendering.

Two master plans will be produced — one for the existing 4.5-acre park that features a rotunda and a BNSF train locomotive, and one that also incorporates the vacant 3.5-acre parcel to the north.

The northern lot used to be the site of the former South Central Kansas Regional Medical Center, which was torn down earlier this year.

"The master plan will lay out potential growth and changes in order to help to grow and sustain the park," said City Manager Nick Hernandez. "We're looking at the feasibility of incorporating the former hospital property and determining the best utilization of the grounds. They're also going to do surveying of the property to look at water lines and drainage, to make sure that whatever we are going to do is more than just to make it look pretty. It has to be functional."

Hernandez met with the Wilkins Foundation's board of trustees on Oct. 27, 2014, and presented several ideas for the enhancement of Arkansas City's arts and culture, such as improvements for the Arkansas City Public Library and potentially a cultural events center that could handle large community events in a more aesthetic setting than the City's Agri-Business Building.

**For immediate release**

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During that conversation, the Wilkins family stated how much they love Wilson Park, and shared the fond memories they had of growing up and attending events in the park.

Making substantial improvements to the Wilson Park rotunda, in order to make it a multi-use facility for a variety of events, was identified as a priority. The board showed a keen interest in completing the improvements prior to PrairieFest 2015 and awarded funding for that phase. The project was completed on time with the help of Randy Smith, Roger Sparks, and the City's Parks and Facilities Department.

Wilkins Foundation board member Otis Morrow said the board also was interested in funding a feasibility report for the cultural events center, including potentially relocating the public library.

The City was asked to identify an entity that would perform the study and receive a quote for the Foundation's consideration. There was no deadline in 2014 because the Foundation wanted to focus on the rotunda for 2015.

But a foundation member indicated they thought the proposed master plan was a great idea and would benefit the city for years to come, Hernandez said.

A steering committee will be established to start the master planning process. Citizens who are interested in participating may contact Andrew Lawson, public information officer and special projects coordinator, at 441-4415 or [alawson@arkansascityks.gov](mailto:alawson@arkansascityks.gov).

"(Community input) will be critical with the process," Hernandez said. "LK Architecture will help us formulate ideas, based on its extensive project and planning experience, and give suggestions, but it's our plan."

### **In other business, the commission:**

- heard from Mell Kuhn, owner of Kuhn Mechanical, regarding unresolved issues stemming from the prior City Commission meeting regarding the City's bidding process for professional services. Kuhn asked that he be allowed to bid on City projects and that commissioners seek the lowest bid whenever possible in order to save taxpayer dollars. Public Works Director Eric Broce said his department was adjusting to meet the commissioner's expectations on bidding.
- unanimously approved the following consent agenda items: approving the Aug. 18 regular meeting minutes as written; approving the placement of a memorial stone bench at Ben Givens Center City Park; ratifying Giles' reappointment of Liz Shephard to the Convention and Tourism Board; and a resolution to authorize a public meeting of the City Commission in order to attend a Public Building Commission meeting at 5 p.m. Sept. 15.

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- voted unanimously to ratify Giles' appointments of Larry Gilmore to the Retired Citizens Advisory Council and Gareth McGee to the Arkansas City Public Library Board of Trustees.
- unanimously approved a resolution scheduling a special meeting of the City Commission at noon Sept. 11 in the commission room at City Hall, 118 W. Central Ave.
- unanimously approved an ordinance authorizing the vacating of Central Avenue between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> streets at the request of adjacent property owner Tim Marr. The Planning Commission met Aug. 11 and recommended that the City Commission approve the vacation.
- unanimously approved an ordinance authorizing the rezoning of 723 W. Madison Ave. from C-2 (restricted commercial district) to C-3 (general commercial district) to accommodate a motor vehicle body shop with a paint booth. The Planning Commission met Aug. 11 and recommended that the City Commission approve the rezone.
- unanimously approved an ordinance authorizing a conditional use permit for a motor vehicle body shop in a C-3 general commercial district at 723 W. Madison Ave. The Planning Commission met Aug. 11 and recommended that the City Commissioner approve the permit, as long as the following conditions are met: All work must be performed and all materials must be stored within the building; an enclosure and pad need to be built for the dumpster that currently is free-standing; no vehicles will be allowed to accumulate on the lot for an indefinite period of time; parking must be off South Seventh Street, not West Madison Avenue, due to traffic concerns along U.S. 166; all hazardous waste must be disposed of with prescribed storage and disposal procedures; and a proper, code-compliant fire suppression system must be installed in the paint booth within one calendar year of the issuance of this permit.
- heard updates from Hernandez on National Night Out, which will be held Oct. 5-6, and the creation of a citizens committee to address improvements to the Agri-Business Building.
- heard from Every regarding problems with the removal of dead animals from City roadways and the continuing analysis of water rates in preparation for a new water treatment facility.