The Proposed Recreation Commission Program

1. What is the legal basis for a community Recreational Program?

The 1945 legislature passed a law authorizing any city or school district, having a population of more than 8,000, and which does not have a board of park commissioners, to submit to the voters the ouestion of whether the city or the school district shall establish, maintain and conduct a supervised recreation system, and levy an annual tax therefor not to exceed one mill. The city and the school district of Lawrence were petitioned to present this question to the voters by more than 5 percent of the qualified voters.

2. Who has been sponsoring the recreational program in Lawrence?

Since 1940 a volunteer group of citizens, through the Recreation Council, has organized and carried on a six-week summer program of supervised playgrounds, art studio, Red Cross swimming instruction, street dances, baseball leagues, P.T.A. reading program and similar activities, increasing the offerings as additional funds were made available. The Council also operated the Community building servicemen's center, provided a series of evening parties for Mexican families in the gymnasium of New York school, and for two years has furnished supervision of basketball in school and city gyms during school holiday periods.

3. What has been the basis of support of the recreational program?

The A.A.U.W. made the first program of recreation possible and since then contributions from individuals and clubs supplemented the funds made available by the Board of Education. For the past two years, the Board has contributed \$800 annually and the Community Chest \$1200. Chest officials have indicated that they will not continue this support, feeling that the recreation program should be carried on the budget of a governmental taxing unit.

4. Why not continue with the present plan?

The struggle to secure funds for the support of an adequate program for all children and adults has become too great. Under the present law the city cannot make contributions for any expense of supervision of the program, and without the community chest support even the limited program of the past would be impossible. Community recreation is for the entire community and should be supported by all citizens.

5. Why do we need a community recreational program?

Without some community effort, throughout the year, young people and adults in Lawrence have no provision for leisure time activities, except those of a commercial nature. Modern youth have more leisure time, primarily because of the reduction of home chores, and the failure of most homes to offer constructive activities within the home. A recreational program will keep many children off the streets, will teach useful activities, will assist in the prevention of delinquency, will teach constructive use of leisure time under good supervision, and will train children in cooperative community activity.

6. How much money will one mill levy produce?

At the present evaluations, a one mill levy will provide about \$16,000. The law indicates that the Recreation Commission shall levy not to exceed one mill. The commission will have to establish the program, and make a yearly levy. It is assumed that the full levy will not be made, until such time as the community desires it. Any money levied which is not used in a year goes to reduce the amount of the levy for the next year.

7. How is the Recreation Commission set up under this law?

The law states that the City Council and the Board of Education shall each select two of its electors to serve as members of the commission, and these four persons shall select one additional person, making five members of the commission. These shall serve without pay. The commission is therefore responsible directly to the City Council and to the Board of Education.

8. Who will administer the recreational program?

It is presumed that the Recreation Commission will employ an adequately qualified person to act as Recreational Director, to carry out the policies and program of the commission. The commission and the director will employ such staff as may be needed to provide for carrying out the program.

9. Will present school and park facilities be available in the recreational program?

It is the experience of other communities that the recreational program fits into the established community governmental units in putting into more effective use all the present facilities, such as the school or city buildings, parks and playgrounds. Whatever money which is now spent by the city or the Board of Education on the maintenance of these facilities will reduce the amount of the levy to be made for the recreational program.

10. What is the relation between the proposed bond issue for parks and the recreational program?

The sponsors of the recreational program project wholly endorse the bond issue for parks. The more adequate the park facilities of the city, the less will it be necessary for the recreational funds to be used in this development. Adequate park facilities throughout the city are essential for a strong recreational program.

11. Who will be included in the recreational program?

A year round recreational program would include programs for adults, adolescents, and children. Also, in such a program there would be facilities for everyone, regardless of race or religion.

12. What types of services will the recreation program provide?

The new Recreation Commission would have to decide upon and establish the program for Lawrence. Other communities which have year-round recreation programs include sports and athletics, dramatics, music, art, woodworking, crafts, social activities, community work projects for children, and reading classes. These activities are developed for both children and adults.

13. Are other cities in Kansas taking advantage of this law?

The three largest cities in the state have boards of park commissioners, and operate their recreational programs through them, or through the Boards of Education. Coffeyville has just recently taken advantage of the provisions of the law and has a Recreation Commission. Manhattan and Ottawa are voting on the proposal April 2.

14. If this proposal is approved by the voters, when will the first levy be made?

It will not be possible for any money to be available before Jan. 1, 1947, if this proposal is approved. The present Recreation Council has plans to carry on the work next summer, in the limited way it has had to do with the small resources which are available.

Make Lawrence more interesting and a better place for children and youth ... VOTE FOR The Recreation Program Proposal at the City and School District Election, Tuesday, April 2.