



Independence Park Commission Minutes

September 4, 2025 4:30 PM

Palmer Center - 218A N. Pleasant St.

CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair Kay Douglas called the meeting to order at 4:31 pm.

Commissioners Present: Kevin Baird, Kay Douglas , Jana Evans, Katie Leiker, Paula Martin and Pamela Smith

Staff Present: Morris Heide, Frank Buhro, Rosie Carlson, Cheryl DeHaan, Kimberle Franks, Candi Laster, Jeff Umbreit, Jo Chappell, Mike Hicks

Acting Chair Douglas introduced new commissioner Pamela Smith.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Minutes - May 1, 2025

Commissioner Baird motioned. Commissioner Smith seconded. Minutes approved as presented.

STAFF REPORTS

1. Budget

Parks & Recreation Fiscal Administrator Kimberle Franks presented financial reports for FY25. She explained the department's different funds and cost centers. Fund balance and budget changes in FY26 were discussed.

2. Parks, Facilities & Grounds

Assistant Parks & Recreation Director Mike Hicks referenced the written report and explained the various crews in Park Maintenance, new trash truck, and new playground at Rotary Park. Discussion followed about the shelter being removed at Roberts Park due to safety concerns. It is not being replaced due to the high volume of homeless people in the area. Discussion continued about homeless camp cleanups and vandalism.

3. Recreation Services

Frank Buhro, Assistant Director of Recreation Services, referenced the written report which details core programming events and statistics. He stated that staff is interviewing for three programmer positions and hope to fill those soon to allow for expanded programming options. Discussion followed about Adventure Oasis Water Park being closed due to budget constraints.

Cheryl DeHaan, Recreation Services Supervisor III, and Jo Chappell, Recreation Programmer II, gave a presentation highlighting activities and events as well as volunteer opportunities at Palmer Center. Discussion followed about volunteer emails with Commissioner Baird noting the Animal Shelter's weekly email. Ms. Chappell reported that a monthly volunteer orientation event has been implemented at Palmer Center.

4. Promotions

Promotions and Marketing Supervisor Candi Laster reported an increase in followers on all department's Facebook pages and showcased the most popular posts on each page. The Parks and Recreation Instagram page is also showing an increase in followers after launching the new account in June. Commissioners watched social media reels created by department staff for Facebook and Instagram. Staff intends to add more videos in the future. Staff also created paid media ads for historical sites, including Missouri Life ads that featured local events.

Discussion followed about using other social media platforms such as X and TikTok. Several commissioners expressed appreciation for the increased social media presence as well as for all the department does.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Parks and Recreation Master Plan - City Council Study Session 6:00 PM, Sept. 8, 2025

Director Heide provided an update on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. It is about halfway complete with a January 2026 expected completion date. The ETC survey, social pinpoint website, and youth survey were discussed. He encouraged the commissioners to watch or attend the Council Study Session on September 8 when the consultants will present an update on the Master Plan.

NEW BUSINESS

Printing of meeting packets was discussed. It was decided that the packets will not be printed for future meetings as they are sent in advance for commissioners to review. Staff will present

information on a projector or tv in future meetings.

1. Metal Detecting Ordinance

Director Heide shared an updated ordinance which bans metal detecting on park property.

2. Credit Card Fees

Director Heide stated that credit card fees were shifted to the customer effective September second.

Commissioner Douglas motioned to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm.

ADJOURNMENT - NEXT MEETING - NOVEMBER 6, 2025

Meeting Schedule - 4:30 PM on the first Thursday of September, November, February and May
This commission is to act in an advisory capacity to the City Council relating to public education, use and knowledge regarding Parks and Recreation programs, will consider recommendations from the Tree Commission, will solicit and suggest disbursement of funds donated from private sources and will review the status of the projects funded by the Parks Improvement Sales Tax. They are to make a report to the City Council at least twice a year. They are to meet at least quarterly.