

**CITY OF VANDALIA**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**February 19, 2025**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tara Landis, Corey Follick, Lydia Baker, Lenny Maenza

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Holly Herbst, Larry Taylor, Rick Scherer

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Steve Clark, Sherry McConnaughey, Sara Moyer, Al Tuttle, Daniel Pierron

- Chairperson Tara Landis called the regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to order at 6:32 p.m.
- Steve introduced Sara Moyer as the new Recreation Coordinator handling Programs and Events, and Daniel Pierron who was attending on behalf of Holly Herbst from the School Board.

**MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

- The minutes of the November 20, 2024, meeting were presented to the Board. Tara Landis motioned to accept the minutes as presented, and Lydia Baker seconded the motion. Motion carried all ayes.

**COMMENTS FROM INTERESTED CITIZENS**

- None.

**FACILITIES SUPERINTENDENT REPORT**

Steve Clark presented the Facilities Superintendent Report.

- Interviews and a practical exam were given for the open Buildings Maintenance position, as Garrett Danner left to do plumbing for MSD. A conditional offer has been given to a candidate, Dakota Sizemore, who spent the past 5 years on a submarine working with HVAC systems.
- Still working through HVAC struggles at the Rec Center with MSD.
- Several doors at the Rec Center have needed maintenance and repairs.
- New bollard posts were installed around the Rec Center and main drive.
- 5 new benches were put together for outside the Recreation Center.
- Installed construction fencing and signage around the old playground at Helke Park, and began the removal. This got a lot of social media attention and complaints about removing this unit. The playground was 25 years old, and structural issues had begun, and with its age, parts were not available anymore. Steve discussed the future plan for the swings.
- Continue to provide Snow and Ice control when needed.

**CITY TREE REPORT**

Steve Clark presented the Urban Forest Report.

- The Christmas tree and decorations were taken down.

- The Parks Maintenance Staff will be taking back the duties of all the median maintenance. This had always been contracted out. With the increase in FT Staff, and landscape maintenance training, Rudy believes we can do a better job than a contractor. A new arrow board was purchased to help with road safety.
- The 6 Parks Staff attended the 2025 Tri-State Green Industry Conference & Trade Show in Cincinnati. This is a great conference on horticulture, tree care, lawn care, and more.
- Downtown tree work continued, with 35 more trees being removed. This includes working with Public Works on stump removals. New trees will be planted this spring.
- Sunday night someone drove through a median on Dixie Drive and took out a tree. They drove away. This will be replaced.
- Lenny asked when the live Rec Center tree will be used as the Christmas tree. Steve responded, if not in 2025, the tree would definitely be ready by 2026.

### **BEE CITY REPORT**

Al Tuttle presented the Bee City Report.

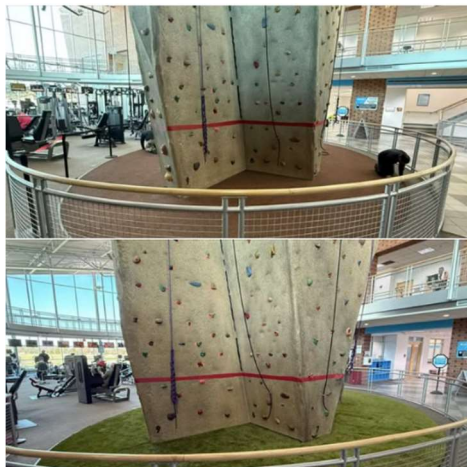
- The goal remains to increase pollinator plantings.
- The Historical Society held a Christmas Eve Service. It was so well attended that it was standing room only.
- Advertising the Historical Society Open Houses has helped with attendance. Attendance is up to approximately 40 people at each Open House.

### **RECREATION SUPERINTENDENT REPORT**

*Recreation Report – Handed out and presented by Sara Moyer*

VRC

- January 2025 Party Numbers: 28 total - 7 Resident/Member; 21 Non-Resident
- January 2024 visits -18,051; January 2025 visits - 17,772
- We had 229 IBM members visit 10 times or more in January.
- New Climbing Wall surface is installed! (Pictured below)
- Recreation Superintendent Alicia McCracken presented to Council Monday, February 17, about the VRC Outdoor Childcare playground unit and surfacing. We hope to get that project done in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2025. (Pictured below)
- We are revisiting the VRC Membership Fees and plan to bring you a proposal at our next in-person meeting.



## *Fitness*

- March FREE Class Spotlight is Zumba Toning w/ Annie on Mondays at 6:30pm.
- Free Climb Day is March 11.
- March Inclusive Fitness Days – March 8 and 22, from 10:30am-11:15am.
- Recreation Coordinator Josh Berry and Facility Manager Aaron Messenger are researching and getting quotes for new strength equipment. We have 2025 Capital money to complete the project.

## *Program/Event Updates*

- Plans to offer archery classes are underway.
- Summer CampREC Counselor applications are coming in.
- Recreation Coordinator Sara Moyer attended the second Advanced Leadership Training at the Miami Valley Communications Council on February 6.

## *Completed Events*

- **Pizza My Heart w/ Eat Pretty Darling:** On Saturday, February 1, Eat Pretty Darling led a Pizza My Heart Program to celebrate Valentine's Day with young chefs! 11 participants attended this program at the Vandalia Senior Center. During the class, preschoolers created their own mini heart-shaped pizzas and a sweet, festive treat!
- **Stitched in Love Paint Night w/ Miss Bec:** On Tuesday, February 4, Miss Bec led a Stitched in Love Paint Night at the Vandalia Rec Center. This program was full with 15 participants registered. During this class, young artists painted the lovable Disney character Stitch on a canvas while enjoying the evening together!
- **Kids Night Out:** This program was led by Recreation Leaders on Friday, February 7. This youth program had 24 registered participants. During their night out at the VRC, kids had the chance to participate in rock climbing, swimming, gym games, crafts, and more! Pizza and snacks were provided as well.
- **Date Night-In w/ Eat Pretty Darling:** On Tuesday, February 11, Eat Pretty Darling hosted an adult date night-in program at the Senior Center to celebrate Valentine's Day. This program had 2 couples registered. During the program, couples enjoyed crafting fresh, delicious pasta and flavorful sauce. They ended the night preparing a delicious dessert!
- **Sweetheart Goat Yoga:** On Wednesday, February 12, we partnered with The Grazing Ground for Sweetheart Goat Yoga. 25 participants registered for this program. The yoga program took place in the gymnasium at the Rec Center. Participants enjoyed plenty of goat cuddles during their yoga session!
- **Brixilated Presidents Day Camp:** This full-day camp was hosted by Brixilated at the Rec Center on Monday, February 17. While schools were closed for Presidents Day, campers spent the day building and designing a variety of LEGO creations with the Brixilated instructor. There were 9 participants registered for this full-day program. Discussion followed regarding the owner of this business being known to many Park Board Members.

## *Upcoming Events*

- **Piakchu Paint Night w/ Miss Bec:** Tuesday, March 4 - 6:00pm-7:30pm

- **Flower Cupcakes w/ Eat Pretty Darling:** Thursday, March 6 - 6:00pm-7:30pm
- **Mini Monets w/ Miss Bec:** Tuesday, March 11 - 6:00pm-7:00pm
- **Spring Break Camp-** Monday March 31-Friday April 4 - 7:30am-5:30pm
- **Homeschool Takeover-** Friday, March 21 - 11:30am-2:00pm

### *Senior Center*

- 581 total Senior Center Members through January 2025.
- 26 new members in January 2025.
- Vantran - 123 one-way rides in January 2025.
- Welcome Tom Underwood to our group of volunteer Vantran drivers.
- March Newsletter is available.

### *Athletics*

- 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade Youth Basketball continues. We have a couple more weeks of regular season and then we begin the tournament.
- Kindergarten/1<sup>st</sup> Grade Instructional and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade are done for the season.
- Youth Baseball/Softball registration is underway, and the deadline for registering is Saturday, March 1.
- Recreation Coordinator Maecie Burkhardt has secured with Tipp and Troy as a partner for youth baseball/softball. They have started a discussion of rules and will do a scheduling meeting in March.
- Opening Day is Saturday, April 26, and we are finalizing details of the day!
- We need Athletic League Supervisors to help with the Youth Baseball/Softball program and the Adult Softball Leagues.

### *Recreation*

- May-August Program Guide edits are in progress. Registration will begin April 2.
- Facility Manager Aaron Messenger, and Recreation Coordinator's Sara Moyer and Maecie Burkhardt all attended the 2025 OPRA conference Feb 2-5. They went to many great sessions and hope to implement ideas they learned into their areas.
- 2025 Corporate Challenge dates are finalized, and the events will take place June 2-6. This event is going to be a collaboration of staff thinking of ideas for the week and implementation.
- Recreation Staff have created an OPRA Awards Committee. This was formed in the hopes of having more people involved in the department, thinking of ideas, applying for the award, and then the end goal of winning the award 😊
- Recreation Superintendent Alicia McCracken and Facility Manager Aaron Messenger recently interviewed a potential intern for the department. The deadline to apply to be an intern is Feb. 28 so we will be deciding soon after. We look forward to having an intern again!

- Parks, Maintenance, and Recreation staff are researching software systems to track and submit work orders, inventory, inspections, etc. We look forward to having one platform to improve communication and efficiency.
- Facility Manager Aaron Messenger has submitted a grant for a mobile sensory tent. We will know by April 30 if we will receive the grant. Lenny asked if that would just be a quiet area? Sara explained that many items would be inside, including noise canceling headphones, fidget toys, etc.
- Parks Maintenance staff did upgrades to the Little Library outside of the Rec Center. It looks great!



### **DISCUSSION TOPICS**

- Robinette Park Update – Weather put a hold on the installation on the playground. Once they begin, it will only be one week for the installation, and then one week to install the safety surface. A Grand Opening will be held in the Spring. Contracting with OHM Advisors to design the splash pad, shelter, and parking. Hoping to get this out to bid in the summer of 2025, with a late fall installation, and open to the public in 2026. Much of this project is grant funded, with \$400K coming from the State, and \$400K from a federal grant.
- Art Park Amphitheater Update – 80% of the work is complete. Sidewalk work was done in January. Once the weather breaks, the stage background will be completed. Playground grass will be put in front of the stage. Steve will keep everyone posted about the ribbon cutting date.
- Helke Park Update – Former City Manager, Dan Wendt, applied for a \$500K grant from Sherrod Brown's office for a splash pad at Helke Park. Due to the change in administration, High Point Consulting advised that all grants were on hold, and we would need to re-apply if funds became available. Steve would like to work with OHM Advisors to produce a conceptual park plan for Helke Park.

**OLD BUSINESS** - None.

**NEW BUSINESS** – None.

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, Tara Landis made a motion to adjourn, and Lydia Baker seconded the motion to adjourn. Motion carried all ayes. Meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.