

CITY OF VANDALIA
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

May 21, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tara Landis, Corey Follick, Lenny Maenza, Holly Herbst, Larry Taylor, Rick Scherer

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Lydia Baker

OTHERS PRESENT: Steve Clark, Alicia McCracken, Rudy Wells, Sherry McConnaughey, Al Tuttle

- Chairperson Lenny Maenza called the regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to order at 6:31 p.m.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- The minutes of the February 19, 2025, meeting were presented to the Board. Larry Taylor motioned to accept the minutes as presented, and Tara Landis seconded the motion. Motion carried all ayes.

COMMENTS FROM INTERESTED CITIZENS

- Lenny commented about Riverscape in downtown Dayton on Monument Avenue. He said that area receives tons of traffic, and they have all sorts of large trees that provide shade. It is something to look into. He commented that he would like a large tree planted on National Road dedicated to him, with a sign that reads "All Dogs are Free to Pee Here."

FACILITIES SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Rudy Wells presented the Facilities Superintendent Report.

- Cassel Hills Pool – Preparations are near completion for the 2025 season. We have two new staff in Building Maintenance, and they have been involved in becoming familiar with learning what is needed to prepare, operate, and maintain the pool facility systems. The roof on the Concession Stand and the Men's Locker Room were successfully replaced.
- The Victory Park play structure will be inspected and opened tomorrow morning.
- Various Full-Time Staff attended the following training sessions: Fall Protection, Confined Space, Chain Saw Operation, and Aerial Equipment Operations. Great learning and skill improvement opportunities.
- Preparations for the ribbon-cutting for the Art Park Amphitheater. The Public Works department paved the final section of gravel access in the park. There is now access around the stage with access to the street for vendor vehicles, etc. No personal vehicle access will be permitted in the park.
- Assisted with events such as Shred Day and the Sweet Treats event.
- Baseball, soccer, and sand volleyball programs – routine maintenance.
- We now have five seasonal staff working with us helping with mowing, trash, string trimming, sports field maintenance, and restroom duties. Two additional members will join us next week.
- Provided pavement space at the garage for Fire Department training, which included Jaws of Life training on salvaged vehicles.

CITY TREE REPORT

Rudy Wells presented the Urban Forest Report.

- We have been fortunate in one aspect of the rainy weather; we have not had to water our newly planted street and park trees yet this year.
- Park Staff have taken on the maintenance of the 12 landscaped medians. This has always been contracted out. We now feel we have enough staff to take this on and feel we can do a better job in maintaining them. For that reason, we have purchased an aerial board for use on the roadways as needed. We plan to do this work from 8:15am-11:00am in the morning, which is the slowest traffic time.
- Pruning trees and landscapes as needed. We have had some dead wooded trees at Cassel Hills Pool and worked on structural pruning at the Art Park and Sports Complex.
- Weed control in landscape beds, pavers along National and Dixie and other areas, as needed.

Lenny asked if there had been any recent median damage. Rudy said, yes, there continues to be damage to the south most median on Dixie. We have lost approximately 10-12 trees since it was put in. We are no longer putting trees back into that median.

BEE CITY REPORT

Al Tuttle presented the Bee City Report.

- Open houses continue, and seed packets are being handed out.
- Rich Hopkins will be shooting a Focus Vandalia on June 4 about bee hives and the importance of pollination.
- The week of June 16 is Pollinator Week.

RECREATION SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Recreation Report – Handed out and presented by Alicia McCracken

VRC

- April 2024 Party Numbers: 28 total - 6 Resident/Member; 22 Non-Resident
- April 2024 visits -15,641; April 2025 visits - 15,917
- We had 200 IBM members visit 10 times or more in April.
- The VRC will be open 7am-Noon on Memorial Day - Fitness, Track, and Gymnasium Only
- The VRC will close at 6pm on June 20, due to the Flight Fest taking place that evening.
- The Morton 8th grade class used the VRC pool for a STEM project of building cardboard boats. The winning boat is pictured below:



Fitness

- June FREE Class Spotlight is Fit 2 Dance with Cheryl on Fridays at 9am in the gym.
- June Free Climb Day is June 10.
- June Inclusive Fitness Days – June 6 and 20, from 10:30am-11:15am.
- Senior PAR TEE, a senior social with indoor/outdoor putt-putt, is Friday June 20, 1pm-3pm.
- Summer Wellness Bash is June 6 from 10:30am-1:00pm.
- New strength equipment was delivered on Monday, May 19. 13 Precor machines are now available for use. The machines are smaller in size than the old machines, so the gym is more spacious. We have received good compliments so far on the changes.



Program/Event Updates

- Summer CampREC staff training is in full force! The first day of camp is Tuesday, May 27.
- Final preparations are underway to ensure that all campers and staff have an unforgettable summer! Staff are also preparing for our Summer Camp Open house on Friday, May 23, to meet campers and parents, and welcome them for an amazing summer!

Completed Events

- **Kids Night Out:** This program was led by Recreation Leaders on Friday, May 2. This youth program had 17 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.
- **Rose For Mom:** On Tuesday, May 6 at 7:00pm, we hosted a small gathering for the Rose for Mom Essay contest winners. Students in 1st and 2nd grade submitted essays on why their mom is the best mom in the entire world! 15 winners were picked to read their essays to their moms at the celebration and enjoy refreshments with the other winners and their families!
- **Vandalia Sweet Treats Fest:** This event was held at the Vandalia Sports Complex on Saturday, May 10 from 4:00-8:00pm. Everyone was invited to indulge their sweet tooth in a symphony of flavors! We had a variety of sweet treats, non-food vendors, live music, and other activities to enjoy!



- **Pokémon Playtime:** On Monday, May 12, from 5:30pm-7:00pm, we hosted Pokémon Playtime at the Rec Center. Kids ages 5–14 were invited to come out and enjoy a Pokémon filled time. Children brought in their phones, cards, or other mobile gaming systems to battle and trade Pokémon with each other! There were 12 participants registered for this program.
- **Homeschool Takeover:** On Friday, May 16, from 11:30am-2:00pm, we hosted a Homeschool Takeover at the VRC. Homeschool groups and families were invited to come out and enjoy everything the VRC has to offer; swimming, climbing wall, gym activities, and Luther's Jungle. 15 families/groups attended.
- **Hula Workshop w/ Olohana's Polynesian Dance:** On Friday, May 16, from 6:00pm-7:30pm, we hosted a free Summer Hula Workshop for the whole family at Art Park! The workshop included learning basic steps of hula dance and a full dance routine. Approximately 70 people attended the workshop!
- **Firefly Jar w/ Miss Elissa:** On Monday, May 19, Miss Elissa led a Firefly Jar painting class for adult participants at Helke Park. Participants created a glowing "Firefly Jar" painting while enjoying being outdoors. Elissa guided participants step-by-step to create a beautiful work of art! There were 7 participants registered for this program.

Upcoming Events

- **Art Park Amphitheater Ribbon Cutting** - Thursday, May 22, 6:00pm
- **Buggin Out at the Park w/ Dr. Insecta** - Saturday, May 31, 10:30am-11:30am
- **Mini Skyhawks Camp (Baseball/Basketball/Soccer)** - June 2-6, 9:00am-4:00pm
- **It's Not Magic, It's Science w/ Science Saturday** - Saturday, June 7, 10:00am-11:00am
- **Skyhawks Pickleball & Tennis Camp** - June 9-13, 9:00am-4:00pm
- **Beach Day w/ Miss Elissa** - Monday, June 9, 6:00pm-8:00pm
- **Paulette's Princess Party, Princesses & Superheroes** - Tuesday, June 10, 5:30pm-7:30pm
- **All Inclusive Rec Day** - Friday, June 13, 10:00am-1:00pm
- **Tasty Tides, Ocean Inspired Snacks w/ Eat Pretty Darling** - Saturday, June 14, 10:00am
- **Parent & Me Adventure Camp** - Monday, June 16, 9:00am-12:00pm
- **Campfire Story Night w/ Dayton Metro Library** - Tuesday, June 17, 7:00pm-8:00pm
- **Art Park Amphitheater Music Series** - Thursday, June 19, 7:00pm-9:00pm
- **Vandalia Flight Fest** - Friday and Saturday, June 20 and 21, 6:00pm-10:00pm
- **Skyhawks Golf Sampler Camp** - June 23-27, 9:00am-4:00pm

Senior Center

- The Senior Center has been open 107 days in 2025 and currently has 100 new members!
- 712 total Senior Center Members through April 2025.
- 22 new members in April 2025.
- Vantran - 452 one-way rides YTD. 159 one-way rides in April 2025.
- June Newsletter is available.

Cassel Hills Pool

- To date, we have sold 137 Resident passes, and 115 Non-Resident passes.
- Piranhas Swim Team has been practicing when the weather permits in the evenings.
- Kiddie Pool resurface work has been completed, which will help with slipping when entering.
- Brooklyn Wilson will be the Head Manager this season. Lots of Butler High School lifeguards.
- Saturday, May 24 is Opening Day! Unfortunately, the weather does not have people thinking of the pool.

Athletics

- Rain, rain go away! We have not had a lot of opportunities to play due to the rainy weather. Maecie is doing a great job trying to get everything rescheduled.
- To date, we have 63 kids enrolled in soccer and 17 kids signed up for flag football.
- Thank you to our 2025 Youth Sport Sponsors to date:

Ace Transfer Company	Elevate Dental	Minster Bank	Skateworld of Vandalia
Airline Dairy Crème	Fricker's Vandalia	Momentous Health Vandalia	Steve Reed State Farm Insurance
AMG INC.	Heeter Plumbing	MSD Inc	Tag Roofing & Restoration
Balanced Comfort Systems	Johnson Electric	Naborly Expediting LLC	The Expediting Co.
Beau Townsend Ford/Nissan	JYG Innovations	Optimist Club of Vandalia-Butler	The Vandalia Lions Club
Beckstrom Orthodontist	Kendall Electric	Pathways Financial Credit Union	VFW 9582
Blue Knight Roofing	Kona Ice	Ralph's Automotive LLC	Warehouse 4 Coffee
Bunkers	Logan Services	S&R Digital Expressions	
Digital Cowboy Computers	Mangen and Associates	Sister Cities of Vandalia	

Recreation

- Facility Manager Aaron Messenger and Recreation Coordinator Sara Moyer have secured the Mobile Accessible Restroom for our bigger special events in town.



- THE VPRD has partnered with the VB Optimist Club to bring the Thunderbirds crew and staff to the VRC on Friday, June 20 at 9:00am for a presentation to the youth of the Community.



- “Rocky” the snake is visiting Art Park for a few months. Smith Intermediate School students provided rocks to start the snake. Community members are encouraged to add rocks.



- Corporate Challenge will be held Monday, June 2 – Friday, June 9.
- Alicia reminded everyone this would be Steve’s last Park Board meeting before his retirement.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Cassel Hills Pool Tour of Facility – Originally the meeting was scheduled to be held at Cassel Hills Pool. Due to the weather, it was moved to the Recreation Center. Steve still believes it would be valuable to have the Park Board visit Cassel Hills Pool to get a look behind the scenes at the 50-year-old facility, potentially in the fall. We will soon need Council’s input on what will happen with the pool moving forward. Meaning, do we put money into it, and keep it operating, or do we look at putting a second splashpad at Helke Park, and closing the pool. Many things to consider. At Helke, the tennis and pickleball courts really need fixed before looking at a splashpad.
- Art Park Amphitheater Update – The Art Park Amphitheater Ribbon Cutting will be held tomorrow night at 6:00pm. The Michelle Robinson band will perform. The Amphitheater will be dedicated to Bill Jergens, who was a long-time member of the Rotary Club. His company, RB Jergens, was instrumental in the Art Park, as he donated his time to help create it. A thank you goes to Jake Hayslett and the Public Works Department, as they did an excellent job finishing the asphalt paving for \$8K, instead of the \$30K quote we had gotten. This project came in at just under \$600K. \$300K was from a grant, and the remaining was from the capital budget. Really excited about all the events that are scheduled.
- Meeting Schedule for 2026 – For us to be eligible for Tree City USA, we must have six meetings per year. Going into 2026, we would like to schedule six meetings for the year, every other month. To leave most of the Summer free, we will do early June, and late August. For the remainder of 2025, we have meetings scheduled for August and November. We will add a meeting for the 1st week of October, and a meeting to be held in December before the Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony.
- Robinette Park Update – There is frustration with Robinette Park and how long it is taking to get that completed. The weather put them behind, but Penchura over-scheduled. March 25 was their first day on-site. They will be pouring concrete at the same time the safety surface is going in. Hopefully, it will be open in two weeks. Due to these issues, Penchura will not get the Splashpad bid. Alicia is meeting with another company, Vortex. Hoping to have the bid out in June, awarded late summer, and work to begin late fall. This will be a nice addition to the City with the playground and splashpad. Lenny asked about parking. Steve commented that 107 spaces will be added.

OLD BUSINESS

- Lenny said, with this being Steve's last meeting, I just want to say, you did a heck of a job all these years. For a City this size, it is incredible all the amenities we have.
- Steve said he has been with the City for 37 years. June 13 will be his last day in the office, and July 7 is his last official day.
- Larry said, Bruce Sucher introduced Steve to him, and he has done a wonderful job, a very talented man.
- Corey said he started working for the City when he was 13, and Steve has always been a mentor to him. Steve's advice pushed Corey to take a job in Mason. The Department has been successful because of Steve. The City will be going through many changes over the next several years because of people retiring.
- Steve said thank you for the kind words. The Park Board has had little turnover over the last 20 years. He knows Council appreciates this longevity. He appreciates all the help and feedback over the years.
- Lenny added, it would not be the same City without Steve.

NEW BUSINESS

- Steve informed the Board that his position will be posted through Monday, June 16. There will be a first round interview, then a PRADCO leadership assessment, followed by a second-round interview. This will take most of the summer. Thinking a late summer/early fall selection.
- Alicia will be applying for the position, and will be serving as Interim Director, title unknown, until a decision is made.

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, Larry Taylor made a motion to adjourn, and Tara Landis seconded the motion to adjourn. Motion carried all ayes. Meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Lenny Maenza, Chairperson

Tara Landis, Secretary

Park Board photo taken with Steve Clark before he retires.

Pictured from left to right: Steve Clark, Rick Scherer, Tara Landis, Lenny Maenza, Corey Follick, Holly Herbst, and Larry Taylor.

