

Draft - Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes Regular Meeting – July 9, 2026

Meeting Location: Hospitality Suite – Lincoln Park Tower

Roll Call

Board Members Present: William Findlay
Kyle Gardner
Cayman Haltiner
Anna Stout
Nancy Strippel
Josh Travers
Lisa Whalin

Board Members Absent: Byron Wiehe
Chandler Smith
Cindy Enos-Martinez

City Staff Present: Ken Sherbenou, Director of Parks and Recreation
Emily Krause, Recreation Superintendent
Anna Wirth, Administrative Specialist

Guests:

Meeting called to order by Nancy Strippel at 12:03p.m.

Approve minutes from the June 2026 Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

Bill Findlay made a motion to approve the minutes of the June meeting. The motion was seconded by Cayman Haltiner and carried unanimously.

Yes – 6 No – 0

Regular Agenda Topics

Bylaws

Ken Sherbenou reported that the City Attorney's Office has been working with the City Clerk to update the bylaws to ensure they are current. He noted that a change to the City ordinance regarding term limits requires the bylaws to be updated to align with the City Code.

Ken Sherbenou reviewed the proposed bylaw amendments with the Board.

The first amendment, under **Article VI – Members, Section 1**, changes the City Council representative to a voting member of the Board.

The second amendment, under **Article VI – Members, Section 2**, updates the term limit provision to state that members may serve up to four terms in total.

The third amendment to **Article XI – Committees, Sections 4 and 5**, adds the phrase "**working with City staff**" to the requirement that the Committee Chair provide written reports of committee meeting proceedings to all Board members.

The final amendment updates the latest amendment date to **July 9, 2026**.

Kyle Gardner made a motion to approve the proposed bylaws as presented. Lisa Whalin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Yes –6

No - 0

Botanical Gardens Greenhouse

Ken Sherbenou said that the expansion of the botanical garden campus has been part of the long-term vision for some time.

The botanical gardens are owned by the City and operated by Strive. The first phase of the campus expansion is the construction of a new greenhouse, which will be a significant improvement over the current facility. The existing greenhouse is located on the far east side of town off Highway 50, approximately 20 minutes from the Parks Operations office. Because the current greenhouse is rented and costly to operate, relocating it closer to the Parks Operations office will reduce travel time and provide long-term cost savings.

Funding has been secured for the new greenhouse, and it has already been ordered. It will be constructed on the vacant lot between the botanical gardens and WestCo Brewing. Since additional greenhouses and other amenities are envisioned for the future, the site is being planned to ensure the greenhouse is positioned to accommodate future expansion. Plans also include installing fencing and security cameras to protect the facility and deter vandalism. The greenhouse will be accessible only to staff and will be used to grow flowers during the winter for spring planting.

The possibility of adding a community garden in the future was also discussed. Nancy noted that the library gardens have experienced theft and vandalism at night, which could present similar challenges for a community garden at the botanic gardens. Ken emphasized that no decisions have been made regarding a community garden and that, if one is developed, public access would likely be limited to designated hours. For now, the priority is ensuring the site is designed to support future growth and that the greenhouse is located to allow for additional expansion. Future phases may include infrastructure improvements, a shelter, maintenance facilities, and food production opportunities such as a farm-to-table program.

CRC Update

Ken reported that staff are close to selecting a grand opening date for the Community Recreation Center (CRC). The goal is to announce the date in the Fall Recreation Guide, which will be available to residents in mid-August.

The guide will also outline the transition of staff from the Lincoln Park Recreation Office to the CRC. RSRs are expected to transition to the CRC approximately six weeks before the grand opening, at which time membership sales will move from the on-site trailer into the new facility. Tours of the CRC are also planned to help promote memberships. Membership sales continue to be strong, with approximately 1,400 memberships sold to date. Ken Sherbenou noted that participation through the SilverSneakers program has been especially strong, and some individuals have even changed insurance providers to take advantage of the benefit.

A board member asked about plans to address concerns raised by private gym owners following a recent *Daily Sentinel* article regarding the CRC's opening. Ken felt the article presented the issue fairly and acknowledged that while there will be some overlap between the CRC and private fitness facilities, extensive discussions have been held with private business owners throughout the planning process. He explained that compromises were made regarding the services and amenities offered at the CRC to minimize direct competition with private gyms. While some short-term impacts are expected, Ken believes the CRC and private fitness businesses will complement one another over the long term. Studies indicate that the long-term impact on private gyms should be minimal, and he emphasized the importance of communicating that these concerns have been carefully considered.

Anna Stout noted that City Council is sensitive to public comments and the concerns of private businesses. She asked whether additional steps could be taken to proactively address the issue and avoid future concerns. Ken Sherbenou asked the Board for ideas beyond promotional materials that could help support local fitness businesses. A board member suggested that individuals who begin exercising at the CRC may eventually transition to private gyms as their fitness goals evolve. Anna Stout proposed partnering with private gyms by offering promotions, such as a free trial membership for CRC members, to capitalize on increased community interest in fitness.

Ken Sherbenou reported that construction of the CRC continues to progress very well. The recent punch walk for the dry side of the building went smoothly, and the facility looked excellent. The pools are currently being filled.

Staffing efforts are also progressing well. Ali Little has been hiring guest service representatives, lifeguards, fitness instructors, climbing wall staff, and other recreation personnel. Approximately 90 employees have been onboarded so far, with a goal of hiring 150 to 175 staff members. Lifeguards are currently completing their required training.

Bill Findlay asked whether any project funds might remain after construction is complete. Ken responded that several alternates, including slide timers and additional fitness equipment, have already been added to the project. However, some desired items, such as shade structures and signage, remain unfunded.

Ken stated that PRAB will be notified as soon as the grand opening date has been finalized.

Magpie Island Damage Update

Ken Sherbenou reviewed the history of fire mitigation efforts on Magpie Island. He explained that, through grants administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Fire Department previously completed vegetation management work that opened up large areas of the island by removing primarily tamarisk. In subsequent years, goats were brought in to help prevent regrowth.

Nancy Strippel asked whether goats would be used again this year by the parks department. Ken Sherbenou replied that grazing would occur at only one location because the dry conditions have resulted in very little vegetation growth. He added that reducing the grazing program this year will also help meet the current budget.

Ken Sherbenou reported that, based on the Parks staff's initial assessment of the recent fire, the burned area reached the sections where vegetation had previously been cleared but did not spread significantly beyond them. While these observations have not yet been reviewed with the Fire Department, they suggest that the previous fire mitigation work was effective in slowing the fire's spread.

Ken Sherbenou also discussed ongoing conversations with RiversEdge West about pursuing grants through Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and the Gates Family Foundation to support additional fire mitigation and habitat restoration efforts. Potential grant funding would be used to continue removing tamarisk and reestablish native vegetation, including cottonwood trees.

Future plans for Magpie Island were also discussed. Ken said there has been interest in pursuing passive recreational improvements, such as soft-surface walking and biking trails, while preserving the island's natural character.

The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 1:01pm

Next Meeting – August 6, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Wirth, Administrative Specialist