

Draft - Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes Regular Meeting – June 4, 2026

Meeting Location: Hospitality Suite – Lincoln Park Tower

Roll Call

Board Members Present: William Findlay
Kyle Gardner
Cayman Haltiner
Chandler Smith
Cindy Enos-Martinez
Anna Stout
Nancy Strippel
Josh Travers
Lisa Whalin
Byron Wiehe

Board Members Absent:

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

Guests: Josh Ash
Russ Garrity

Meeting called to order by Nancy Strippel at 12:01p.m.

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

Byron made a motion to approve the minutes of the May meeting. The motion was seconded by Cayman and carried unanimously.

Yes – 8

No – 0

Chandler and Anna joined after the vote.

Cody Wright, Park Supervisor Presentation

Cody oversees the Custodial Team, the Facilities Maintenance Team and Fleet/Small Engine Maintenance.

Custodial Team

The custodial team consists of soon to be 4 FT staff members and is responsible for maintaining 46 restrooms, 25 park shelters, and hundreds of waste receptacles throughout the park system. The team also distributes dog waste collection bags, removes graffiti, and repairs vandalism-related damage.

The separation of the custodial and facilities maintenance teams has produced significant benefits. Facilities staff are now able to focus on addressing maintenance needs and reducing previously accumulated backlogs, while the custodial team provides park coverage during operating hours, seven days a week. Having dedicated full-time maintenance staff has also increased the team's expertise, allowing more repairs to be completed in-house, reducing lead times and lowering costs.

Facilities Maintenance

The facilities maintenance team is currently staffed by two full-time employees.

Cody highlighted several ongoing improvement projects, including renovations at Eagle Rim Skate Park. The team is also completing playground safety improvements at Hawthorne Park, where worn playground equipment is being recoated rather than replaced, resulting in an estimated 40% cost savings.

In addition, playground safety inspections are being transitioned to a digital work order management system. This change will streamline the inspection process, improve recordkeeping, and provide more accurate tracking of maintenance needs. Cody also discussed efforts to strengthen playground safety standards by supporting staff in obtaining Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) certifications.

Fleet and Small Engine Maintenance

The small engine maintenance position is currently seasonal and is responsible for maintaining equipment such as leaf blowers, trimmers, and other small engines. The position also supports fabrication projects and serves as a liaison with the fleet division to improve communication and expedite service requests.

Performing small equipment repairs in-house significantly reduces turnaround times. The fabrication component of the position also provides substantial cost savings by allowing the department to customize equipment and infrastructure rather than purchasing commercial products. Cody cited the construction of custom gates for less than \$800, compared to an estimated vendor cost of \$10,000.

Systemwide Improvements

Cody highlighted several systemwide improvements that are underway throughout the park system. These include the installation of upgraded metal trash receptacles and dog waste stations mounted on concrete platforms to improve durability and reduce maintenance needs.

Restroom flooring is also being upgraded to epoxy-coated surfaces, with approximately two to three restrooms completed each year. The new floor coating is expected to last more than a decade, compared to the previous flooring paint which required annual maintenance and repairs.

Cody also informed the board about a planned transition to automated shelter power controls. The proposed system would integrate shelter electrical service with RecTrac, automatically

activating and deactivating power during reserved rental periods. This would eliminate the need for staff to manually travel to shelters to turn power on and off, improving efficiency and reducing labor costs.

Vandalism and Damage

Cody estimated that approximately 30–35% of staff time is currently dedicated to repairing vandalism-related damage. He shared several examples of vandalism occurring throughout the park system and explained that, due to recurring damage and misuse, some restrooms are only opened during shelter reservations.

He noted that restroom closures are evaluated based on park usage and demand and are adjusted as conditions change. Portable restrooms remain available at affected parks, and an additional weekly service day has recently been added to improve cleanliness and overall conditions.

Board members suggested installing signage explaining that restroom closures are the result of vandalism and misuse in order to increase public awareness and understanding.

Aging Playgrounds

Cody discussed challenges associated with aging playground infrastructure. As playgrounds age, replacement parts become increasingly difficult to obtain, reducing the functionality of equipment when components cannot be repaired or replaced.

He emphasized the importance of following a regular replacement schedule for playgrounds to ensure facilities remain safe, functional, and fully operational for park users.

The issue of shelter renters driving and parking on turf areas was also discussed. Because the Grand Junction Police Department is often unable to respond quickly to these incidents, Ken suggested that park rangers be notified in advance of shelter reservations so they can monitor parks more closely and help prevent unauthorized vehicle access onto grass areas.

Drought Response Plan – 13 Sites for Turf Reductions

Ken updated the board on the city's drought response plan, which includes converting bluegrass to native vegetation at 13 park sites to help achieve a 25% reduction in water use. Lilac Park and Desert Vista Park will transition away from bluegrass entirely, while other parks will only convert underutilized turf areas. The changes will reduce irrigation needs and mowing frequency.

A board member asked about planned landscaping at the Rec Center and Ken said that it will mostly be native grasses around the perimeter and a couple of turf areas that will be heavily utilized and was designed with water conservation in mind.

Nancy asked whether signage would be installed at the conversion sites. Ken responded that informational signs will be placed at participating parks and will include QR codes linking visitors to the city's drought response webpage. Public outreach efforts will also include letters mailed to residents living within a quarter-mile of each project site, explaining the planned changes, project timeline, and the reasons behind the conversions.

Salt Flats Park

Ken updated the board on plans to approach the Colorado Foundation about a planning grant to advance the design of Salt Flats Park, with potential implementation funding to follow.

He reviewed an initial park concept that includes a playground, turf area, basketball court, picnic area, and detention and irrigation ponds. The irrigation pond is already under construction as part of the site's infrastructure development.

The Salt Flats development is expected to include approximately 450 housing units and is being built by three different developers. If funding is secured, the park design will be further developed and discussed.

Community Satisfaction Survey

The Community Satisfaction Survey is conducted every two years, and this year three new questions regarding the Orchard Mesa Pool have been added. Randomly selected participants are being asked whether they believe tax dollars should be used to repair the Orchard Mesa Pool and whether they would support a ballot measure to increase property and sales taxes to help fund the project.

Originally, repair costs were estimated at \$6 million. That figure has since increased to approximately \$8 million. The estimated cost would only keep the facility operational and does not include major upgrades to the user experience beyond repairs to the hot tub and portions of the pool decking.

The survey will also provide context by comparing the cost per user of the Orchard Mesa Pool to the Lincoln Park Pool.

A decision must be made before the end of the year. If the City chooses not to move forward with renovations, the Orchard Mesa Pool will most likely be demolished.

The survey is expected to be distributed within the next month.

6/21 Go Skate Day/Starburst Award Presentation

Ken informed the board that the Starburst Award received by the City for Emerson Skate Park will be presented by the Colorado Lottery on June 21.

400 Block Main Street Ribbon Cutting – Mid June

Ken also announced that a date will soon be selected for the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Main Street play area currently under construction.

For the Good of the Community

The board asked whether the new soft-surface trail along the Riverfront Trail will receive an official name. Ken responded that the topic will be discussed at a future PRAB meeting.

Questions were also raised regarding bike safety at the CRC. The CRC will include bike lockers, bike racks, and a bike repair fix-it stand.

The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 1:11pm.

Next Meeting – July 9, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Wirth, Administrative Specialist