



Parks & Recreation Commission – MEETING MINUTES

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The regular meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission was held on August 7, 2025, at 3:00pm the Parks & Recreation Administration Building, 2154 Landstown Rd, Virginia Beach, Virginia, 23456.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Phillip Hines called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm. A quorum was present.

ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Alexander Amerine, Daniel Edwards (Vice Chair), Phillip Hines (Chair), Ben Messer, Kathryn Moran, Myra Payne, Stephen Rockefeller, Eugene Towler, David Wiener, Debbie Wiggins
MEMBERS ABSENT: Tommy Altman, Barrett Lankford, Clinton Mills Jr.
LIAISONS PRESENT: Ryan Hersey (Schools), Alison Pimentel (MYLA), MPO Kevin Boda (Police)
CITY STAFF PRESENT: Michael Kirschman, Ken Chandler, Chad Morris, Shirley Deibler, Taryn Buckley-Thiel, Kara Shoup

1. Resignation

No resignations this month.

2. Student Members

Alexander Amerine was appointed to the Parks & Recreation Commission at the June 17, 2025, City Council meeting.

3. New appointees to P&R Commission

No new members this month.

MINUTES

The June 5, 2025, meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

HOUSEKEEPING

No housekeeping items were discussed.



AGENDA ADDITIONS

No agenda additions.

CORRESPONDENCE / PUBLIC COMMENT

No correspondence / public comment.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Secretary Position

Following a brief discussion, Commissioner Eugene Towler nominated Commissioner Stephen Rockefeller to fill the Commission's vacant Secretary position. The Commission unanimously approved. Commissioner Rockefeller will fill the open position immediately.

2. Share the Air Support Letter

Chair Hines announced he will work with Secretary Rockefeller to draft a letter of support for the Share the Air initiative.

3. Rudee Park Support Letter

As an advisory group to City Council, Chair Hines asked the Commissioners to determine their support for Rudee Loop's parking scenarios, as the project goes back to City Council on August 19, 2025. The group discussed parking (garage vs. lot parking) at the new park.

- With Parking Garage = additional \$28-30M.
- Without Parking Garage = no additional cost, as current parking will be utilized. *A garage could be added at a later date.*

Q&A/Discussion:

- 1) How many spaces will be added to the area with a parking garage? 120+ new spaces will be added.
- 2) How long until this park could open? Five years without a parking garage; five to six years with a parking garage.
- 3) Will current parking on site be open during construction? No, parking in the area will be closed.
- 4) How long will the area be completely closed for construction? The area will be closed an estimated two to three years minimum. This includes event staging areas. Event coordinators will need to look at off-site staging areas during this time.
- 5) Will the park construction be done in tiered sections so the whole area is not closed at one time? Potentially. This is still to be determined.
- 6) A parking garage will bring in additional revenue for the city.

- 7) Moving forward with a garage now will allow it to be built concurrently with the new park. This will save time, space, and costs.

Commissioner Catherine Moran made a motion for the Commission to vote on supporting a surface parking-only option at Rudee Park. Commissioner Towler seconded. A vote was held, and the motion was passed, 9 to 1. Chair Hines will work with Secretary Rockefeller on a letter of support to submit to City Council.

Director Michael Kirschman suggested that the letter be delivered to City Council prior to their August 19, 2025, meeting, during which the Department will present and receive direction on Rudee Park.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Lynnhaven Boat Ramp & Beach Facility

Chair Hines requested an overview of the security enhancements the Department has added to Lynnhaven Boat Ramp & Beach Facility this year. Director Kirschman noted that the facility has been a big topic of interest lately, and the Department continues to work with the local community.

- Armed security will be on-site every night (8:00pm – 2:00am) through October 31, 2025.
- Electronic signage to display if the parking lot is full has been ordered. The Department is awaiting the signage's arrival so it can be installed on Shore Drive.
- A-frame signs directing visitors on where to properly turn around are being used in the local community.
- Site staff provide Department leadership with a weekend visitation recap. This recap is shared with the local civic league for distribution to the community.
- A Flock security camera will be added to the site. This technology reads license plates and helps police track vehicles of interest. This camera will join the six security cameras already on-site.
- Police continue to visit the site at various times to ensure visitor compliance.

Q&A/Discussion:

- 1) What is the funding source for the additional cameras? The camera cost will come from the Parks' budget.
- 2) Which company is providing armed security? Garda World.

STAFF REPORT

1. VBTrail

Planning, Design, & Development Administrator Chad Morris provided an update on the status of the VBTrail. He noted an economic impact study on the trail is coming soon.

The project's construction will begin in the winter of 2026/2027, with Phase 1 estimated to be completed in 2032.

Phase 1:

- There is an idea to divide the construction of the trail and related bridge over Independence Boulevard's project. This would allow trail construction to begin, while the bridge is being designed. The bridge designer would work with the trail contractor. This guarantees costs and there would not be a bid process required, but the quoted cost can be higher.
- The Department will receive a \$2.5M Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant.

Phase 2:

- The Department should hear back on the status of Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant (\$14.9M) by this fall or winter.

Phase 3:

- This section of the trail is currently unfunded.
- The Department is considering applying for another Smartscale grant.

Phase 4:

- The Department will receive funding for the design of this section in 2027 and then begin planning. The section will be complete by 2033.

In total, the VBTrail project has two of its five sections completely funded, equating to roughly half of the entire project's costs.

Q&A/Discussion:

- 1) Is there any concern over the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant (\$14.9M), since paperwork has not been received back from federal government? No - the design is 60% complete so the project can be completed within the 5-year completion timeline as soon as the grant is received.
- 2) How quickly could the project be completed if all funding was in hand now? Five years.
- 3) The Commission discussed the possibility of moving this project forward on an accelerated completion timeline.
- 4) Chair Hines noted that while this project is expensive to construct, the return on investment is large, and maintenance needs are low.

2. HAWK Signal

A HAWK (high intensity activated crosswalk beacon) signal will soon be installed on Shore Drive at Great Neck Road. When activated by a pedestrian, this device will be used to stop road traffic and allow pedestrians to cross safely. This Public Works project will be constructed between May 2026 and March 2027.

LIAISON REPORTS

1. Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC)

ATAC recent toured the Bow Creek Stormwater project. The area is currently under construction. Phase 1 will be complete before Phase 2 of the project begins.

2. Virginia Beach Police

- National Night Out 2025 was a success.
- A meeting to discuss the rising use of e-bikes is coming soon. The goal is to get ahead of any issues that may arise from the growing usage.

Q&A/Discussion:

- 1) Will golf carts be included in the upcoming discussion? No, as they have their own codes and road restrictions already.
- 2) Will the VBTrail be lined for motorized (i.e. e-bike) vs. pedestrian traffic? Yes – the trail was even widened during initial planning to improve safety.
- 3) Chair Hines proposed the idea of creating an e-bike safety PSA.

3. Open Space Advisory Committee (ATAC)

Reminder: The Interfacility Traffic Area (ITA) plan proposes a variety of mixed uses to a large portion of land in the city. The ITA vision prioritizes strengthening development areas along the Princess Anne Corridor. In areas where residential uses fall outside of restricted Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) zones, vibrant mixed-use districts are envisioned where people can live, work, and recreate within walking distance to services and gathering spaces. A large part of this land is proposed for recreational use.

This project is currently unfunded and is merely a working plan with many visions for how the land could be utilized. The ITA may or may not be included in the City's next Comprehensive plan.

4. MYLA

The Mayor's Youth Leaders in Action program is in the middle of the interviewing process to acquire new students.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Fiscal year 2025 ended with Department's highest earned revenues - \$17.3 million prior to the books being closed. Fiscal year 2026 began July 1, 2025. Preparations for fiscal year 2027's budget process are about to begin.

The Department recently acquired Placer.ai. This visitation tracking software uses location intelligence, machine learning, and data science to generate accurate foot traffic analytics that will allow the

Department to closely analyze visitation patterns and better understand visitors' behavior and preferences.

Example data: With Placer.ai, the Department knows that Mount Trashmore had 1.6 million visitors during the last twelve months and ranks third in visitation in the Nature & Landmarks Category for Virginia.

GOOD & WELFARE

1. The Commission's annual report is due back to the City Clerk by August 31, 2025. Once Secretary Rockefeller, Chair Hines, and Staff Liaison Buckley-Thiel complete it, a draft will be emailed to each Commissioner for approval. Please respond to the email with approval or edits.

2. Staff Liaison Buckley-Thiel reminded the Commission of the attendance policy:

"No member shall accumulate an annual total of more than three absences for reasons other than personal illness, the illness or death of a relative, or other circumstances beyond the member's control. Absences for personal illness, the illness or death of a relative, or other circumstances beyond the member's control shall be excused by the Chairperson. The staff liaison shall notify the Chairperson after a member has two unexcused absences in a calendar year. The Chairperson shall contact the member to determine why the member is missing meetings and remind the member of the City's attendance policy. If a member accumulates more than three unexcused absences in a calendar year, or accumulates unexcused absences for more than one-fourth of the total number of meetings held during the calendar year, the staff liaison shall notify the City Clerk's office in writing, with a copy to the Chairperson, and advise the City Clerk of the name of the member of who has accumulated absences beyond those allowed by the City Code. The notification should reference the attendance policy set forth in City Code § 2-3.1 and indicate it was sent on behalf of the Chairperson."

3. The next meeting will be held at 3:00pm on September 4, 2025. The meeting location will be Bayside Recreation Center, 4500 First Court Road, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23455.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Hines called for adjournment. No one opposed. Meeting adjourned at 4:45pm.

ATTACHMENTS (1)

1. Meeting Agenda – June 5, 2025