



Parks & Recreation Commission – MEETING MINUTES

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The regular meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission was held on June 5, 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 3:05 pm. A quorum was present.

ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Daniel Edwards (Vice Chair), Phillip Hines (Chair), Sebastian Johnston (Secretary), Ben Messer, Clinton Mills Jr., Myra Payne, Stephen Rockefeller Eugene Towler, David Wiener, Debbie Wiggins
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Tommy Altman, Barrett Lankford, Kathryn Moran
LIAISONS PRESENT:	Ryan Hersey (Schools), LT. Dewberry
CITY STAFF PRESENT:	Michael Kirschman, Ken Chandler, Chad Morris, Shirley Deibler, Shannon Moore, Taryn Buckley-Thiel. Kara Shoup

1. Resignation

No resignations this month.

2. Student Members

No new student members this month.

3. New appointees to P&R Commission

No new members this month.

MINUTES

The May 1, 2025, meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

HOUSEKEEPING

No housekeeping items were discussed.

AGENDA ADDITIONS

No agenda additions.



CORRESPONDENCE / PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Share the Air

Joey Crosby, Share the Air's campaign manager, along with two local students, Ami Badiye and Christine Huelquist, requested the Commission's support for their Share the Air movement in Virginia Beach. This movement calls for voluntary compliance to maintaining smoke- and vape-free outdoor areas. It has been successfully adopted by 31 cities in Virginia. Once adopted by the City, Share the Air will provide free signage and resources to discourage smoking and vaping in agreed upon outdoor, public areas. While smoke- and vape-free areas cannot be mandated by the City, public support for this initiative demonstrates that it is a desired change for public outdoor areas.

The group already has the Director of Parks & Recreation's support and requested the Commission draft a letter of support to be shared with City Council.

Q&A/Discussion:

- 1) What areas of Virginia Beach this policy will cover? Director Kirschman informed him that the 293 Virginia Beach parks would fall under this policy. Mr. Crosby added that the policy's coverage area can be crafted to best suit the City (i.e. certain areas can be exempted if needed).
- 2) What is City Council is being asked to approve? Director Kirschman acknowledged that smoking cannot be banned in the city's public outdoor areas. City Council will be asked to approve the signage be added to promote voluntary compliance to smoke- and vape-free parks.
- 3) Confirm - There is no cost for this program: There is no payment to Share the Air. They provide all signs and resources to the City for free. The only indirect cost will result from our team installing the signage.
- 4) Does this policy include smoking cannabis? The policy discourages smoking of any type but does not explicitly discourage smoking cannabis. Share the Air may update their signage to explicitly include cannabis in the future.
- 5) Who funds this initiative? He was informed that Y Street, the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth's volunteer initiative for high school students, funds the program.
- 6) Does Share the Air have any research to demonstrate the success of their program? Mr. Crosby stated that they do not have direct research, but interviews with other Parks Department's directors note that there is a significant drop in parks' maintenance following adoption of the Share the Air initiative.
- 7) Will the policy be policed? Since this policy encourages compliance, rather than mandating it, there is no policing involved.

Share the Air will present to City Council this fall. Vice Chair Daniel Edwards called for a motion to have Chair Hines draft a letter of support to be reviewed and approved at the August 1, 2025, meeting. Commissioner Towler seconded. Chair Hines will draft a letter for the August meeting.

Director Kirschman reminded the Commission to consider special areas to exclude from the policy when sharing their support for this initiative.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Great Neck Recreation Association – Update

Chair Hines shared that Great Neck Recreation Association received \$41,400 to support their city-wide tackle football program during the May 6, 2025, City Council meeting.

2. Coastal Virginia Community Rowing

Paul Mason and Melissa Kuch returned to provide updates on Coastal Virginia Community Rowing (CVCR). Since their previous Commission presentation, the organization has continued to be a resource for Virginia Beach youth interested in rowing. Since all school-based rowing clubs have ended, CVCR has remained as a rowing resource for all athletes interested in the sport. Rowing is a year-round opportunity for youth to stay engaged in their free time, with the potential to provide athletic funding opportunities for college.

The group currently launches out of Thalia Creek, using a Right-of-Entry since the launch is closed to the public due to on-going dredging.

Q&A/Discussion:

- 1) What is the group is currently requesting from the Commission? Ms. Kuch stated the group is trying to maintain open communication with the Commission, as funding sponsors for current students and connections with new interested students are always needed.

She added that funding is key because each year costs the students around \$375-\$575 each.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Secretary Position

Student Commissioner Sebastian Johnston currently serves as the Commission's secretary. His Commission term ends at the end of this month. A new secretary will need to be selected. Chair Hines asked all those interested in the position to email him directly. A selection vote will be held at the August 2025 meeting.

STAFF REPORT

1. Rudee Park

Planning, Design and Development (PDD) Administrator Chad Morris provided the Commission with an update on Rudee Park. On May 20, 2025, members of the Parks & Recreation and Dills Architects teams provided City Council with an overview of final concept for the park. This design incorporates the public's key park elements from three designs shared at previous community meetings. Director Kirschman and PDD Administrator Morris returned to City Council on June 3, 2025, to obtain approval

and direction on a few items that are pivotal for the next steps in the Rudee Park project, including probable costs and budget, parking scenarios, project sponsorships, and a proposed timeline.

- [May 20, 2025: City Council Presentation](#) (starts at 0:49)
- [June 3, 2025: City Council Presentation](#) (starts at 0:30)

Administrator Morris presented several computer-rendered images of Rudee Park, while discussing the planned amenities and different areas of the park. The public's desired elements (Natural Ecology, Active & Passive Uses, Naturalized Built Elements, Connection to Water & Views, Authentic to the Culture of Virginia Beach) are included in the final plan. This park will be focused on guest activation and will be different than Mount Trashmore Park.

Project's timeline (4 years, estimated):

- Construction Documents - 15-18 Months
- Bidding and Award - 6-9 Months
- Construction – 24 Months

The project is currently in a strategic pause until August to allow the design team to collect information requested by City Council. City Council will next discuss the project on August 12, 2025.

Director Kirschman added that the Tourism Investment Program (TIP) Fund will provide the full funding for this project. The design without a parking structure is fully funded in the FY25-26 budget.

Chair Hines informed the Commission that they must decide to support the plan as presented or not. The Commission will decide on its level of support for the project and submit a letter to City Council before August 12, 2025.

Q&A/Discussion:

- 1) How high is the overlook's rise? Around a 15–20-foot rise.
- 2) If a parking garage is added, will parking be free? Director Kirschman stated that the Commission should expect parking to be charged if a parking structure is added to the design.
- 3) Why is parking being charged for a park? Not all parks in the Virginia Beach park system have free parking (i.e. Little Island Park).
- 4) Is City Council considering a parking deck? City Council is actively reviewing the pros and cons of adding a parking deck to the park's design.
- 5) How far back will the park sit? The park will cover the area from 4th Street to the waterfront and Rudee Inlet.
- 6) Are restrooms included in the design? Yes, restrooms will be added in several locations.
- 7) Dills Architects have mentioned that the park will fund itself. Is this true? Director Kirschman stated the park is estimated to earn \$1.5 - \$2 million each year but is only estimated to cost \$1 million per year.

- 8) Does Virginia Beach Development Authority (VBDA) own the land currently planned for the surface parking lot? VBDA does own the land projected for the surface parking lot. They will either transition the land to Parks & Recreation or maintain the parking for Rudee Park.

2. VB Trail

VB Trail, Phase 1 (Newtown Road to Town Center) has been awarded a \$14.9 million Safe Streets & Roads for All (SS4A) grant through the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). This grant requires a match from the City.

VB Trail, Phase 4 has received the FY26 Smart Scale grant for \$23.8 million. This grant does not require a match.

Q&A/Discussion:

- 1) Is the VB Trail design complete? It is about 30% complete. The Commission can review the complete plan in the future.
- 2) When will the grant agreement be signed by all parties? There is currently no determined timeframe, but it should be completed soon. The department is awaiting direction from USDOT

3. ITA

PDD Administrator Morris overviewed the main ITA plan, as well as the master plans for the Princess Anne Athletic Village (East and West) and Passive Recreation South (Parts 1 and 2). This project is the result of the department being tasked with creating a vision for the ITA area. There is no current funding allocated to this project. It would currently cost \$160 million to complete.

The goals of the plan are trails (paved and soft) and trees (planting and preservation. Internal groups are now coordinating their varying visions and priorities to be prepared for a future presentation to City Council.

4. Mount Trashmore Carnival

The Mount Trashmore Carnival has been held at Mount Trashmore for 35 years. This year, however, there was an unanticipated issue with the security component of the Carnival's special event permit. The plan called for a certain number of deputies to be on-site (using a bank of off-duty officers). Not enough officers signed up for the overtime for this year's event and the City chose to revoke the permit with the public's safety in mind.

Q&A/Discussion:

- 1) Is there a potential lawsuit? There is no lawsuit at this time.

- 2) If the event returns to Mount Trashmore in the future, can the company hire their own third-party security to cover the needs of the permit? Director Kirschman stated this would not be his decision to make.
- 3) Is the event profitable for Parks & Recreation? Director Kirschman stated that this event is held for the public's enjoyment, not as a revenue-generating event for the department. The department receives a portion of the event's revenue.

LIAISON REPORTS

1. Virginia Beach Police

Lieutenant Dewberry informed the Commission that there is always an ebb and flow in crime. Staffing issues also remain so some calls may be delayed.

Pop-up events are still an issue, as well. Pop-ups are when a random promoter puts out a call for a party in a specific area and many people show up. The Police Department is working to curb behavior and manage these types of events in advance with constant monitoring.

Q&A:

- 1) Does this have a connection to Lynnhaven Boat & Beach Facility (LBBF)? Lieutenant Dewberry stated that this past weekend was quiet at LBBF. Director Kirschman added that cameras, speed bumps, and police patrols have helped curb this behavior at LBBF. New signage to direct boaters is coming to this facility soon, as well.

2. City of Virginia Beach Public Schools

Sustainability Officer Ryan Hersey informed the Commission that Bayside Sixth Grade Campus students will be moving into Bayside Middle School. The Bayside Sixth Grade Campus' building and property will eventually become surplus.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. Parks After Dark

Director Kirschman reminded the Commission that Parks After Dark kicks off this evening at Williams Farm Park, and will continue most Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings through the summer. Two additional Parks After Dark events will begin at College Park Elementary and Rosemont Elementary on June 14, 2025, and continue most Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings through the summer.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Hines called for adjournment. No one opposed. Meeting adjourned at 4:58 pm.

ATTACHMENTS (3)

1. Meeting Agenda – June 5, 2025



2. Share the Air Presentation
3. PDD Updates

