



## **Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes**

Thursday, Nov. 6, 2025

3-4 p.m.

Parks & Recreation Administration Building  
2154 Landstown Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23456

### **Call to order**

Chair Phillip Hines called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm. A quorum was present.

### **Roll Call**

#### **Members Present**

Phillip Hines (Chair), Daniel Edwards (Vice Chair), Stephen Rockefeller (Secretary), Tommy Altman, Alexander Amerine, Barrett Lankford, Ben Messer, Clinton Mills Jr., Kathryn Moran, Myra Payne, Eugene Towler, David Weiner, Debbie Wiggins

#### **Members Absent**

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#### **City Staff Present**

Ken Chandler, Shirley Deibler, Chad Morris, Shannon Moore, Taryn Buckley-Thiel, Kara Shoup, LT. Dewberry, Therese Cummings, Brynn DiPaola

### **Approval of Minutes**

The October 2, 2025, meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

### **Correspondence / Public Comment**

No items were discussed.

### **Old Business**

#### **Share the Air Letter of Support**

Chair Hines acknowledged that Secretary Rockefeller drafted a letter of support for the Share the Air initiative, as previously discussed. He signed the letter and Executive Assistant Taryn Buckley-Thiel will submit it to City Council's attention.

## Lynnhaven River NOW Letter of Support

Chair Hines reminded the Commission of Lynnhaven River NOW's request for a letter of support for their goal of adding a \$0.05 fee on plastic bag use. Following-up on the October presentation to the Commission, Dylan Mason, Lynnhaven River NOW's Public Policy Manager, answered remaining questions about how the plastic bag fee would apply to Virginia Beach's consumers.

### *Q&A/Discussion:*

- 1) If a letter is drafted, what happens next? If the Commission drafts a letter to City Council, City Council could select the issue for public discussion and comment at a future City Council meeting.
- 2) How will the fee be listed on consumers' receipts? The bag fee would be a line item on the receipt, similar to other taxes and fees. The fee would only be on the receipts of consumers that do not use their own bags and choose to use plastic bags offered by the store.
- 3) What happened two years ago when this fee was brought to City Council's attention? There was not enough support or research done on the potential impact of the fee at that time, so the issue was not pushed forward. Lynnhaven River NOW has done more organizing and research before bringing the issue back to the city's attention.
- 4) Has Lynnhaven River NOW been in touch with retailers that may be affected by this change? Yes. Since many large stores work with a bag fee in other cities, the addition of a bag fee in Virginia Beach is an easy switch. Some stores in the area have already removed plastic bag options on their own.

Chair Hines asked the Commissioners to consider if this type of change falls within the Commission's purview, before making a motion to draft a letter of support for the addition of a plastic bag fee.

**Motion:** Moved by Chair Hines to have the Commission draft a letter of support for Lynnhaven River Now's plastic bag fee proposal.

**Vote:** Motion carried — 7 in favor, 4 opposed, 2 abstain.

Secretary Steve Rockefeller will draft a letter of support to be signed at the next meeting.

## New Business

Nothing discussed

## Staff Report

### Budget Review

Business Services Manager Theresa Cummings provided an overview of the department's operating budget, with a focus on the department's expenditures. The presentation explained the difference between the department's controllable (expenditures the department can manage through its business decisions) and uncontrollable (expenditures the department is obligated to pay) expenditures, before diving into a five-year overview of the operating budget (Fiscal Year 21/22 through Fiscal Year 25/26). This review provided Commissioners with a greater understanding of various areas of the department's budget, as well as key changes that influenced each year's budget.

## Q&A/Discussion

- 1) Has next fiscal year's budget been submitted? The proposed Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget is due December 5, 2025. The final budget will be approved by City Council in May 2026.
- 2) Is any part of budget based on earned revenue, and can these areas' fees be increased? Yes, some of the department's budget is based on earned revenue, and the department can/does increase program fees strategically where applicable.

## Placer.ai Overview

Strategic Initiatives Coordinator Brynn DiPaola provided an overview of the department's newest technology platform, Placer.ai. Placer.ai is an all-in-one location intelligence platform that provides accurate and insightful data about physical locations. Through this data, the department can analyze park and facility usage and economic impact. The data included runs from 2018 to present day. Through the anonymized visitor phone location data, Placer.ai enables the department to geofence specific areas and uncover user trends.

The department is already integrating this data into its event planning.

## Q&A/Discussion

- 1) While it's anonymized when sent to the department, can recorded information be datamined to uncover personal visitor information? No.

## Project Status Reports

- Level Green Park has a soft opening scheduled for November 15, 2025, at 11:00am. A community ribbon cutting, with the city's first splashpad will be held this spring or summer.
- City Council gave the department the greenlight to begin working on a \$20 million fundraising campaign for Rudee Park in August. Staff are currently working with a local partner to create the campaign, as well as working with a national fundraising consultant for potential nationwide donors. A conservancy will be developed after the park is complete. The park's groundbreaking is anticipated to occur in two years, with the park opening two years later.
- Staff are still looking at the progressive design build option for VBTrail. There is no federal funding

## Liaison Reports

### Police

LT. Dewberry announced that e-bikes continue to cause issues for the police department. Officers can only uphold the current laws, many that do not include e-bike safety. They await new legislation to come through to guide their actions regarding e-bikes. He reminded the group that a Virginia Beach task force, composed of City Council and consolidated staff members, has been formed to provide information to the Virginia General Assembly. They are also focused on providing educational pamphlets for users and guardians of younger e-bike users.

He also stated some issues with noise complaints in joint business/residential areas.

## Q&A/Discussion:

- 1) Can the city have its own ordinances? Yes, but the state imposes guidelines on how ordinances are written so state legislature is needed to guide city code and ordinance development.

## Police

Foundation Liaison Barbara Duke announced that the annual [Winter Wildlife Festival](#) trip registration opens at 9:00 a.m. on November 15, 2025. This year's event runs January 24 to February 1, 2026, and will include a silent auction to benefit the department's FLOW Camp. Anyone with donations can contact Foundation Liaison Duke. More information can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/523557603592864>.

## ATAC

The 2025 Holiday Lights Bike Night will be held on Thursday, November 13, 2025, from 5:30-8:00 p.m. This event is free and open to the public. <https://beacheventsvb.com/event/holiday-lights-bike-night-2025>

## Director Report

No report provided – Director did not attend the meeting.

## Good & Welfare

Chair Hines requested a future presentation from the operators of Pickleball Virginia Beach.

Chair Hines announced that he will not seek reappointment when his term ends on February 28, 2026. He asked Commissioners to consider filling the Chair position once he is off the Commission. Commissioners can submit their interest to Chair Hines, and a vote will be held for a new Chair at the February 5, 2026, meeting.

## Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Hines called for adjournment. No one opposed. Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

## Attachments (2)

- Presentation: Parks & Recreation Budget Review
- Presentation: Placer.ai Overview