



Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes

Thursday, Oct 2, 2025
3:00-4:00 p.m.
Seatack Recreation Center
141 S Birdneck Rd, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

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- virtual), Alexander Amerine, Tommy Altman, Barrett Lankford, Ben Messer, Clinton Mills Jr., Kathryn Moran, Eugene Towler, David Weiner, Debbie Wiggins

Members Absent

Myra Payne, Stephen Rockefeller (Secretary)

City Staff Present

Ken Chandler, Michael Kirschman, Shirley Deibler, Chad Morris, Shannon Moore, Taryn Buckley-Thiel, Sgt. Bishop, LT. Dewberry, Steve Lambert

Approval of Minutes

The September 4, 2025, meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Correspondence / Public Comment

Lynnhaven River NOW's Public Policy Manager (Dylan Mason) and Community Outreach Manager (Cristin Pullman) presented on their organization's efforts to bring a plastic bag usage fee to the City of Virginia Beach to reduce the community's dependence on and use of plastic bags.

They would like a letter of support for this initiative from the Commission. This topic will be added to the November agenda and Secretary Rockefeller will work on a letter of support after the next meeting.

Q&A/Discussion:

- 1) How does the fee work? If a shopper in the City of Virginia Beach uses a plastic bag (vs. a reusable or paper bag option) at check-out, they will be charged a small fee per bag.

- 2) How is Lynnhaven River NOW funded? The group is funded with federal, state, and local grants.
- 3) Who else in the city supports this initiative? The Resort Advisory Commission, Clean Community Commission, and Open Space Advisory Commission have pledged their support for bringing this initiative to Virginia Beach.

Old Business

ITA Letter of Support

Chair Hines requested that the Commission draft an updated letter of support for the ITA. The Commission must decide what it supports being included in future ITA development. The group debated the merits of economic versus recreational development.

The Planning Commission is currently reviewing and updating the previous plan and will submit a draft plan to City Council for consideration. Ultimately, City Council will make the final decision on how the project will move forward.

Director Kirschman noted that the Commission could support the plan Parks & Recreation drafted a year ago, consider Economic Development's plan once released, or do nothing at this time. The Commission will draft an updated letter of support for the general recreational development of the ITA.

New Business

Nothing discussed.

Staff Reports

VBTrail

Steve Lambert, Active Transportation Planner with P&R's Planning, Design & Development Unit, provided updates on the VBTrail. This 12.6-mile trail has been in discussion since 1981, will run from Newtown Road to the site of the future Rudee Park, and is the eastern terminus of multiple state-area trails.

- Phase 1: Funded, Progressive design with Phase 4
- Phase 2: Currently unfunded
- Phase 3: Currently unfunded
- Phase 4: Funded; Progressive design with Phase 1
- Phase 5: Already complete and being improved.

More information on the trail can be found [here](#).

The trail is estimated to be completed in 2031.

An economic study of the per-dollar value of the trail will be released to the Commission soon.

Q&A/Discussion:

- 1) Has the unhoused population residing in the future VBTrail's location been considered? Yes. For Phase 1, the planning team has made recommendations based on walk-through of the property. A similar walk-through of Phase 2 will happen in the future.
- 2) How will cars be kept off the trail? Safety bollards will be used to keep vehicles off the trail.
- 3) How long will it take to traverse the complete trail by standard bike? Around an hour to an hour and a half.
- 4) Why is the cost so high to build so little? The average cost to build this trail is \$6 million per mile in today's dollar. The cost of building infrastructure is currently high across the country. Additionally, the City does not build the trail; the lowest cost contractors are selected via a bid process.

Liaison Reports

Parks & Recreation Foundation

Foundation President Barbara Duke reminded the Commission that the Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that helps support the Parks & Recreation Department's various initiatives.

The Foundation is currently looking for new board members. Anyone interested in joining or assisting the Foundation can submit their information [here](#).

Director Report

e-Bikes + Safety

The Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) has a sub-committee focused on e-bike safety. This group is currently developing an e-bike safety educational campaign. The campaign and various options to improve user safety will be presented to City Council on October 7, 2025.

Various Updates

- Crime has decreased at Lynnhaven Boat & Beach Facility, with the addition of several safety improvements. All security aspects are in coordination with the City's Police Department. Peak season is winding down, but armed security will be kept on site through the end of the year.
- Department staffing is stabilizing. No services are being impacted by a lack of staff.
- The Department is developing a plan for a new park ranger program. Numerous program set-up options are being considered. City Council will be briefed soon, for potential funding to be included in next year's budget. The Commission will be briefed on the program once it has been included in a future budget.

Q&A/Discussion:

- 1) Could the age requirement for working in the Parks & Recreation Department be lowered to help with staffing? There are only so many Department jobs that this would feasibly work for, so this is not being considered.

- 2) Has the Department considered outsourcing the Sports Management Unit? There is not a viable vendor that could offer the level of service that this Unit requires. *Note: The Unit recently underwent a reorganization to improve services.*

Good & Welfare

Nothing discussed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Hines called for adjournment. No one opposed. Meeting adjourned at 4:49pm.

Attachments (2)

- Presentation: Lynnhaven River Now – Bag Fee
- Presentation: VBTrail Update