



Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes

Thursday, March 5, 2026

3-4 p.m.

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

Call to order

Chair Daniel Edwards called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. A quorum was present.

Roll Call

Members Present

Daniel Edwards (Chair), Kathryn Moran (Secretary), Tommy Altman, Richard Hoehlein, Barrett Lankford, Ben Messer, Clinton Mills Jr., Anwar Miles, Eugene Towler, David Weiner

Members Absent

Alexander Amerine, Myra Payne

City Staff Present

Michael Kirschman, Ken Chandler, Shirley Deibler, Chad Morris, Frank Fentress, Shannon Moore, Taryn Buckley-Thiel, Kara Shoup, LT. Irving Dewberry

Approval of Previous Minutes

The February 5, 2026, meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Correspondence / Public Comment

N/A

Old Business

Share the Air Follow-up Discussion

Chair Edwards reminded the Commission of the letter of support they submitted to City Council for the Share the Air initiative in November 2025. There has been no action by City Council at this time. Before following up with City Council, Chair Edwards asked Director Kirschman to provide his insight into smoke-free signage at park facilities. He would also like to work with staff to submit parallel support for the addition of any smoke-free signage and any related policy additions.

Director Kirschman stated that none of the smoke-free initiatives are enforceable or policy-driven. They are merely suggestions to curb smoking in the park facilities. He noted that signage should reduce smoking in the parks, as most visitors will comply. An example of the signage used in Mecklenburg, North Carolina's park system was displayed. The potential to simply add department signage like Mecklenburg's at select locations was discussed.

Q&A:

- 1) Will Share the Air potentially split the cost of producing department signage instead of utilizing theirs? Most likely no, as they have the signs developed already. There should not be a significant cost to produce signs internally.

New Business

New Vice Chair – Selection/Vote

Chair Edwards reminded the Commission that a Vice Chair is needed. Following a brief discussion, Commissioner Larry Altman made a motion for David Weiner to serve as Vice Chair. Eugene Towler seconded. The full Commission was in favor. Commissioner Weiner was selected as the Commission's new Vice Chair, effective immediately.

2026 Staff Report Topics

Director Michael Kirschman displayed a staff-supplied list of potential staff report topics to be covered throughout 2026. Chair Edwards asked the Commissioners to rank their top five topics and send them to Executive Assistant Taryn Buckley-Thiel. Director Kirschman will organize the topics into a monthly report schedule based on the best timing for the topics to be discussed, and a draft schedule will be brought to the April meeting.

Liaison Reports

Police

Lieutenant Dewberry informed the Commission that the Police are getting ready for the warmer months ahead. He also discussed the earlier (10:00 p.m.) curfew being implemented on March 19, 2026. Parks & Recreation will partner with the Police on this initiative by allowing Police to drop off youth picked up for violating curfew at a to-be-determined recreation center. With Police on-site for security checks and to supervise the youth, this pilot program will improve efficiency by freeing up Police resources (single drop off point for the City) while also improving community relations. He noted that youth with warrants, weapons, drug paraphernalia, etc. will be taken to the police station, not the recreation center.

Director's Report

Director Kirschman provided a general overview of the Parks & Recreation department. This presentation reviewed the department's metrics, budget, random household survey results (every 2 years), successes, and how customer satisfaction is gauged.

Note: A presentation on this year's random household survey results is be provided.

Leadership:

- Michael Kirschman: Director
- Shirley Deibler: Deputy Director

- Chad Morris: Planning, Design, and Development Administrator (PDD) – Build It
- Frank Fentress: Park & Landscape Services Administrator (PLS) – Maintain It
- Shannon Moore: Programming and Operations Administrator (P&O) – Program It
- Theresa Cummings: Business Services Manager – Internal Management

Director Kirschman also discussed the role of the Parks & Recreation Commission and the responsibilities of its Commissioners.

- Serve as an advisory body of the Virginia Beach City Council
- Serve as a liaison between City Council, the City Manager, the Director, and the citizens
- Consult with/advise the City Manager, the Director, and City Council on parks & recreation matters
- Weigh in and endorse actions/policy changes by department
- Advise, Endorse, Take Action

At the conclusion of this presentation, Director Kirschman noted the common characteristics of effective Commissions.

- Tend to have open dialogue with City Council
- Tend to have the trust of City Council, the department, and citizens
- Understand their role and are able to clarify it to others
- Seek understanding prior to taking action or voting on an issue
- Realize their votes are recommendations to City Council for their consideration
- Remain engaged and stay abreast of department events/issues/projects

Chair Edwards stated that the Commissioners should actively seek to see and hear what is happening in their communities. Attending events like City Councilmember's community meetings can help this process.

Q&A:

- 1) If Commissioners have an ideas to share with staff, who should they contact? Ideas can be shared with the appropriate staff members (if known), copying Director Kirschman and Chair Edwards.
- 2) Can the parks by district maps be reshared? Yes, Executive Assistant Buckley-Thiel will share the most recent version of the maps.
- 3) Is the ITA study complete? Planning, not Parks & Recreation, is handling this study with a consultant. It is currently in the works.

Good & Welfare

- 1) Executive Assistant Buckley-Thiel informed the Commission of an update to the City Code for City Council-appointed boards and commissions.
 - Previous: 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.
 - Update: No member shall be absent from more than half of the meeting held with a given calendar year.
- 2) Chair Edwards inquired about nametags for the Commissioners. The full Commission supported his suggestion. Executive Assistant Buckley-Thiel will order nametags and bring them to the next meeting for distribution.
- 3) Chair Edwards asked all Commissioners to let Executive Assistant Buckley-Thiel know in advance if they will be absent from meetings.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Edwards called for adjournment. No one opposed. Meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Attachments (3)

- Smoke-Free Park Signage - Document
- Proposed Staff Reports- 2026
- VBPR Agency Spotlight - Presentation