



Parks & Recreation

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes, November 21, 2024

Committee Members present:

Position #1	Jeff Kelso	✓
Position #2	Mary Weaver	✓
Position #3	Hunter Tibbals	✓
Position #4	Carlisle Harrison	✓

Position #5	Erica Juarez	_____
Position #6	Angel Aguilar	✓
Position #7	Nicole Westing	_____

City Representatives:

Jackie Myers, Council Representative	✓
David McCarty, Council Representative	✓
Brandon Artz, Parks & Recreation, Director	✓

Kelly Schwirse, Parks & Recreation, Admin	_____
Kasia Robbins, Parks & Recreation, Coordinator	_____
Dylan Westfall, Parks & Recreation, Coordinator	_____

Members of the Public:

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 5:30 by Jeff Kelso. Welcome to Mary Weaver as the newest member of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee.

MINUTES

Motion made by Angel Aguilar and seconded by Hunter Tibbals to approve the minutes from the September 12th meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Angel Aguilar and seconded by Jeff Kelso to elect Hunter Tibbals as committee chair effective January 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Regularly scheduled meeting on October 10th was cancelled, to minutes to report.

REPORTS & BUSINESS

Director's Report, presented by Brandon Artz

RECREATION STAFF

- Kasia Robbins has accepted the Recreation Manager position starting in January when she returns from maternity leave
- Previous candidate turned down the offer for Recreation Manager due to family commitments and pay.
- Hiring for an additional Recreation Coordinator that is focused on youth and adult sports, given the department's reliance on sports revenue.
- Rec team has been working well despite being short-staffed and picking up additional responsibilities.



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HERMISTON WELLNESS CENTER (HAWC)

- The last couple meetings have focused on discussions about a potential new aquatic and wellness center. Initially, the committee reviewed the current aquatic center and past programs, assessments, and feasibility studies. The next steps involve identifying potential sites for the facility. Input has been requested from local organizations, including the cities of Umatilla, Stanfield, Echo, the Hermiston School District, and Good Shepherd.
- Press release, initiated this week, has gained traction on social media and received positive feedback. However, funding remains a key challenge.
- The estimated cost of building the center is approximately \$60 million, with significant additional funding required annually for operations and maintenance. The discussions so far have been productive and are generating positive momentum.
- Next meeting will focus on potential contributions and commitments from various entities to move the project forward

CIMMARON PARK

- Cimarron Park project is advancing with GreenPlay preparing design and construction documents and plans to coordinate with Anderson Perry to issue an RFP for a construction firm.
- Naming survey for the park will launch early next year with a survey to the community and local schools to encourage student participation in suggesting names. This community-centered approach mirrors the Horizon Park process.
- After compiling suggestions, the committee will recommend park name to City Council for approval.

FORESTRY GRANT

- An RFP for the urban forest management plan was issued, and Arbor Pro, the preferred firm, has been selected.
- The plan will include a full GIS-based inventory of trees, assessing their condition, and creating a planting and maintenance strategy. This will ensure existing trees are healthy before planting new ones, funded by a \$1 million federal urban forestry grant received last year.
- A tree ordinance is also proposed to promote sustainable tree management, support Tree City USA designation, and guide developers on appropriate tree planting. The ordinance aims to protect existing trees and ensure best practices for new developments, fostering long-term urban forestry sustainability.

RIVERFRONT PARK

- Riverfront Park's Read and Walk Trail is complete, with 19 signs installed by Altrusa International of Hermiston.
- Books for the Read and Walk Trail provided by Hermiston Public Library.
- Carlisle Harrison expressed concerns about river erosion and potential solutions.

HARRISON PARK

- Lights adjusted to go off at 8:00pm.



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- New gazebo, being built by Hermiston Rotary Club is nearly complete.

FOOD POD

- New Food Pod manager, Patrick Hunt, will oversee vendor recruitment and management for the next two to three years. His role includes filling vendor vacancies and ensuring variety and quality within the space. Vendor rules and policies were updated to address past issues and provide clear expectations for both vendors and the manager. Although Patrick had been managing the Food Pod since its inception, the Parks and Rec Department issued an RFP to allow other candidates to apply.
- Additionally, work has started on a 16x40 pavilion for the Food Pod, which will provide shelter for diners. The pavilion is being constructed by Cortez Construction and is expected to be completed soon, with funding from the TRT and Parks Reserve funds.

PICKLEBALL COURTS

- Pickleball courts leveling and grading began in October, with Barton Construction donating time and efforts.
- Project is on track for a summer 2025 opening, with additional grants and donations helping to fund it. Budget: \$670,000 Raised \$690,000
- Work will begin on an agreement between Pickleball Club and HPRD for usage.

GRANT AWARDS

- Recently, two grants were received from The Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation and the Greater Hermiston Community Foundation to fund the purchase of a portable aquatic lift for the pool. This initiative was inspired by the "I Can Swim" program, which provides swim lessons for children with disabilities. While the pool has wheelchair-accessible ramps, it lacked a lift to lower individuals into the water.
- The combined \$11,000 grant will cover the cost of the lift, with additional funds allocated for maintenance and staff training.
- This support reflects the community's commitment to inclusivity, providing valuable assistance to those who need it.
- The I Can Swim program will continue next year, with positive feedback from participants.

PARK PROJECTS

The Parks and Recreation departments current project list:

- Harrison Park - Basketball Courts, Gazebo, Security Cameras, Signage
- Riverfront Park - Read & Walk Trail
- Skatepark - Irrigation & Grass Install
- Theater Sports Park - Pickleball Courts
- Horizon Park - Playground & Basketball Court (Donation!)
- Food Pod - Picnic Pavilion
- Harkenrider Center - Basement and Landscaping
- Greenwood Park - Fence Repair
- HEROS - As needed help on improvements



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- Community Center - Casework
- Downtown Tree Lighting Setup (Volunteer Opportunity!)

These projects are being managed alongside regular park maintenance duties, such as cleanup after events, addressing homeless-related issues, and routine mowing. The department is working to balance these new developments with their day-to-day responsibilities, which has resulted in some projects being prioritized or staged to manage the workload effectively.

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

- Recent events include a successful "Treats on Main" program, despite lower attendance due to other local events, and a Veterans Day breakfast attended by 250 people.
- Rec It Arena event at EOTEC was less successful, likely due to the early timing in November, with plans to hold it in December and January/February 2025.
- Upcoming events include the Christmas Bazaar, Holiday Parade and Tree Lighting on December 5, and the new "Land of Lights" at EO Tech, aiming to make Hermiston a regional Christmas destination.
- The city has leased a synthetic skating rink from Umatilla, which will be used for the next year or two while Umatilla develops a business resource center. The rink will be operated by the recreation and EOTEC staff starting December 6th Friday through Sunday, with admission priced at \$5 for kids and \$7 for adults. Rink features synthetic ice, not real ice, but visitors can use real skates, with rentals available. Final details are still being worked out, with a meeting scheduled to finalize plans.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- Carlisle Harrison and his family attended the ORPA banquet in Sun River, where Carlisle was awarded the Lasting Impact Award. Carlyle's 60 years of dedicated service to the community is being celebrated, and the recognition is an honor for all of his hard work.
- The City Council will recognize Carlyle on Monday, Nov 25 at 7 pm, and all are encouraged to attend. Carlyle's award was praised by the judges, who commented it had the best presentation at the event. A special two-minute video highlighting Carlyle's contributions will be shown, followed by a longer eight-minute version on Monday.

PARKS & RECREATION FOUNDATION

- Exploring the creation of a Hermiston Parks & Recreation Foundation dedicated to supporting the park system, similar to those in other cities.
- Discussions are underway with the Greater Hermiston Community Foundation to establish this fund, which would allow for donations specifically for parks and development, rather than general city funds. This foundation would help ensure parks are maintained and improved for future generations, especially as city funds are limited.
- Further discussions will continue on the structure and management of the foundation, including whether a separate board will be needed.



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PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment

ADJOURNED

Meeting adjourned at 6:31pm
No Meeting in December
Next regular meeting, January 9, 2025 5:30pm

DRAFT