



MINUTES
Richland Parks & Recreation Commission Special Meeting
Wednesday, July 9, 2025
Richland City Hall ~ Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard

Parks & Recreation Commission Special Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

Welcome and Roll Call

Pledge of Allegiance

Attendance: Chair Mason	Present
Vice-Chair Gutierrez	Absent
Commissioner Buelt	Absent
Commissioner Jones	Present
Commissioner Hodges	Present
Commissioner Watrous	Present
Commissioner Thompson	Present
Commissioner Thallapally	Absent
Commissioner Kreis	Present

Also present were Staff Liaison/Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite, Recreation Manager Piper, and Administrative Assistant Christian.

Approval of Agenda

COMMISSIONER WATROUS MOVED AND COMMISSIONER KREIS SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE JULY 9, 2025 PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of the June 12, 2025, Parks & Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes and the June 26, 2025, Parks & Recreation Commission Regular Workshop Meeting Minutes.

COMMISSIONER JONES MOVED AND COMMISSIONER HODGES SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE JUNE 12, 2025 PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AND THE JUNE 26, 2025 PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Recreation Report

Recreation Report, presented by Recreation Manager Piper, highlighted successful

summer programs, including swimming lessons and the well-attended Cool Desert.

Nights event. She then previewed the “See Through Slam” event, noting it will result in road closures from Friday evening through Sunday. Lastly, Recreation Manager Piper announced the upcoming retirement of key staff member “Stan” and shared that the position will be posted soon.

Parks & Public Facilities Report

Parks & Public Facilities Report, presented by Director Waite, reflected on the busy July 4th weekend. He reported effective park operations and improved maintenance, including adding more trash receptacles. However, incidents of vandalism were noted at Columbia Point Marina Park, which will necessitate repairs.

Director Waite then provided updates on budget preparations and current park projects, such as resurfacing at Columbia Playfield. Tennis court upgrades at Leslie Groves Park, expected to span two construction seasons due to weather constraints, with anticipated winter closures.

Public Comments

None.

Presentations

2. Richland National Little League Presentation

Eric Christensen, Vice President, and Don Robbins, President of Richland National Little League, were in attendance. Christiansen and Robbins’ presentation highlighted the following:

- The league, active since 1951, fielded 375 youth baseball players across 30 teams this year - a slight decline from 400 last year.
- Notable successes include the 11-year-olds' recent state tournament win and consistent Little League World Series representation.
- The newly launched softball program had 96 girls participate across eight teams. This offers a more inclusive, community-oriented alternative to highly competitive tournament play.
- Facility demand is growing, especially at Badger Mountain Community Park and Clay Bell Park, prompting the league to plan for expansion to meet future field needs.

Artemis Tree Presentation

Pauline Schafer from the REACH Museum stated that Richland will plant a sycamore tree from seeds that orbited the moon during NASA’s Artemis 1 mission, symbolizing local

heritage in science and innovation, and honoring astronaut Kayla Barron. While Richland High School was the original planting site, other options now include Howard Amon Park.

or John Dam Plaza. The project includes engaging the community through educational programs and citizen science, such as tree growth monitoring and data collection. The tree is currently in nursery care and is expected to be planted by next spring, accompanied by educational signage.

New Business

3. South Orchard Park Land Exchange

Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite stated the Parks & Public Facilities Department is seeking the Parks & Recreation Commission's recommendation to declare the South Orchard Park parcel surplus, on the condition of a land exchange with Nor Am Investment, LLC. The exchange would secure a replacement parcel of equal or greater size in the Badger Mountain Subarea, specifically in an area lacking adequate public park access.

Originally planned to complement a future school site, the South Orchard Park parcel lost strategic value after the school project was canceled. A private HOA park began construction nearby, creating potential redundancy.

Under Richland Municipal Code Chapter 3.06, the City Council must declare any park property surplus before selling, leasing, or exchanging it, and the Commission serves in an advisory role for such actions. The proposed replacement site, identified in partnership with Nor Am, would better serve current neighborhood development, offering improved access, better spacing from existing amenities, and long-term suitability for park development in the South Badger Subarea.

COMMISSIONER JONES MOVED AND COMMISSIONER KREIS SECONDED THE MOTION FOR THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION TO RECOMMEND TO THE RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL THAT THE SOUTH ORCHARD PARK PARCEL BE DECLARED SURPLUS TO THE CITY'S PRESENT AND FUTURE PARK NEEDS. THE RECOMMENDATION IS CONTINGENT UPON A LAND EXCHANGE WITH NOR AM INVESTMENT, LLC FOR A PROPOSED GREATER IN SIZE, LOCATED WITHIN THE BADGER MOUNTAIN SUBAREA. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

4. Richland Park Hours Update

Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite provided an update on the proposal to change park hours. Director Waite explained that the park hours currently operate from 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. The proposed change is to consider shifting to 10:00 p.m. closing times, citing regional compatibility and the potential for decreased unwanted nighttime behavior due to lighting and staffing constraints. New signage timelines and cost estimates will be shared as a follow-up. The formal ordinance change will be proposed to the City Council

by August or September, subject to the Council's approval.

COMMISSIONER WATROUS MOVED, AND COMMISSIONER JONES SECONDED THE MOTION TO RECOMMEND THE RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL TO REVISE THE STANDARD PARK HOURS FROM 5:00 A.M. to 11:00 P.M. to 5:00 A.M. TO 10:00 P.M. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Adjournment

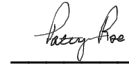
Chair Mason adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

APPROVED:



Samantha Mason, Parks & Recreation Commission Chair

PREPARED BY:



Patty Roe, Administrative Assistant II