



MINUTES

Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting
Wednesday, January 8, 2026
Richland City Hall ~ Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard

Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

Welcome and Roll Call

Chair Gutierrez welcomed those in the audience and expressed appreciation for their attendance.

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

Also present were Recreation Manager Piper, Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite, and Administrative Assistant II Roe.

Approval of Agenda

1. Approval of the January 8, 2026, Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Agenda

COMMISSIONER BUELT MOVED, AND COMMISSIONER WATROUS SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 8, 2026, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Presentations

2. Meals on Wheels Program Update

Representatives from Generational Care (formerly Senior Life Resources Northwest) provided an overview of the Mid-Columbia Meals on Wheels program and its operations at the Richland Community Center. The program utilizes the Community Center kitchen and dining space to prepare and serve weekday lunch meals to seniors aged 60 and older.

In the past year, 278,451 meals were served to 2,554 seniors throughout Benton and Franklin counties. Survey results shared indicated that 97% of home-delivery clients report eating a better variety of food, 96% report the meals help them remain independent in their homes, and 95% of dining site participants report staying socially connected through meal participation.

The presentation emphasized that no individual age 60 or older is denied service because of an inability to donate. Commissioners were informed that the Richland Community Center plays a vital role in supporting meal service delivery by providing a climate-controlled, accessible facility that supports both nutrition and social connection within the community. The organization also shared information regarding its recent rebranding to Generational Care and its continued commitment to serving older adults while strengthening intergenerational connections.

Public Comments

None.

Approval of Minutes

3. Approval of the December 11, 2025, Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting and Special Workshop Minutes

COMMISSIONER MASON MOVED, AND COMMISSIONER THOMPSON SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 11, 2025, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING AND SPECIAL WORKSHOP MINUTES. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Recreation Report

Recreation Manager Piper provided updates on current recreation programs and upcoming events. She reported participation trends, highlighted successful classes, outlined seasonal program offerings, shared updates on facility usage, and noted staffing adjustments. Piper also discussed community feedback and plans for expanding youth and senior programming in the coming months. Programs and events mentioned: Winter Wonderland 2025 and 2026 prep, youth basketball program, and volunteer opportunities.

Parks & Public Facilities Report

Director Waite provided updates on parks operations and facilities, including recent project completions, ongoing maintenance priorities, and upcoming initiatives. Projects and updates mentioned: Park Hour ordinance and signage; Bateman Island causeway removal began on December 23, 2025; Parks and Recreation Commission 2026 goals; Leslie Groves Tennis Courts construction on pause due to weather. PROS Plan update, and South Badger land exchange.

Adjournment

Chair Gutierrez adjourned the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

APPROVED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maria Gutierrez', written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and extends to the right of the line.

Vice Chair

Maria Gutierrez, Commission Chair

PREPARED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patty Roe', written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and extends to the right of the line.

Patty Roe, Administrative Assistant II