



MINUTES
Richland Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting
Thursday, February 12, 2026
Richland City Hall ~ Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard

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

Welcome

Pledge of Allegiance

Attendance:

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

Also present were the Council Liaison Holten, Liaison/Parks and Public Facilities Director Waite, Parks and Public Facilities Project Manager Wieber, and Administrative Assistant II Roe.

Approval of Agenda: (Approved by Motion)

1. Approval of the February 12, 2026 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Agenda.

COMMISSIONER JONES MOVED AND COMMISSIONER KRIES SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 12, 2026, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA. MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

Presentations:

2. Purple Sage Riders Park Partnership Grant Report

Dawn Kammernzind presented a summary of the 2024 Park Partnership between the City of Richland and the Purple Sage Riders, a chapter of the Washington State Back Country Horsemen, which resulted in several improvements to equestrian facilities through volunteer labor and donated resources. Projects completed included installation of a 50–60 foot round pen constructed with Noble panels set in concrete, construction of a ladder box obstacle using pressure-treated lumber anchored with

rebar, creation of a stair-step obstacle built from railroad ties on a natural slope, installation of two 12-foot swing-arm gates at the Colyak Bow Hunters parking lot, and placement of four new signs to guide park users. The volunteer group contributed labor and materials, demonstrating strong community partnership and support for equestrian recreation and trail use within the park system.

3. 2026 Park Partnership Grant Program

Director Waite provided an overview of the City of Richland's Park Partnership Program, which offers matching grants to community groups for enhancing city parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational facilities. It highlights the program's goals, eligibility requirements, and the application timeline, while encouraging participation in the 2026 funding cycle.

Waite explained that projects must provide year-round public benefits, be self-contained, and require no City labor, materials, or ongoing maintenance. Applications are due by March 2, 2026, and require a mandatory pre-application meeting and a presentation to the Parks & Recreation Commission. Projects must be completed within one year of the contract.

And for 2026, the Park Partnership Program will have two grant windows—January–March and September–November—with flexible funding allocation based on project merit, readiness, and available funds. Starting in 2027, the program will shift to a single grant window in the fall.

Public Comments:

None.

Approval of Minutes: (Approved by Motion)

4. Approve the Minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting and Workshop held on January 8, 2026, and January 22, 2026.

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON MOVED, AND COMMISSIONER MASON SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 8, 2026, AND JANUARY 22, 2026, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING AND WORKSHOP MINUTES. MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

New Business:

5. Little Badger Trail Recreation and Conservation Office Grant Application

Staff and representative David Comstock from Friends of Badger Mountain presented a proposed grant application to the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office for improvements to the Little Badger Mountain Trail system. The project aimed to advance trail development in line with the Trail Master Plan, enhance safe public access, and support conservation goals. The Commission's recommendation was requested before the City Council's review and authorization to submit the grant.

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON MOVED AND COMMISSIONER BUELT SECONDED THE MOTION TO RECOMMEND THAT CITY COUNCIL APPROVE SUBMISSION OF THE LITTLE BADGER TRAIL RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE GRANT APPLICATION. MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

6. Parks and Recreation Commission 2026 Goals

The Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed and finalized the Calendar Year 2026 goals. These goals, refined through prior discussion with staff at the January 22 workshop, provide direction for Commission activities, policy recommendations, and engagement efforts, supporting the City's Strategic Plan and priorities for community safety, mobility, natural resource protection, fiscal responsibility, and recreational opportunities. Revision to P&RC GOAL 1, OBJECTIVE 2:

Each commissioner will attend a *minimum of four (4) parks* and recreation-related events in a year to increase opportunities for community engagement, expand perspective, and provide context for the work of PRC.

COMMISSIONER MASON MOVED AND COMMISSIONER KREIS SECONDED THE MOTION TO ADOPT THE 2026 PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION GOALS AS REVISED. MOTION APPROVED 8-0.

Council Liaison Report:

Council Liaison Holten introduced herself as the new Council Liaison to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Recreation Report:

Director Waite provided an update on current Recreation programs and upcoming activities. Youth Volleyball is returning for grades 5–8, with practices twice weekly and Saturday games at Enterprise Middle School, along with a 3rd/4th-grade “Minis” developmental program. Youth Basketball is halfway through the season, with 656 participants on 59 teams in grades 1–6. Team Picture Day was successfully held, and the staff continues to ensure smooth operations.

Seasonal staffing is supporting programs, including 38 trained basketball officials. Aquatics Lifeguard positions for the 2026 pool season have been posted, and preparations are underway for another strong summer at George Prout Pool.

Sports field rentals open March 1, and 25 softball tournaments are already scheduled for the 2026 season. Recent events include the Special Olympics Polar Plunge on February 7. Staff is actively preparing for Bunny Brunch on March 28, 2026, at the Richland Community Center and Howard Amon Park, one of the City's signature spring events.

The Recreation Team welcomed Michelle Haffner as the new Recreation Coordinator on February 9, who will lead major City events. STAR Award nominations through the Richland Arts Commission remain open through February 26.

Parks & Public Facilities Report:

Project Manager Donald Wieber introduced himself as the new project manager for Parks and Public Facilities.

Director Waite provided updates on several Parks and Public Facilities projects. The Bateman Island causeway removal project is near completion, with a celebration planned at the end of April to coincide with the salmon run. He emphasized the importance of removing the causeway. Additional updates included the Columbia Point Golf Course lease, Leslie Groves tennis courts, the land exchange at South Badger Mountain, and improvements to the Columbia Point Marina viewing platform, which is near completion. Updates were also shared on the Columbia Playfield parking lot and other ongoing facilities projects.

Adjournment


The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 PM

APPROVED:



Maria Gutierrez, Parks & Recreation Commission Chair

PREPARED BY:



Patty Roe, Administrative Assistant II