



City of Auburn
Recreation Department
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Parks and Recreation Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes

Wednesday June 11th, 2025, at 4:30pm (West Pitch Park & Festival Plaza)

Members Present: Haley Warden, Philip Savignano, Julia Bergeron-Smith, Corey Kinnan, Jeremy Gatcomb, Sara Parker and Dawna LaBonte

Excused Absences: Tim Cougle and Misty Edgecomb

Unexcused Absences: Elisabeth Collier

Approval of absences Phil/Corey; all in favor unanimous

Meeting Minutes: May minutes approved Phil/Julia all in favor unanimous

Department Update presented by Dawna and Sara:

Programming Updates

- **Summer Camp and PAL Programs:** Our Summer Camp has a new home at Auburn Middle School (AMS) this year. Sara has been working closely with Principal Ben Wilson to prepare the areas for our use, and we anticipate this will be a positive change for the program. We're excited to announce that we currently have 240 participants, meaning both our camper and staff capacities are full! For our PAL Summer Programs, hours will be adjusted to 12 PM - 4 PM starting June 18th and running through June 30th. The program will then be closed for the first week of July. We will resume operations to provide lunches to PAL participants from July 7th to August 1st.
- **Afterschool Program Suspension:** Unfortunately, we've had to discontinue the Afterschool Program due to minibus capacity limitations, which restricts us to 12-14 students. This limitation prevents the program from generating the necessary revenue to cover staff requirements.

We are actively exploring solutions with Sarah Levine, the ASD afterschool director, to provide care for students on the Fairview waitlist. We are investigating whether the school can transport these students to the recreation center, which would eliminate one bus stop and allow our staff to pick up more children. Our goal is to double our numbers from 12 to 24 students through this initiative.

Building/Field Updates

- **PAL Move updates:** Our PAL staff will begin the move into the new facility in phases, starting in late July and continuing into mid-August. We anticipate vacating the current facility on August 1st, with programming in the new space expected to begin on August 25th. A gradual move-in process is planned throughout July.
- **Staffing Concerns:** Staffing the PAL facility remains a significant concern. The proposed limited part-time budget for FY26 (while not yet finalized) may compromise our ability to safely offer year-round programming. We require further clarification from the Council regarding their vision and expectations for programming at this location.

Closure Reminders: The Main Office will be closed for Juneteenth, Thursday June 19th, 2025.

Budget Updates: The budget was approved during the second reading on May 19th. This new budget will take effect on July 1st, 2025, and run through June 30th, 2026.

The group then completed a tour of the West Pitch Park trail, then the group walked to river walk to Festival Plaza to view the Plaza and discuss programs that happen at the park.

SWOT Notes from Park Tour

Riverwalk, and Festival Plaza

Strengths:

- Well paved, level pathway
- Great view of river/Lewiston
- Storyboard for youth/groups
- Events regularly happen here! Band is every Wednesday movie in the park, tree lighting, New Years, Blues and Brews, National night out, Fright Fest, etc.
- It's a free rental space

Weaknesses:

- Behind the plaza needs to be cleaned up
- ARPA funds not available for the multiple redesigns that exist
- Noises of bridge/road can make it hard to hold certain types of events here
- Parking can be difficult if road is closed/garage access

Opportunities:

- Open space can be used for anything
- Can lean into the existing plans if funding becomes available

Threats:

- Flood area!!
- No music allowed here until the city figures out paying for licensing

West Pitch Park

Strengths:

- Neat view of the cities
- Great spot to put off the fireworks
- Signage describing the area

Weaknesses:

- Not really a park

Opportunities:

- Could update the benches, platform, and fencing to be sturdier/aesthetically appealing
- The view could be even better if Lewiston added mural/lighting to mill building

Threats:

- Homelessness encampment – potentially unsafe for those living here and visiting this space

Meeting was adjourned, Phil/Haley all in favor unanimous.

Next meeting will be held Wednesday July 9th, 2025, at 4:30PM at Mount Apatite