



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

Wednesday May 14, 2025, at 4:30pm (Lake Auburn Community Center)

Members Present: Misty Edgecomb, Philip Savignano, Julia Bergeron-Smith, Corey Kinnan and Tim Cogle

Absent: Haley Warden, Elisabeth Collier, - Staff: Sara Parker, Jeremy Gatcomb & Dawna LaBonte
Excuse absences Tim/Corey; all in favor unanimous

Meeting Minutes: April minutes approved Tim/Corey all in favor unanimous

Department Update presented by Misty due to Dawna's absence:

- **Revenue Sustainability:** City Council and leadership have directed us to reevaluate our program offerings. Moving forward, programs must generate sufficient revenue to cover 35% of staff salaries. This necessitates a potential 35% increase in program costs, which may create a financial barrier for some participants.
- **Senior Program Support:** We appreciate the PRAB's advocacy for our Senior programs during the last Council meeting.
- **Afterschool Program Suspension:** Unfortunately, we have been instructed to discontinue the Afterschool program due to minibus capacity limitations (12-14 students). This restriction prevents the program from generating the necessary revenue to meet staff coverage requirements.
 - This program is a crucial resource for many families, with a consistent waitlist since 2021. Parents have expressed a willingness to pay increased fees to sustain the program. Despite this, City Management has resisted this option. Your support in advocating for the continuation of this vital program would be greatly appreciated.

Building/Field Updates

- **PAL Transition:** PAL will officially vacate the facility on August 1st. Programming in the space is anticipated to begin on August 25th. We hope to begin a gradual move-in process during 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 Memorial Day on Monday, May 26, 2025

Budget Updates: The next City Council meeting regarding the budget is scheduled for Monday, May 19th. Your attendance or online viewing is encouraged.

Discussion of Department Update:

- The existing after school program had more than enough people interested in keeping it going and supplements/offsets the schools' programs which are full. It was noted that the Rec Departments problem is tied to the school departments problem of not enough spots to meet the demand. The group wondered if the schools' limited programming space is due to funding or staffing needs.
- PAL staffing: The group wondered if this building must generate 35 percent from programming, even though it's serving the most in need/lowest income community groups? This is a brand-new building that should be well utilized and staffed but there's not enough staffing or resources with the current budget. If the Rec Department needs to generate more revenue from the City Council, maybe it will make sense for another group to run this programming who does not have this revenue stipulation, such as the Boys and Girls Club. The group discussed that the City Government needs to reread the mission statement of the Rec Program because, as it stands, the proposed revenue requirements and heavy oversight of the budget does not align with the Rec's mission to serve all members of the community. Corey noted that the government is not meant to be run as a business. The Rec programs are services taxpayers would like their taxes to go towards so to keep programming affordable. The group is concerned that city government is micromanaging what Dawna is doing as Director, when she should be responsible for making decisions that are best for her staff and programs. One member noted that it seems as though the Council is doing this to all City Departments by going line by line over budgets and programming when this wasn't the case in the past.

Misty to going to write a statement that may be read or included at the upcoming May 19th Council Meeting.

The group then completed a tour of the Auburn Community Center and surrounding trails.

SWOT Notes from Park Tour

Strengths:

- The grounds are well used by residents for riding bikes and dog walking.
- Network of mountain bike trails also used by snowmobilers in the winter.
- The community center space has a trail that is attached to Spring Road which offers a nice trail and parking at each end.
- City's tree nursery is here.
- Dog bags and trash station.
- Will be replacing the pink bridge soon.

Weaknesses:

- The ground is squishy after rain and less useable/able to hold a structure like a gazebo.
- Needs non-plastic outhouse and covered pavilion.
- Used to have clean beach sand and a light for the volleyball which meant lots of kids used to play in the evening. They no longer do since the light was removed.
- Needs additional signage for where the trails go. The best signage that's there wasn't done by the city.

Opportunities:

- Kiosk would benefit from a quality map of space and rules about the parks.
- Better marketing to city residents about this offer of this park.
- Signage at either parking area about additional parking. QR code map for

- New sign for the driveway - hard to read so people driving by don't know what this space is.
- The kiosk used to have information like use of space/activities. We recommend adding this back to the kiosk and including trail maps
- The main trail could include a storyboard about the old fancy hotel and what happened with the fire.
- Could add Christmas trees to the nursery. add sign or display that describes how the nursery is used/what's in it. (Professional photos and display)
- What would residents want instead of volleyball court? Pickleball court or something else. Reach out to the locals to ask! Could we put a pavilion there and hold small events.
- There is existing water infrastructure for rinsing kids and dogs by the volleyball court that could be tapped into again for the same or different purposes.
- Bring charcoal grills back to the park, especially if the volleyball is converted to a covered pavilion.

Threats:

- Would marketing this space to more Auburn residents be a positive thing for the local neighbors/community members? Would want to find out about any sort of marketing campaign.
- Is this even a city park? Not on the list...
- Lack of distinction between what is city property and what is private property. This makes it harder to know how to appropriately plan for updates and market the park.

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

Next meeting will be held Wednesday June 11th, 2025, at 4:30PM, Location