



**CITY OF ALBERT LEA
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD**

*July 2026 Meeting
7/20/2026, 5:30 pm
Edgewater Bay Pavilion*

1. CALL TO ORDER:
 - Roll Call
 - Adopt Agenda
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
 - June 15, 2026 Meeting Minutes
3. PUBLIC ITEMS:
4. OLD BUSINESS:
5. NEW BUSINESS:
 - Support of disposal of Doreda Park parcel (108 Giles Place) – City Manager Ian Rigg
 - Review and comment on Strategic Plan – City Manager Ian Rigg
6. STAFF REPORT DISCUSSION:
7. BOARD MEMBER ITEMS:
8. ADJOURNMENT:

MISSION STATEMENT

“To provide quality recreational opportunities and to plan, acquire, develop and maintain attractive and safe parks and facilities that enhance the quality of life in the community of Albert Lea.”

**PARKS & RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

June 15, 2026 5:30 pm
City Hall – Rm 109

Members Present:

Wende Taylor
Therese Salazar
Whitney Sauer
Tom Jones
Ted Herman (ex-officio)

Members Absent:

Amy Leach
Kent Rahn
Joe Staloch

Staff in Attendance:

Ryan Hajek, Assistant Director of Public Works
Ben Bangert, Parks Superintendent
Dani Bakken, Recreation Coordinator
Afton Wacholz, Recreation Administrative Assistant

Others in Attendance:

Jill Bangert

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Wende Taylor at 5:30pm.

Adopt Agenda:

Tom Jones made the motion to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting and Therese Salazar seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 4-0. Motion declared passed.

Approval of the Minutes:

Whitney Sauer made the motion to approve the minutes from the May 18, 2026 meeting and Wende Taylor seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 4-0. Motion declared passed.

Public Items:

Don Blake and Jerry Munson returned to present to the board on updates from the Eddie Cochran statue committee. Don shared additional information on Eddie's history with Albert Lea. Don reported that the hope is to do the unveiling of the statue at the 2027 Eddie Cochran weekend. The statue would be roughly 800-900 lbs. Last month Jerry presented to the board and the board took action on recommending that the committee look at Frank Hall Park as the location of the statue. Since last month's meeting, Don and the committee have further discussed it's location and also met with the mayor for additional options for the statue to be placed uptown.

Don would like for the board to consider the new location idea on the corner of Broadway and Marion Ross St, directly north of where the Marion Ross statue is currently located. There is currently a kiosk in that area which could stay but a flower pot would need to be relocated. Staff are unsure of the utilities that would be under the sidewalk in that spot, so further investigation into that would need to take place.

Therese Salazar made the motion to recommend to the City Council the approval of placing the statue at the newly present location pending any issues with underlying utilities. Tom Jones seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 4-0. Motion declared passed.

Old Business Items:

Bike Shelter – Ryan shared that the construction is underway.

Pickleball Courts – Ryan will be in contact with the pickleball group as there will be some court work being done to fill the larger cracks.

Sondergaard Park – There has been some cleaning issues at the play park building due to not being used as a main Rec program building. This location has been busy this summer and Rec staff look to continue to use this location due to its access to the surrounding neighborhoods. Parks would like to explore renovating the two separate bathrooms to make one large bathroom at this play park building to make things more accessible. Ryan also discussed the history of this building potentially serving as a storm shelter for the nearby mobile home community. Ryan will be contacting Jeff Laskowske for further discussion but these potential upgrades would also benefit this additional use.

Therese Salazar made the motion to recommend that City staff pursue renovations to the Sondergaard play park building making the two bathrooms into one larger bathroom that meets ADA standards. Whitney Sauer seconded the said motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 4-0. Motion declared passed.

New Business Items:

None

Staff Report Discussion:

None

Staff Updates:

None

Board Member Items:

Therese Salazar – Inquired about the Bridge St dock. Ryan shared that there are still plans for a bench on the shore, solar lights and cleats for boat tie down, as well as longer poles for when the water rises since it is a floating dock. She also asked how the sales tax situation would affect the Songbird Trail progress.

Whitney Sauer – Stated that the picnic tables at the boathouse could use a fresh coat of paint. She would also like to thank Parks and Recreation for their hard work. She loves seeing the progress on the items that the board discussion and acts on.

Adjournment: Whitney Sauer made a motion to adjourn the Park Board meeting and Tom Jones seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 4-0. Motion declared passed. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Afton Wacholz
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Secretary

Approved:

Wende Taylor
Park & Recreation Advisory Board Vice-Chair

July Parks and Recreation Department Updates from Staff

Recreation: Report provided by Afton Wacholz and Dani Bakken;

- Neighborhood Parks will end on Thursday, July 30. Total individual visits this season:
 - Academy: 140
 - Lakeview: 324
 - Sondergaard: 265
 - Valley: 347
 - Valley, Academy, Lakeview and Sondergaard parks are open Monday-Thursday 9 am-4 pm.
 - There is a field trip coming up on Friday, July 24 to the History Center of Freeborn County from 11a-1p. You must ride the bus from a neighborhood park to attend. Registration is required by July 20th, either online or by calling the Recreation Office at 507-377-4370.
- Movie in the Park will be held on Friday, July 17 at the Aquatic Center. The movie Finding Dory was shown. The Albert Lea Figure Skating Club sold concessions, including popcorn and ice cream. The next movie will be on August 14 and we will be showing Zootopia at the Edgewater Bandshell.
- Archery Tag is held every Tuesday and has been well received. We have an average of about 10 kids come each week.
- Teen Night is held on Thursdays at Southwest Play park building. We have an average of 4 kids that come each week. Upcoming teen takeover events:
 - The boathouse at Brookside landing - Thursday July 16, 2026 5-7p
 - Aquatic Center- Thursday, July 23 6-8p
- Activities at Snyder Fields and the play park fields are winding down for the season. All in all the weather cooperated for our user groups this season.
- There are a few garden plots available for rent at the Brookside gardens.
- There are a few dock permits on Fountain Lake still available for rent for the 2026 season. List of available dock spaces is at the Recreation Office.

Parks: Report provided by Ryan Hajek and Ben Bangert;

- Pickleball courts had repairs to cracks and surface for \$6500. Had all new nets installed in June.
- Bridge Ave Dock- Purchased six additional/ longer poles for stabilization. Will replace temporary poles with these.
- Bike Shelter project is moving along. Awaiting bench brackets, electrical, and signage.
- Continued maintenance with mowing, tree trimming and removals, and trash collection, and weed eating.
- Watering plants, landscape beds, Front Street Stormwater basin trees, 300 block seeding area regularly, and boulevard trees when able.
- Concrete pads added to New Denmark Park, Katherine Island, Bridge Ave Dock area, and Edgewater Park- Inclusive Playground for benches, trash cans, tables and bike racks.
- Rich Murray memorial donation of Gaga Ball Pitt and four person swing set to Shoreland Heights Park in progress.
- Replacement Ford F-350 Forman truck and JD 1585 mower with snowblower received in July.

- Surveillance camera for Splash Pad Bathrooms installed, additional locks for electric boxes, No Loitering, and building closes at 10 p.m. decals added.
- Collecting bids for roof repair at Valley Park from Rightway Roofing and Young Construction. Rubber roof has leaks and improper drainage.
- Edgewater Open Pavilion- Finalizing documents for Dual Fireplace repair project from Ultimate Concrete and Masonry. To begin later in July...

City Arena: Report provided by Afton Wacholz and Josh Heilman;

- Facility updates –
 - See Facilities Project Update below
- Events -
 - Summer hockey continues to keep the arena busy Monday-Thursday each week. The HS girls' team is skating 3 times per week and the HS boys' team is skating 2 times per week. Game 7 Industries out of Mankato as well as Pre Scan Hockey Development ran by an Albert Lea Alumni are skating multiple times per week.
 - North Star Pro Wrestling event will be held in the Nystrom dry floor area on Saturday, July 18. A flea Market will be held from 12-4p and the wrestling event will take place in the evening. Staff are preparing the facility for this event as Nystrom ice was taken off, with the assistance of the Parks Department, a couple of weeks ago.
- Other events –
 - Weekday public skate and stick and puck calendar can be found on our website or Facebook page.
 - June 10-July 30 there will be stick and puck (2:30-3:30p) and open freestyle figure skating (10:30-11:30a) every Wednesday, as well as public skate (10-11:30a) every Thursday. The attendance for all of these programs has been great so far!

Aquatic Center: Report provided by staff;

- See programming information under Recreation update.
- Upcoming events:
 - Teen Night – Thursday, July 23 6-8p for ages 12-18. There will be no evening swim.
 - Veteran's Day special- Sunday, July 26, every veteran gets in free with a paid admission.
 - Water walking every Sunday evening from 7-8 p.m. \$2 admission at the door.
 - Lunchtime lap swim every Tuesday and Thursday from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.. \$2 admission at the door.

Senior Center: Report provided by Dani Bakken;

- Trips -
 - Shrine of the Grotto day trip will be July 23. Registration deadline is July 13th.
- Programs/Events –
 - Coffee with a cop – August 5 at 9:30 a.m.

Marion Ross Theater: Report provided by Afton Wacholz;

- Facility Updates –

- See Rec facilities update below.
- Upcoming events –
 - ACT completed a successful kids theater camp!

Other: Report provided by Cathy Malakowsky;

Songbird Trail

- The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission recently designated the Songbird Trail as a regional trail, paving the way for future grant funding. The planned 50-mile trail along a former rail corridor will connect Albert Lea to near Waterville, linking the Blazing Star and Sakatah Singing Hills state trails. Freeborn County, the City of Albert Lea and Waseca County continue to work together to develop the trail in phases as funding becomes available.

With the Freeborn County Board accepting the low bid of \$2.2 million at its July 6 meeting, construction of the first segments could begin in August this year:

- Building the trail from Fountain Street to Shoff Park on the east side of Minnesota Highway 13 and from Sunset Street to 220th Street (County Road 74) on the west side of the highway.
- Rehabbing 4 former railroad bridges for pedestrian use.

The city and county have already received \$1.1 million in federal and state grants for these initial segments, with the city and county splitting the remaining cost.

Senior Center

The most recent estimate for remodeling part of Jim and Dude's for relocating the Senior Center is \$515,000. With contingency and architectural fees, the estimates reach nearly \$580,000. At its July 13 work session, the City Council directed staff to seek architectural recommendations for cutting costs; start lease negotiations with Jim and Dude's; develop a fund-raising goal with Senior Center members; and return to the Council in the near future for discussion of the long-term cost of remodeling, financing and leasing for the proposed relocation.

Referendum Project Updates

City Arena

Lobby and office area

- Staff are continuing work on furniture for the skate office, new lobby and Rec office.

Refrigeration and Colstrup Arena

- Colstrup Rink held its first skate on June 29, after being shut down for construction since March 2025.

- The project is getting closer to completion, however there is still work being done on the well and new issues have popped up with the condenser due to build up from the water.

Aquatic Center

- The only project item left to complete is the new counter at the ticket building. The counter that was built and put in originally has issues with the welded joint lines.

Marion Ross Theater

- Staff are working on finalizing new window lights for the front arched windows of the lobby.

**** 2026 Top 5 Project Updates:**

Developing the Songbird Trail – see update by Cathy Malakowsky

Completing the Miracle Field – no update

Mini Golf Course – no update

City Beach marina – no update

Security Cameras for Parks and Facilities – no update

Park and Recreation Advisory Board Agenda Items
Monday, July 20, 2026

Agenda Item Summary:

Potential Disposal of 108 Giles – Doreda Park

Review the attached draft RFP. The City Manager will present information as it relates to private ownership and in large part the Council's idea of selling/disposing the property. The City Managers would appreciate in either this meeting or the following on August 17th the Park Board's expressed support or concerns in the form of a recommendation or communication to the Council. The RFP shows what the intent or action item for their review and that is simply adding a taxable lawn to neighboring properties that could potentially clear up zoning issues, create small building improvements and more all while not changing the visual aesthetic of the neighborhood. City Manager and Council have expressed they do not see a challenge in continuing access to public play spaces as there are 3 in no less than 3 blocks away west, east or south of the park space.

Review and Discussion of Strategic Plan

Review the attached draft Strategic Plan. The City Manager will present information as it relates to the Strategic Plan. The City Manager would appreciate in either this meeting or the following on August 17th the Park Board's expressed support or concerns in the form of a recommendation or communication to the Council. We are asking all boards and commissions to have a chance to review the plan and provide feedback to the Council. There is no expectation of any significant changes or additions to the plan, this is more a chance to express any concerns or support.



Request for Proposals:

Sale of Property –
Giles Greenspace

SECTION 1 PROJECT SUMMARY

The City of Albert Lea ("City") is seeking proposals ("Proposals") from neighboring properties on the sale and lot combination of a limited use greenspace.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

108 Giles Place Please refer to the attached list of property groups in Exhibit A.

RESTRICTED COVENINCE

Excluding foot pathways, plantings of natural flowers, pollinator gardens, trees and bushes all but the south, east and west five feet (5') of the parcels shall remain lawn space free of fencings accessory buildings, and other permeant developments creating hardscape or structures.

ASKING PRICE

City has not set a minimum purchase price and will determine the award of a proposal based on the quality of the proposal and the improvement it brings to the neighborhood. Refer to Section 6.

SECTION 2 PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

To evaluate and select the appropriate buyer, the city is evaluating proposals based on the following

1. Description of the intended use and its impact to the:

- Neighborhood aesthetics
- Tax base
- Any safety concerns
- Conservation of greenspace

2. Price.

PROPOSAL TIMELINE

Release Request for Proposals..... July 21, 2026
First Review of Proposals August 13, 2026

SECTION 5 CITY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The City will not be liable for any expenses incurred by Buyers responding to this solicitation. All material submitted will be kept by the City. The City reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted and to use any ideas in a proposal, regardless of whether that proposal is selected. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the proposing Buyer of the conditions contained in this Request for Proposals, unless clearly and specifically noted.

The City shall to its best ability make staff available to assist when needed in any inspection of the properties during the work day and answer questions.

SECTION 6 SELECTION PROCESS

CRITERIA

The selection of a winning proposal will be based on the following criteria in no order of importance:

- Long term tax impact.
- Environmental impact.
- Impact on neighborhood.
- Public safety and public use
- Zoning Compliance
- Price
- Continuity of and layout of parcels
- Assignment of assessments

STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The City has the sole authority to select a buyer and reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any informality or minor defects in proposals received.

SECTION 7 INDEMNIFICATION

Buyer shall indemnify, defend and hold the City, their officers, agents and employees harmless from any and all claims, damages, losses, causes of action and demands, including, without limitation, the payment of all consequential damages, expert witness fees, reasonable attorney's fees and other related costs and expenses, incurred in connection with or in any manner arising out of the work contemplated by this RFP.

Submitting a response to this RFP signifies that the Buyer is not covered under the City's general liability insurance, employee benefits, or worker's compensation. Buyer's obligation to indemnify shall survive expiration or termination of this RFP and shall not be restricted to insurance proceeds, if any, received by the City, and their officers, agents and employees.

Buyer shall defend, with counsel of City's choosing and at Buyer's own cost, expense and risk, any and all claims, suits, actions or other proceedings of every kind that may be brought or instituted against City, and their officers, agents and employees as a result of this RFP. Buyer shall pay and satisfy any judgment, award or decree that may be rendered against City, and their officers, agents and employees as part of any such claim, suit, action or other proceeding. Buyer shall also reimburse City for the cost of any settlement paid by City, and their officers, agents and employees as part of any such claim, suit, action or other proceeding. Such reimbursement shall include payment for City's attorney's fees and costs, including expert witness fees. Buyer shall reimburse City, and their officers, agents and employees for any and all legal expenses and costs incurred by each of them in connection therewith or in enforcing the indemnity herein provided.

SECTION 8 Contact

City of Albert Lea, MN
Attn: Ian Rigg, City Manager
221 E Clark Street
Albert Lea, MN 56007
Telephone: 507.377.4330
Email: irigg@ci.albertlea.mn.us

Exhibit A

108 Giles Place

