

PARKS & RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

May 18, 2026 5:30 pm
Marion Ross Theater

Members Present:

Amy Leach
Kent Rahn
Wende Taylor
Joe Staloch
Whitney Sauer
Ted Herman (ex-officio)

Members Absent:

Tom Jones
Therese Salazar

Staff in Attendance:

Ryan Hajek, Assistant Director of Public Works
Afton Wacholz, Recreation Administrative Assistant

Others in Attendance:

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Amy Leach at 5:30pm.

Adopt Agenda:

Wende Taylor made the motion to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting and Kent Rahn seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 5-0. Motion declared passed.

Approval of the Minutes:

Whitney Sauer made the motion to approve the minutes from the April 20, 2026 meeting and Kent Rahn seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 5-0. Motion declared passed.

Public Items:

Jerry Munson presented to the board of the Eddie Cochran statue committee. Jerry shared Eddie's history with Albert Lea, growing up on the south side of town near Frank Hall park, where there is a road named after him. Eddie is extremely well known for his music around the world, especially in Liverpool, as Jerry was just there recently and visited the Beatles museum where there were pictures of Eddie. Dave Nelson and Don Blake are also on the statue committee with Jerry. They would like to have a statue similar to Marion Ross to celebrate him and his tie to Albert Lea. The committee met with the mayor, Engineering dept and Cathy Malakowsky to discuss possible locations. These locations included several around the north end of Broadway near Fountain lake Park and the splash pad, as well as at Frank Hall park, near Eddie Cochran St. Jerry was in support of the Frank Hall location, as well as Eddie's

family, due to the proximity of the street named after him and where his house was located growing up. Dave and Don are more partial to Broadway, near where the music is held and where they have the Eddie Cochran car show and other events. They would use the same sculptor as the Marion Ross statue and would fundraise very similarly to hers as well, by selling pavers and seeking donations.

The statue would be roughly 7 feet tall and 2-foot base. They would like to start fundraising at the Eddie Cochran weekend events June 11-14.

A packet was prepared with the possible locations both downtown and Frank Hall park. Many pros and cons were discussed about each location. The majority of the remarks from the board gravitated toward Frank Hall park, as a way to extend the attractions we have here in town. So much is downtown but having it at Frank Hall would bring those visiting to the south side of town more and showcase the area where Eddie grew up.

Kent Rahn made the motion to recommend Frank Hall Park as the primary location for the statue. Kent also added that the committee could then propose to City staff their preferred placement within the park once decided upon to be brought to the City Council for approval. Wende Taylor seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 5-0. Motion declared passed.

Old Business Items:

None

New Business Items:

None

Staff Report Discussion:

Ryan gave an update on the Frank Hall park bike shelter. They are waiting on some materials but hope to be starting the structure very soon.

Ryan also informed the board that the splash pad bathrooms are now officially open. They are still working on security cameras however they are up and ready as soon as the connection is figured out.

The public dock is also nearly ready to be installed along with the kayak launcher.

New fountains will be placed by the mermaid in the new few weeks as well.

There are been a few requests for a port-a-potty in New Denmark park due to the high level of traffic due to the ice cream shop as well as people fishing. Ted voiced his support of this as it is a need from the community that would be very beneficial since there isn't a bathroom close by. Based on the support by the board, Ryan will notify his staff to put one in place.

Staff Updates:

None

Board Member Items:

Wende Taylor- Thanked the Parks department for greasing the swings at Lakeview Park. She did also note the handicap swing security belt is functioning a bit hard.

Joe Staloch- shared that the sales tax failed to pass at the state level so Albert Lea will not have the chance to take it to the community for a vote.

Ted Herman – Requested further information regarding the Advisory Boards decision to not allow the Recreation bounce houses and other large yard games be loaned out to community groups, specifically the Relay for Life event. Staff and board members discussed liability concerns, the lack of supervision of the equipment at events, the set-up and tear down needs, as well as just the excitement of these fun,

unique pieces for Recreation specific events in our community. Ted will take this information back to Brian Anderson from the Relay for Life.

Adjournment: Wende Taylor made a motion to adjourn the Park Board meeting and Kent Rahn seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 5-0. Motion declared passed. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Afton Wacholz
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Secretary

Approved:

Amy Leach
Park & Recreation Advisory Board Chair