

**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