

CITY OF VANDALIA
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

October 1, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Corey Follick, Lenny Maenza, Rick Scherer, Lydia Baker, Larry Taylor

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Tara Landis, Holly Herbst

OTHERS PRESENT: Alicia McCracken, Aaron Messenger, Rudy Wells, Sherry McConnaughey

- Chairperson Lenny Maenza called the regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to order at 6:30 p.m.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- The minutes of the August 20, 2025, meeting were presented to the Board. Larry Taylor motioned to accept the minutes as presented, and Lydia Baker seconded the motion. Motion carried all ayes.

COMMENTS FROM INTERESTED CITIZENS

- None.

FACILITIES SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Rudy Wells presented the Facilities Superintendent Report.

- Cassel Hills Pool winterization work is under way.
- Plumbing issues at the Justice Center and Municipal Building. Leaks developed at both locations. Water to the buildings was shut down and repairs were made on the same evening.
- Special Events – Assisted as needed with the Touch-a-Truck event, the Pickleball event, and the Police Open House.
- Staff replaced the carpet in the Municipal Building elevator.
- Cement walkways, and curb work repair and replacement, took place at the Municipal Building and Recreation Center, as needed. Also, at the Recreation Center in the west parking lot, an entrance ramp was put in, removing the step to the sidewalk. This will be beneficial to the Patrons that struggled with the step.
- Staff finished a project at Fire Station 2 installing a privacy fence, stone surfacing, and timber-edge materials.
- Staff finished installing cement bases for the permanent art being placed in the Art Park.
- Maintenance work has begun on the Facility Maintenance Garage, including tuck point, expansion joints, cracks, and painting of exterior doors and frames.

CITY TREE REPORT

Rudy Wells presented the Urban Forest Report.

- Landscape maintenance at various sites, including the 12 street medians, building locations, and entry sign locations.
- Watering of young plant material was in full swing; we did receive 2" of rain over several days that has provided a slight reprieve concerning tree and shrub watering.
- Fence line brush removal. With the slowdown in grass growth, seasonal staff have worked on fence line pruning work.
- Two of our Staff attended the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Field Day. Proper tree planting, chain saw operation, and other related tree topics were covered in this one-day session. This information was then shared with Staff that did not attend.
- The fall tree order has been placed. Planning for the addition of four trees at Robinette Park between the parking area and playground, and two evergreens planted at the Sports Complex event signage area near the entry of the park.
- Eight street trees along National, east of I-75, will be replaced this fall.

BEE CITY REPORT

- None.

RECREATION SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Recreation Report – Handed out and presented by Aaron Messenger

VRC and Recreation

- Year to Date Active IBM (Insurance Based Memberships) = 1,394
- We had 216 IBM members visit the VRC 10 times or more during August.
- Starting October 1, the Vandalia Recreation Center will have new weekday operating hours. The VRC will be open from 5am-9pm year-round, Monday through Friday, excluding certain holidays. The VRC Aquatic Center will open during the weekdays at the same time of 6:00am, while the fitness floor, track, and gymnasium will be available for use starting at 5:00am. This has been well received by Patrons and Staff. We believe we will see an increase in patrons arriving at 5:00am to get their workout in.
- New Recreation Rental Coordinator – Lauren Price
- New Recreation Facility Manager – Kayla Sensenbaugh. She has previous Parks and Recreation experience, working in Beavercreek, Kettering, and Miamisburg.
- Sara Moyer & Aaron Messenger had a program retreat, to evaluate current program offerings and see where changes need to be made and see what program offerings we should be providing.
- January – April 2026 Program Guide: Staff are working on their programs and other recreation initiatives.

- The Vandalia Arts Council selected the sculptures for the Fall 2025—Fall 2026 season on Wednesday, September 3. There will be 8 new sculptures for this coming season. Installation began on Tuesday, September 30.
- VPRD staff attended the Vandalia-Butler High School football game on Friday, September 5. Staff had a table setup where we interacted with the public and handed out candy and promotional items. We as a Department plan to have more of a presence at the school's sporting functions.
- Online registration for athletic practice fields, Seger Park Gazebo, and the Helke Park Shelters will be available for 2026.
- Adaptive Swim Program: The first session through SwimSafe had 10 families attend on Sunday, September 21. We plan to have more of these sessions throughout 2026. Note: SwimSafe did not charge us for facilitating this program.
- VSC & VRC Membership Fee increases have been approved by City Council and Staff will get RecTrac updated and other literature created to update Patrons about the change. The Marketing Coordinator will put together information sheets that will be available at the Front Desk.
- August Birthday Party Numbers: 20 total - 6 Resident/Member; 14 Non-Resident
- August 2025 VRC Visits = 14,749; August 2024 VRC Visits = 12,722; Larry Taylor asked what this was attributed to. Aaron advised it was largely related to the increase in attendance to the Senior Fitness Classes.
- August VRC Facility Rentals - Resident = 0; Non-Resident = 4
- August VRC Promotional Groups - Resident = 0; Non-Resident = 1
- August Cassel Hills Pool Parties - Resident = 6; Non-Resident = 0

Fitness

- September Inclusive Fitness Days – Friday, September 12 and 26, from 10:30am-11:15am.
- Over 20 patrons took part in the 9/11 Challenge during the week of 9/11, which included patrons climbing 110 flights of stairs with the Stairmaster machines.
- 51 patrons attended the September Wellness Bash.
- Josh Berry & Aaron Messenger are working on a grant for inclusive fitness equipment for the Inclusive Fitness Program.
- Fitness Studio floor resurfacing will be September 29 through October 3.
- September - Thursday TRX Classes - 4 classes; one class had 12 participants, and the other three had 11 participants.
- August Group Fitness Class Count - August 2025 = 1,366; August 2024 = 1,405
- August Senior Fitness Class Count - August 2025 = 1,575; August 2024 = 1,234

Program/Event Updates

Completed Events

- **Touch-a-Truck:** On Saturday, September 13 we hosted the Vandalia Touch-a-Truck event from 10:30am-1:00pm at the Sports Complex, with sensory friendly time from 10:30-11:15am. Several hundred people attended this event. There were 30+ vehicles at this event for families to touch, climb in, and enjoy! From fire trucks to construction equipment, we had it all!
- **Art Outside the Box w/ Art Adventures:** From Monday, August 18-Friday, August 22, Art Adventures hosted a weeklong art camp designed for young, creative explorers! This camp was all about breaking boundaries, thinking creatively, and exploring all things art. Campers engaged in a variety of artistic activities that challenged their imaginations and encouraged them to see the world through a new lens! There were 14 campers enrolled.
- **STEAM Lab Camp w/ STEMILY Studios:** From Monday, August 18-Friday, August 22, STEMILY Studios led a STEAM Lab Camp that blended science, technology, engineering, art, and math into hands-on projects. Campers had the chance to grow crystals, create sculptures, and build squishy circuits. Each day was packed with exciting challenges that sparked curiosity and creativity! There were 11 campers enrolled.
- **Let's Get Messy w/ Art Adventures:** From Monday, August 25-Friday, August 29, Art Adventures hosted a weeklong art camp that encouraged young artists to experiment with various art forms, embrace their creativity, and get messy! Campers were able to unleash their artistic talents and dive into a world of color and imagination. 16 campers attended.
- **Homeschool Takeover:** On Friday, August 29, from 11:30am-2:00pm, we hosted a Homeschool Takeover at the VRC. Homeschool groups and families were invited to come out and enjoy everything the VRC has to offer; swimming, climbing wall, gym activities, and Luther's Jungle. There were 33 groups/families that attended, for a total of 131 participants.
- **Doggy Pool Paw-ty:** On Monday, September 1 from 6:00pm-8:00pm, we hosted a Doggy Pool Paw-ty at Cassel Hills Pool! This event was free for VRC Members, Cassel Hills Pool Members, and Residents. Dogs had a wonderful time in the pool on the last day of Cassel Hills Pool season. 40 dogs attended this event!

Upcoming Events

- **Vandalia Fall Festival** – Saturday, October 11 from 12:00pm-6:00pm at the Vandalia Sports Complex. The band Stranger will provide music.
- **Vandalia Halloween Hangout** – Saturday, October 25 from 11am – 2:00pm at the Vandalia Sports Complex

Senior Center

- 771 - Senior Center Members through August 2025.
- 17 new members in August 2025, 11 to-date in September 2025.
- Vantran – 1,217 One-way rides YTD.
- October Newsletter is available.

Cassel Hills Pool

- Aaron Messenger, Alicia McCracken, Rudy Wells, Jerrod Hill, and SwimSafe Staff conducted a walkthrough of Cassel Hills Pool on Friday, September 12. We reviewed how the season went and what changes we can make to the Facility for 2026.
- August Cassel Hills Pool Visits: August 2025 visits = 2,376; August 2024 visits = 1,891

Athletics

- Aaron Messenger is working with Maecie Burkhardt to set up the RecTrac athletics reservation system. Progress is being made, and it will be ready for the new year. Next steps are adding the waivers online and completing a test run of how everything will look online.
- Opening day for soccer was Saturday, September 6. There were 12 games total that day. The park was packed full of players and their families, and everything went very well!



- Flag football picture day and opening day was Sunday, September 7.



- The first games of the adult softball fall season started on Monday September 8, and Friday September 12. Both days went well!
- As of 9/15, 17 kids are enrolled in various grades of our Youth Basketball program, and 3 kids are enrolled in Instructional Basketball.

Aaron asked if there were any questions or comments before we moved on to Discussion Topics.

- Corey Follick asked about the success of the Pickleball Palooza Event. Alicia advised that the estimated numbers she heard were around 120 participants, and around 100 volunteers. Overall, the event was smaller than expected. There is potential for another event, which will probably have a shortened time.
- Corey Follick asked about the power sources at the Helke Shelters. There is only one outlet per Shelter, and he wondered how hard it would be to add additional outlets. Rudy advised that he would look into it.
- Rick Scherer commented that people are still complaining about an ongoing issue at the Rec Center with radiant heat in the Fitness Center and it is getting too warm. Rudy advised that he would look at the issue again and possibly put a box over the thermostat as a solution.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Outdoor Facility Rentals
 - Beginning on January 1, 2026, the reservations for the Helke Shelters and Seger Park Gazebo will be made online. Art Park reservations will still be made through Sherry McConnaughey.
 - All facilities will still only be available to Residents.
 - Shelter and Gazebo reservations will be \$50 for the day. Art Park reservations will be \$300 for the day. This will allow us to hold Residents more accountable, while making some revenue from our facilities.
 - Rudy's Staff will have a checklist to be completed before each reservation.
- Robinette Splashpad Update – Alicia passed around pictures of the mock-up of the Splashpad, which included the following:



- Double Jay Construction was awarded this project, and they plan to break ground next week, trying to get as much done in the Fall as possible.
- Alicia is working with DES and Rudy to figure everything out.
- Lenny commented that he has heard great things about Robinette Park.
- Corey asked if the splashpad will be re-circulating. Alicia advised it will be flow-through and there will be no impact on the new playground with the installation.

- Corey asked if the splashpad pieces can be removed in the winter? He advised in Englewood, the original splashpad could not be removed, but when a new splashpad was installed, all pieces could be removed. Alicia was not sure about this and will investigate.
- No shelter reservations will be accepted for the Robinette shelter.
- Completion planned for early summer 2026.
- Corey advised that the City had secured \$250K for this project, as State Representative Phil Plummer got that money re-allocated to us. We are very thankful to him for that.
- Golf Course – Food and Hospitality Update
 - Chris Royce was back to present to Council about offering food services at Cassel Hills Golf Course. This time he has partnered with a couple that owns the Socialite Café in Kettering.
 - Alicia will be meeting with Chris Royce tomorrow.
 - This project is in the very preliminary stages.
 - Lenny asked if the plan is to be a regular restaurant that is open year-round. Alicia said yes.

Further Updates:

- Golf Course – Irrigation Project
 - Work is moving along after delays caused by hitting rock.
 - 5 or 6 holes to go.
 - Play has not been impacted.
- Rec Center and Senior Center Fee Increase
 - Marketing has begun on the increase, and it will go in the new Program Guide.
 - Everything will be ready to promote, including the Premium Membership, on November 1.
- Robinette Fencing
 - We are moving forward with putting a fence in front of the new playground for added safety due to the proximity of the playground to the parking lot.
 - Once construction on the splashpad is complete, a fence will be put around the rest of the playground and the retention pond.
- Helke Park Swings
 - Money was found in Capital funds to relocate three bays of swings at Helke Park. They will be covered with shade structures like what is at Robinette Park. Alicia is presenting this at the Council Meeting on Monday, October 6.

OLD BUSINESS

- None.

NEW BUSINESS

- None.

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, Lydia Baker made a motion to adjourn, and Rick Scherer seconded the motion to adjourn. Motion carried all ayes. Meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Lenny Maenza, Chairperson

Tara Landis, Secretary