

MINUTES
[Approval October 2, 2025]
LIBERTY PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
September 5, 2025
Liberty Community Center

CALL TO ORDER

The regular business meeting of the Liberty Parks and Recreation Board was called to order by President Ryal Brier at 6:01 p.m. Board members in attendance were: Ryal Brier, Anissa Christine, James Gifford, Christopher Hand, Rachel Hollinberger, Jackie Kennedy, Deb Loomis, John Riedel, and Vern Windsor. Staff members in attendance were BJ Staab, Parks and Recreation Director; Tom Garland, Assistant Director; and Erika Brant, Community Engagement Manager.

OPEN FORUM – There was no one present to address the Board.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Vern Windsor made the motion, seconded by James Gifford, to approve the August 7, 2025 minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously. Christopher Hand, Jackie Kennedy and Deb Loomis abstained due to absence and late arrival for the August meeting.

VOTE:

Ryal Brier	AYE
Anissa Christine	AYE
James Gifford	AYE
Christopher Hand	ABSTAIN
Rachel Hollinberger	AYE
Jackie Kennedy	ABSTAIN
Deb Loomis	ABSTAIN
John Riedel	AYE
Vern Windsor	AYE

OLD BUSINESS

- **Resonus – Bennett Park Engagement** – Mitch Mabrey was present to present the final reports from the Resonus engagement to the Board. He shared that Board members who wanted to see the internal portion of the website, could email him and he'd provide access to the software. That would allow Board members to read to individual comments and see more detailed location information. He then provided printed copies of a summary with the findings from the website, public meetings, and canvassing efforts. Major takeaways found during the Bennett Park Public Engagement showed that a log of people across the community are interested in Bennett Park and interacted with the software. Approximately 90% of the respondents live in Liberty, MO and the demographic breakdown very closely matched Liberty census demographics. An improved Disc Golf Course and Skate Park were the biggest requests from respondents across Liberty. And as expected, requests for new pickleball courts was very popular with many comments from respondents sharing the existing courts were always full. Neighborhood residents shared they use the existing amenities in Bennett Park and walk through the roads to get to different amenities and areas

of the parks. Overall the largest request was for trails or sidewalks to access the different areas of the park. Most of the engagement during the public meetings and through the software was positive with some minor negative comments. Mitch Mabrey provided a full report and executive summary to the Board detailing the results with additional analysis of the top ten suggestions. Mitch Mabrey closed his presentation with a suggestion to send a message through Resonus to the users once the Board determined how to move forward with Bennett Park. He felt that would be a good way to close the loop with the respondents and let them know how their feedback would be utilized.

- **Sport Court KC** – BJ Staab shared the basketball court project at Ruth Moore Park had been approved by City Council and that staff was working to complete that project this year. He shared that City Council was complementary about the project which brought together several different local organizations, Will Smith’s family, and the Garrison Task Force.
- **Little Shoal Creek Trail** – BJ Staab shared that the engineering contract for the Little Shoal Creek Trail project had also been approved by City Council. He shared that this was the first time most members of City Council had been told about the grant from MARC and they were very excited about the project. He also shared staff would look for more ways to share the news that about the grant and trail with the public once engineering was complete. Jackie Kennedy asked if staff was familiar with the international movement for quiet parks. She suggested it might be interesting to add a quiet park along the Little Shoal Creek Trail when it’s constructed. James Gifford suggested Stocksdale Park might be a good fit as well. Tom Garland shared staff could look for spots within the system might be a good fit.
- **Historical Markers** – Jackie Kennedy shared that the unveiling of the Ruth Ewing historical marker would be on 9/16/2025 at 10am at Ruth Ewing Park. She invited the Board to attend. She also shared that Councilman Michael Hagan and Councilman Gene Gentrup will be there to say a few words. Jackie Kennedy plans to speak about Ruth Ewing and the reasons behind park name change. Additionally, Chery Holtman, from the Clay County Museum, will talk about the genealogy of the Ewing and Robertson families as well as the history of the Ruth Ewing School. Erika Brant shared that the Interurban Railway marker that will be placed at Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary had arrived and would be installed in September.

NEW BUSINESS

CivcRec Registration Software

CivicPlus Recreation Management is an all-in-one platform designed for local parks and recreation departments. It aims to streamline operations by automating tasks and providing residents with a seamless online experience for registrations, facility rentals, and payments.

Parks and Rec staff recommend the purchase and installation of the CivicPlus Recreation Management solution. This upgrade will replace the current system and take advantage of our existing relationship with CivicPlus, whose CivicPlus Municipal Websites, MuniCode Codification and Agenda and Meeting Management solutions are already in use by city staff.

The new CivicPlus Recreation Management system will offer a wide array of benefits for both staff and the public. These include:

- Intuitive Activity Registration: An easy-to-navigate online catalog will make it more efficient to schedule, organize, and communicate about programs.
- Advanced Facility Management: Staff can generate complex permits and reports, manage both in-house and online reservations, and schedule leagues and meetings without the risk of double-booking.
- Scalable Point-of-Sale (POS): The new system will unify the sales process, allowing for the quick sale of merchandise, program enrollment, and facility reservations within one shopping cart.
- Comprehensive Membership Capabilities: The new tools will allow for the easy sale and tracking of memberships and day-use passes, alongside automated billing for current accounts.

By centralizing all parks and recreation operations on one cloud-based platform, CivicPlus will empower staff to manage everything from anywhere, on any device. For residents, this translates to a more simple and convenient way to engage with the department's offerings.

- Year One Total Investment \$56,586.89
- Annual – Year Two \$29,702.50 (Subject to Uplift)
- Renewal procedure: Automatic 1-year renewal term, unless 60 days' notice provided prior to renewal date.
- Annual Uplift: 5% to be applied in year 2

Staff recommends the purchase of CivicPlus Recreation Management from CivicPlus, LLC. in an amount not to exceed \$56,586.89. This amount includes software, implementation, data conversion, unlimited storage, unlimited users, portal and top tier support.

The purchase and installation of CivicPlus Recreation Management Software will span over FY2025 and FY2026. A total payment of \$10,000 will be due in FY2025 and \$46,586.89 in FY2026.

BJ Staab reminded the Board that CivicPlus was the registration software he'd mentioned transitioning to earlier in the year. He pointed out that the initial fees would include implementation and would start higher than normal annual fees. He also shared that the implementation needed to start in FY2025, so \$10,000 would be spent during this year's budget and the remainder would be due in FY2026. He shared that he was excited to move forward with this software and hoped to save staff time and make program registration easier for the community.

Deb Loomis asked a few clarifying questions about the budget. Rachel Hollinberger asked when the annual RecTrac cost would need to be paid for FY2026 and if it was possible to reduce that fee. BJ Staab shared that fee would be due on January 1, meaning the department would be double paying for software in FY2026. He shared that would be necessary because staff would still need access to RecTrac for at least half of FY2026, but he would be working with RecTrac to look for cost savings by reducing licenses or asking for a prorated fee.

Rachel Hollinberger asked if the data from RecTrac could be migrated to CivicPlus. BJ Staab shared CivicPlus recommended against a straight upload, and some manual entry would be necessary to have the cleanest possible start. Rachel Hollinberger asked how this change would impact members utilizing monthly billing for LCC memberships. BJ Staab shared that all members would have to fill out some forms to restart their billing in CivicPlus. BJ Staab shared Blue Springs Parks & Rec made this transition to

Civic Plus a little over a year ago and that LPR staff had visited with that Blue Springs to get feedback from them on the transition and get tips on how to make it easier for the community.

Ryal Brier asked if CivicPlus was a better product and if the community would be able to tell the difference between the two pieces of software. BJ Staab shared that he was confident the public would notice the difference and that CivicPlus was a better product. Jackie Kennedy asked what LPR currently pays for RecTrac each year. BJ Staab shared LPR currently pays around \$10,000 per year for RecTrac and after implementation, Civic Plus would cost around \$30,000 per year.

BJ Staab shared he'd been talking to CivicPlus for several years and had worked with them on a fee that was a good fit for LPR. He also shared that the City's website is the same company so the software will work better with the website.

Anissa Christine made the motion, seconded by Vern Windsor to recommend staff recommendation to City Council. Motion passed unanimously.

VOTE:

Ryal Brier	AYE
Anissa Christine	AYE
James Gifford	AYE
Christopher Hand	AYE
Rachel Hollinberger	AYE
Jackie Kennedy	AYE
Deb Loomis	AYE
John Riedel	AYE
Vern Windsor	AYE

Donation of Land from MO Department of Conservation

Following conversations late in 2024 between the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary and Liberty Parks and Recreation, the MDC's area manager suggested donating Walnut Woods and Rush Creek to the city. MDC indicated that it had limited future funding for both areas however funds could be available through cost-share grants with MDC and the City of Liberty. Although MDC recognized the area as a valuable woodland, they noted that it was not a high-quality forest and would require substantial staff time and funding to improve. In response, Liberty Parks staff expressed interest in managing the area and offered to begin the improvement process with guidance from the MDC.

The City of Liberty Parks & Recreation Department is pursuing the preservation of two tracts of land, Rush Creek and Walnut Woods, currently owned by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). The total land area is approximately 108 acres of forested land along Rush Creek. The city's primary goal is to preserve both parcels as a riparian corridor, providing a crucial habitat for wildlife within the developing community. The city plans to keep the land open to the public, utilizing existing access points on city-owned parkland to prevent any new intrusion into the woodlands. Large portions of both tracts lie within the Rush Creek floodway, making their preservation essential for natural stormwater management and flood control. Beyond being a wildlife corridor, the middle-aged forest in these tracts provides significant environmental benefits for the community, including air filtration.

There are some areas outside of the floodway that could be utilized if accessible but both tracts are land are bordered by large lot residential single-family estate lots making access to the land nearly impossible except through City park land or through private conservation land: Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary. Staff feels the best option for the tracts of land is to remain as native habitat that provides shelter for wildlife and a corridor for animals to move through the community safely away from the street network. Our goal for both tracts will be to enhance opportunities for the public to enjoy nature and conservation related outdoor recreation close to home. The City of Liberty is committed to continuing the partnership with Martha Lafite to maintain and program the Rush Creek property as it relates to a separate MOU with Martha Lafite and the City for the Rush Creek tract.

While maintaining the land presents challenges, staff believes a partnership between the City of Liberty Parks & Recreation and Martha Lafite would offer significant benefits. This option would foster administrative and programming efficiencies, strengthening the bond between our organizations. Our department has a proven track record of maintaining and enhancing conservation areas through successful community partnerships. Working together, we are confident we can preserve these properties as thriving habitats while providing a sanctuary for residents and visitors to enjoy and appreciate nature.

The Parks & Recreation Department as entered into a MOU with Martha Lafite in the event that MDC gives land to the City, Martha Lafite staff and patrons will have access to the land as they have had for day camps and conservation outreach and programs.

BJ Staab reminded the Board that the land donation from the MDC was approved at the Missouri Conservation Committee (MCC) meeting in July. One request that came out of the July meeting was that MDC would provide a land management plan for LPR. Rachel Hollinberger asked if this land management plan increased work load for staff. Tom Garland shared it won't increase much and once the land was donated, it would allow staff to work with MDC on grant opportunities to support the properties.

Jackie Kennedy made the motion, seconded by James Gifford to recommend the acceptance of the donation of Rush Creek and Walnut Woods from the Missouri Department of Conservation to City Council. Motion passed unanimously.

VOTE:

Ryal Brier	AYE
Anissa Christine	AYE
James Gifford	AYE
Christopher Hand	AYE
Rachel Hollinberger	AYE
Jackie Kennedy	AYE
Deb Loomis	AYE
John Riedel	AYE
Vern Windsor	AYE

CORRESPONDENCE – BJ Staab shared an article that was written by Haley Ragan, the LPR Marketing Manager, which was recently published in *PRB+ Magazine*. The article is titled “Liberty Parks & Rec shares marketing tips to reach more residents” and can be read on the publication’s website.

FINANCE – BJ Staab shared financial reports through July 2025. Ryal Brier shared that Deb Loomis and John Riedel would begin meeting this month to discuss the FY2026 Budget.

REPORTS –

- Administration Division Report – No additional questions outside of the printed report.
- Parks Division Report – BJ Staab shared the new restroom would be delivered and set at Ruth Moore Park on 9/5. He reminded the Board that it wouldn't be opened until later in September after staff connected the electrical and plumbing.
- Recreation Report – BJ Staab shared that Heather Borchardt, the LPR Health and Wellness Manager, had resigned due to a move out of the Kansas City area. He shared that position had been posted and would be filled soon. Deb Loomis asked about the "Can Play program". BJ Staab shared that it is a new partnership provides adapted recreational activities for those living with special needs and chronic health issues. He shared that Brittany Johnston, LPR Recreation Manager, is facilitating the partnership and is starting with a fall soccer program. He shared the sports division will roll out additional sports in the future.
- Liberty Foundation Report – Ryal Brier thanked the Board members who volunteered at the Foundation's golf tournament in August. BJ Staab shared that the Mayor and City Administrator had attended, loved the event, and shared it was great to see so many members of the Liberty community there supporting the cause. BJ Staab share that was Patrick Flora's last golf tournament.

MISCELLANEOUS – Ryal Brier asked the Board if they all planned to attend the next meeting. He shared that he wanted to take a new Board photo and asked everyone to wear parks shirts to the meeting. BJ Staab promised to remind everyone about the photo in October.

ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Liberty Parks and Recreation Board is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 2, 2025, 6:00 p.m. at the Liberty Community Center.