

MINUTES
[Approved November 6, 2025]
LIBERTY PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
October 2, 2025
Liberty Community Center

CALL TO ORDER

The regular business meeting of the Liberty Parks and Recreation Board was called to order by Board President Ryal Brier at 6:00 p.m.

Board members in attendance were: Ryal Brier, Anissa Christine, James Gifford, Rachel Hollinberger, Jackie Kennedy, John Riedel, and Vern Windsor. Board members absent: Christopher Hand, Deb Loomis. Staff members in attendance were BJ Staab, Parks and Recreation Director; Tom Garland, Assistant Director; and Jimmy Gibbs, Assistant Director.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Vern Windsor made the motion, seconded by Anissa Christine, to approve the September 4, 2025 minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously

VOTE:

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

OLD BUSINESS

- **MDC Land Transfers** –Discussion
 - Director Staab noted the resolution accepting the Land Transfers were presented to City Council on Monday, September 22, 2025.
 - There was no public comment. Resolution passed City Council.
 - Park Board member Deb Loomis was present at the council meeting.
 - Director Staab noted that Channel 41 News has requested an interview.

- **Historical Markers** – Discussion
 - Board Member Jackie Kennedy recounted the dedication ceremony for the historical marker at Ruth Ewing Park noting it was well attended and successful.
 - Chery Holtman was present to share comments and give notes.
 - Kennedy noted that photos and text for storyboards are due in December for the City Park Loop. They will include: Jones Distillery and Wine Cellar Hill.

- TGT approved \$10,000 for 2026

NEW BUSINESS

Liberty Parks & Recreation Schedule of Fees

The City of Liberty maintains a Schedule of Fees for all departments which is reviewed on an annual basis. To remain competitive in the marketplace, each year during the budget development process, staff reviews current rates charged for Liberty Parks and Recreation Department programs, rentals, memberships, and services. During that process staff reviews the fee ranges to determine if fees are nearing the cap of the schedule of fees range. The most recent adjustment to the schedule of fees was January 2020. With several current facility ranges at or near the top of the range, staff brings a request to adjust ranges within the categories of: Facility Rentals, Parks/Sports Complex, Recreational Programs and Community Center Services, Liberty Community Center.

Discussion

- Assistant Director Jimmy Gibbs reviewed the schedule of fees and explained what the ranges are for.
- Director Staab noted need for fees or extra service charges on certain events, e.g., gate fees at Cap Fed for tournaments.
- Board member Riedel asked why some ranges were odd number values, or why some ranges were very broad. Gibbs noted there was no “science” to the calculations, but staff increased the ranges that would help support 5-8 years of growth.

Jackie Kennedy made the motion, seconded by James Gifford to approve the 2026 Liberty Parks and Rec Schedule of Fees. Motion passed unanimously.

VOTE:

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

FY2026 Park Board Budget Subcommittee

Capital Projects Committee

2025

Sub Committee Members: Deb Loomis, John Riedel, Ryal Brier

<Meeting Summary>

Recommendations for Priority Consideration:

- **Trail Kiosks with Maps (Master Plan – Obj 1.4)**
 - Continue installation of trail kiosks with maps in Parks
- **Bennett Park Playground and Surface**
 - High request from the Resonus Engagement
 - Include the addition of hillside(s)
- **Bennett Park – transition #? of tennis courts to Pickleball**
 - High request from Resonus Engagement
- **Trail Connections**
 - **Homestead to Flintlock**
 - Fund the 30% match on Federal Grant
 - **Trail Maintenance Overlay**
 - Northwyck or Westboro/Canterbury
- **Fund the Design for a Skate Park**
 - High request for citizen groups

2024

****Updates**

Sub Committee Members: Rachel Hollinberger and James Gifford

<Meeting Summary>

Recommendations for Priority Consideration:

- **Trail Kiosks with Maps (Master Plan – Obj 1.4)**
 - LPR Foundation paid for 4 trail maps/kiosks for Westboro/Canterbury
- **Restrooms – upgrades and new**
 - **Ruth Moore**
 - Completed Fall 2025
 - **Get a quote for new restroom at Pickleball Courts**
- **Trail Connections**
 - **Homestead to Westboro (Master Plan – Obj 1.2)**
 - Design and Engineering completed Fall 2025
 - **Homestead to Flintlock**
 - Design and Engineering began Fall 2025
- **Security Cameras at Sports Complex**
 - Completed Summer 2025
- **Outdoor Basketball Courts**
 - **Rehab Ruth Moore and Place Liberte (Master Plan – Obj 3.2)**
 - Completed Ruth Moore bball Court Fall 2025
 - Place Liberte is planned with the LWCF Grant application for 2026-2028
 - **Discuss potential new court(s)**

- **Bike Racks (Master Plan – Obj 1.4)**
 - Installed Ruth Ewing, City Park, ClayWoods, Northwyck, Place Liberte in 2024
- **Pickleball Courts**
 - **Benches, Picnic Tables and sidewalk connection**
 - Completed in 2025
- **Skate Park**
 - Location determined to be Bennett Park as part of the Engagement tool Resonus. Staff has begun meeting with American Ramp on details
- **Start working on Brian Court Development (Master Plan – Obj 4.1)**
 - On hold until MDC land transfers are approved
- **Bennett Park Upgrades (Master Plan – Obj 3.2)**
 - Park Engagement completed in Summer 2025 with RESONUS

DISCUSSION:

- Board president Ryal Brier opened the discussion with a thanks to fellow committee members Loomis and Riedel.
- Brier reviewed capital projects in 2025 and updates to projects in 2024. Director Staab noted most projects in previous years are complete.
- Board member Riedel asked BJ to explain budget operations and how to fund capital projects: Staab noted park sales tax is about \$1.7m, park operations are about \$1.4m leaving about \$300K for capital projects.
- Riedel talked about the list and noted the challenging process of creating excitement in planned phases, e.g., pickleball courts, skate park design
- Staab explained trail overlays and how department attempts to do 1 trail segment each year
- Staab explained funding for large projects includes bonding projects along with other city projects, borrowing money, or using the fund balance to support grant matches
- Staab also noted \$300k comes from the general fund to specifically support parks and trails
- Reviewing progress on trail kiosks, it was noted that 4 new trail maps will be installed in Westboro/Canterbury park in the coming weeks.
- In 2026, the board expects to install 2 new signs in Stocksdale Park.
- Staab has been in talks with Steve Rhodes (VIERO) to take RESONUS information and redesign Bennett park. Staab will work with budget committee and bring costs back to the board.

Design Services for the Wilshire Bridge

The Wilshire Park trail, which provides a walking connection for students of Alexander Doniphan Elementary School, includes a bridge crossing a creek. Over time, the creek has eroded the east bank and the bridge abutment. Although structural engineers have deemed the bridge safe for current use, they have recommended repairs be made as soon as possible.

Parks staff has engaged BHC Engineers to review the abutment and suggest repairs. BHC will provide the following design services:

- Reviewing the current bridge abutments and trail elevations to calculate capacity.
- Assessing repair options, including a flood study to model how repairs may affect creek flooding.
- Providing a repair plan and cost estimate to protect the existing abutment.

The total cost for design services from BHC Engineers will not exceed \$19,980, which is within the City Manager’s approval authority.

Parks staff will perform as much of the repair work as possible and will manage the bidding and construction process for any work requiring outside contractors

DISCUSSION:

- Assistant Director Tom Garland explained the erosion problems on the original bridge supports.
- Review came after work to replace the wood bridge with a metal and concrete bridge.
- Board Member Kennedy noted that with the extensive use of the bridge by children, she wants no cut corners and recommends purchasing a metal bridge.
- Director Staab may ask USD if they can help with funding due to the proximity to the schools and the high use by school children.

Jackie Kennedy made the motion, seconded by James Gifford to approve an ordinance approving a contract with BHC Civil Engineering for the Wilshire Bridge abutment repairs and FEMA study for an amount not to exceed \$19,980. Motion passed unanimously.

VOTE:

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

LWCF Grant Application

The Parks & Recreation Department is planning to add a new basketball court to the existing park, and add amenities to the undeveloped portion of Place Liberté Park. Staff recommends applying for federal funding from the Land & Water Conservation Fund to help cover the costs.

In March 2019, the City of Liberty purchased 10.24 acres of land from the Liberty Public School District adjacent to the existing Place Liberté Park and across the street from Warren Hills Elementary School. The Parks Department applied for, and was successful, in securing a Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant to build a baseball field in that space. However, Staff was not able to follow through on that plan due to the pandemic.

As a part of the Parks Master Plan from 2022, several goals pertaining to Place Liberté Park were identified. Those included:

- Develop the vacant property between Place Liberté Park and Church Rd. (Goal 4, Obj 4.1)
- Develop a trail connection between Place Liberté Park and Church Rd. (Goal 1, Obj 1.2)
- Replace paved loop trail in Place Liberté Park. (Goal 1, Obj 1.3)
- Replace the parking lot at Place Liberté Park. (Goal 3, Obj 3.2)
- Replace the basketball hoops and court at Place Liberté Park. (Goal 3, Obj 3.2)
- Install a small picnic shelter at Place Liberté Park. (Goal 3, Obj 3.4)
- Install a porta restroom and enclosure at Place Liberté Park.

In 2023, Parks staff was able to resurface the parking lot and loop trail in Place Liberté Park. In late 2023 & 2024, Parks staff applied for a LWCF Grant to replace the basketball hoops and court in the existing park, and develop the new property by adding a new parking lot, trail, open field space, hill slide and trail among other amenities. Those applications were not successful, however staff received positive feedback on the application and were encouraged to apply again. Therefore, Parks staff plans to update the application based on feedback from the LWCF Selection Committee and reapply for funding to be awarded in late 2026 for 2027-2029 construction.

To accomplish these items and fulfill the goals from the 2022 Master Plan, the Parks & Recreation Department recommends applying for federal funding from the Land & Water Conservation Fund in an amount not to exceed \$350,000.

This is grant matches up to 50% of the total cost of the project and is a reimbursement grant. The Parks & Rec Department would provide equal matching funds of up to \$350,000 to complete the project. The lead time for this grant is long. Applications are due in mid-November of 2025. And if successful, funding would be made available in late 2027. If awarded, work on Place Liberté Park would need to be completed within 2 years.

Discussion:

- Director Staab explained how close we were to winning the award on the last application.
- Staab explained that without grant funding, improvements to this park could not be started.

Vern Windsor made the motion, seconded by Rachel Hollinberger to approve a resolution authorizing the filing of a grant application with the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the renovation of Place Liberté Park within the City of Liberty, MO. Motion passed unanimously.

VOTE:

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

2025 Playground Scrap Tire Surface Material Grant (late addition to Agenda)

The Parks & Recreation Department is planning to update the playground safety surface at the playground off of Reese St. in Northwyck Park in 2026. As a way to help offset the costs of these upgrades, Staff applied for a grant from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources for a scrap tire surface material grant for the playground surface.

Staff was awarded the grant in an amount not to exceed \$56,211, and recommends giving Parks Director, BJ Staab, approval to sign the financial assistance agreement with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to accept the funding.

DISCUSSION:

- Director Staab and Assistant Director Garland explained the safety surface product and process to install.
- Assistant Director Garland noted that this specific grant is a 1st come, 1st served for funds and explained the need to respond quickly when the grant is opened.

Jackie Kennedy made the motion, seconded by Vern Windsor to approve a resolution authorizing acceptance of a financial assistance agreement with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources for the reimbursement of costs for use of recycled materials for the playground safety surface in Northwyck Park. Motion passed unanimously.

VOTE:

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

CORRESPONDENCE –

Clay County Sheriff—Director Staab received request from the sheriff’s office to help transport an inmate from the hospital to the jail using a Liberty Access bus.

MDC Donates Rush Creek & Walnut Woods—Director Staab shared a MDC press release and noted the City of Liberty will make its own press release in the coming weeks.

Paula Ruf-Director Staab shared a very nice compliment from a citizen regarding Paula Ruf, sports coordinator.

Proposed Utility Box Art in Ruth Moore Park—Director Staab shared a request to place an art wrap on the utility box in Ruth Moore Park. Parks is okay with the request, but will need outside funding.

Westboro Canterbury Trail—Assistant Director Garland will work with park staff to give recommendations on needed repairs throughout the trail system.

FINANCE – Director Staab shared financial reports through August 2025. Noted department is still working on year-end balancing and working on the 2026 operations budgets. In November, the city will conduct 2026 budget meetings.

REPORTS –

- Administration Division Report – No additional questions outside of the printed report.
- Parks Division Report – No additional questions outside of the printed report.
- Recreation Report – No additional questions outside of the printed report.
- Liberty Foundation Report – No additional questions outside of the printed report.

MISCELLANEOUS –

- Board president Brier noted he would like to take a Park Board photo prior to the November board meeting.
- Board member Anissa Christine asked for a status of the Sport Court at Ruth Moore. Director Staab noted that the family asked to pause installation until the logo has arrived. The design is complete. Restroom is installed, waiting on Evergy to connect power next week.
- Urban Trails MOU discussions. Tom/BJ had meeting today. Discuss “Day of Clay” (Lozier) work.
- Liberty Foundation is working on a 5K in September 2026. Board member James Gifford thinks this is good idea and that board could/should help.
- Board member Vern Windsor noted praise for Erika Brant and her fantastic job at Liberty Fest. Mentioned she coordinated with police/fire among others and was professional and very organized. She seemed excited to help and represented the City very well.

ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

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