



**Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting - SPECIAL
MEETING Minutes
Wednesday, December 10, 2025, 5:00 PM
Hybrid Meeting - Zoom & Council Chambers, 616 NE
4th AVE**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5 PM.

ROLL CALL

Present: Ellen Burton, Bud Henson, Katy Daane, Jenny Wu, Jason Irving, Alicia Brazington (online)

Absent: David Dewey

Excused: Tim Hein

Staff: Jacquie Hill, Chris Witkowski

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kelly Putney and Gregg Herrington requested a memorial for a friend, community member and Columbian columnist, Alan Thomas, who passed away.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve Minutes of Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting – October 22, 2025

Presenter: Ellen Burton, Chair

Time Estimate: 5 minutes

A motion was made by Daane, seconded by Henson, and approved unanimously to accept the Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes of October 22, 2025, as written.

MEETING ITEMS

2. Special Events (Update)

Presenter: Chris Witkowski, Parks and Recreation Director

Time Estimate: 5 minutes

Witkowski started with facts about the emu war followed by a thank you and brief update about the Hometown holidays numbers. Jacquie Hill will provide a Hometown Holidays event debrief at the January meeting and will review the upcoming 2026 events.

3. **2026 Parks & Recreation Commission Transition (Update)**

Presenter: Chris Witkowski, Parks and Recreation Director

Time Estimate: 5 minutes

Witkowski stated that the mayor will appoint the new Parks & Recreation Commission member on Monday, December 15. David Dewey is leaving the Commission after 7 years. Susan Palmer will no longer be taking minutes for the meetings after taking on this role for 17 years. Burton thanked Palmer for her commitment, reliability and professionalism over the years.

A Commission chair and vice chair will be elected at the January 2026 meeting and Witkowski will submit a list of potential subcommittees to join in 2026.

4. **Nov 19 Department Planning Session (Update)**

Presenter: Chris Witkowski, Parks and Recreation Director

Time Estimate: 10 minutes

Witkowski spoke about the Parks and Recreation Department Planning Session in November, which included department goals, personal goals, exploration of roles, SOAR exercise, and relationships. Next steps include seeking opportunities for optimization, developing dept & individual goals, and aligning goals with PROS plan.

5. **2026 Department Budget (Discussion)**

Presenter: Chris Witkowski, Parks and Recreation Director

Time Estimate: 15 minutes

Witkowski presented data from 2021-2025 was presented along with anticipated budget numbers for 2026. Clarifying questions were asked by Commissioner Burton and Henson about funds for Capital Improvements, and matching funds for RCO grants.

6. **2026 Q1 Department Preview (Discussion)**

Presenter: Chris Witkowski, Parks and Recreation Director

Time Estimate: 30 minutes

Witkowski presented projects he wants to begin in Q1 2026: E-bike and Vendor policies for safety, Heritage Park changes with parking and dock safety, Regional Funding Task Team and the NRPA Park Metrics benchmarking program. Witkowski also spoke about asset management, park playgrounds, staffing and the RCO grants process.

7. **Pickleball & Tennis Courts (Discussion)**

Presenter: Chris Witkowski, Parks and Recreation Director

Time Estimate: 15 minutes

Witkowski did a review of the proposal to put Pickleball only at Grass Valley Park and Tennis only at Crown Park. 15 public Comments were received with the majority in support of separating the courts. Discussion ensued about the viability of separating the courts.

PROJECT UPDATES

8. **Parks Projects Updates (Update)**

Presenter: Chris Witkowski, Parks and Recreation Director

Time Estimate: 10 minutes

Witkowski gave updates on Crown Park, which included the playground and scout hall; the Sports Field Assessment draft report will be sent to the Commission for review in mid-January with a final draft to Council at the February 17 meeting for approval; Legacy Lands Master Plan draft plan will be completed in mid-January and presented to the Commission in February; Lighting at Skatepark has been fixed.

OTHER ITEMS

9. Commissioners Updates

Presenter: Ellen Burton, Chair

Time Estimate: Remainder of Time

Henson stated that the basketball courts at Crown Park are great.

CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 6:58 PM.