Swansboro Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Agenda

Town of Swansboro

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

a. Introduction of New Board Member

II. Adoption of Minutes

a. Adoption of August 19, 2026 Meeting Minutes

b. Approval of October 21, 2026 Meeting Minutes

III. Reports

a. **Upcoming Programs/Events**

b. **Updates**

c. Pumpkin Derby Review

IV. Old Business

a. Municipal Park Enhancement Project

b. Advisory Board Documents

Bi-law Revisions

Responsibilities

Mission/Vision

Strategic Plan

2027 Work Plan

c. Memorial Program

V. New Business

VI. Comments

VII. Adjournment

Next Meeting

December 16, 2026, 5:30 PM or January 20, 2027, 5:30 PM

Town of Swansboro
Swansboro Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
August 19, 2026

I. Call to Order & Roll Call- The Swansboro Parks & Recreation Advisory Board meeting was called to order at 5:31 PM on Wednesday, August 19, 2026

Present: Deborah, Elena Messenger, Matthew Prane, and Betts Love.

Absent: Ryan Swanson and Jen Steele.

II. Adoption of Minutes

a. Special Meeting Minutes July 8, 2026- The board was given time to review the minutes. During review, members noted that the spelling of a member's last name on page four was incorrect and should read Swanson. Motion to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of July 8, 2026, as corrected, was made by Board Member Elena Messenger and seconded by Betts Love The motion carried by voice vote with no opposition.

III. Reports

a. Monthly Report- Parks and Recreation Director Anna explained that the monthly report was attached to the packet. The report was labeled June, but it covers July. A board member asked how often the playground is re-mulched. Director Anna said it is done about once a year, and sometimes more often if needed.

A board member asked whether the soccer association contracts had increased as previously discussed. Director Anna confirmed they had. The field rate went from $8 per hour to $10 per hour and is continuing gradual increases until it reaches the regular rental rate. An earlier increase was exceedingly small, described as pennies on the hour. Director Anna reported no pushback from the association this year.

b. Upcoming Programs/Events-

Few programs had been planned for September. Pumpkin Patch Party registration remains open on a wait list, so families can sign up without refunds if the event cannot proceed. Instructor-led programs (Tai Chi, adult voice classes), the book club (25 signed up), and theater trips continue; other programs are on hold. October advertising has not begun and is on hold until new staff are hired. Director Stanley said the priority is getting staff in place so reservations can resume.

The board asked about Bark Fest, later in September. Director Stanley will evaluate it and the Halloweenie Roast on September 1. The board asked about the Tunnel to Towers event. Director Stanley said it is a partner event and is not affected.

Later in the meeting, Elena M. shared a mockup of a derby car axle kit and asked opinions what families would pay for an entry that includes the kit, one or more races, and decoration judging, with a one-in-three chance to win a $50 gift card. Board members suggested about $25; other recreation professionals suggested $30 to $35. The full kit costs about $36.50.

The board discussed encouraging repeat participation, including donating kits back for a discount next year ($10 or 25 percent), charging $40 the first year and $30 for returning participants, and recycling parts. The board supported trying the event this year and evaluating the results afterward. Director Stanley said money is budgeted for the Halloweenie Roast and she would review last year's receipts to see what funds are available. The board does not want to remove existing resources or pass all costs to participants.

c. Updates

Staff- Director Stanley reported that a staff member had taken a leave of absence. Since the board last met, the department has also lost three part-time employees. One left for college, one left shortly after being hired for personal reasons, and one is moving on to a new opportunity and will leave at the end of the month. The department is extremely short staffed and will make the best of the situation. Deb has stepped up to help, and most festival responsibilities are returning to Director Stanley.

The board asked whether a hiring freeze was in place. Director replied that it was not. Two people had been hired, but fingerprinting is slow. The state is still processing fingerprints submitted in July, and she had checked on the status earlier in the week.

The board asked about hours. The new hires are part-time positions at 15 to 20 hours per week. A part-time employee may not exceed 1,000 hours per year, which averages about 19 hours per week.

Due to staffing shortages, the department is not accepting new reservations for September, with two exceptions. Reservations already on the books will be honored, and reservations that fall within normal operating hours may be accepted. This applies to the recreation center and to Town Hall since there are not enough staff to cover them. Director Stanley will reassess in the middle of September, once new staff are on board.

IV. New Business

a. 2026-27 Approved Budget- Director Stanley presented the approved budget, which includes the Parks and Recreation and the Festivals budget. Comparisons go back to

the 2023-24 budget. She offered to highlight major cuts, and the board reviewed the documents.

The board asked about the staffing request. Director Stanley explained that the request included one additional full-time recreation coordinator, part-time hourly wage increases and restoration of a part-time recreation assistant position to support the recreation staff with developing and running programs. Director Stanley noted that the part-time line is lower $5,000 lower than last year because it did not include summer camp staffing.

Director Stanley reviewed differences between the current-year budget, the amount requested, and the amount approved. The largest difference, about $137,000, comes from the non-capital outlay, capital outlay, and capital reserve lines. Non-capital outlay was reduced by almost $20,000. That line covers items such as park benches, trash cans, and fitness equipment. Capital outlay includes only the tot lot, which is part of the Capital Improvement Plan. The board noted that it will depend heavily on successful grants if projects are to move forward next year. Another area that was impacted was playground repairs, the amount approved was significantly lower than what was spent last year.

The festivals budget remains the same due to most festival expenses are fixed and increase each year. Part-time salary was an exception. Director Stanley stated that revenue is generated through sponsorships and vendor fees, but do not necessarily break even. The four festivals are budgeted as its own department. Revenue generated by the town's festivals does not return to the parks and recreation budget and expenses remain separate.

The board asked whether festival fees for tents and booths are reviewed. Director Stanley stated staff compared other festivals' pricing every couple of years to stay in line without pricing vendors out. Fees were raised about two years ago. Research revealed the town's fees are comparable to, and in some cases slightly higher than, those of other festivals. An average food vendor pays about $800 to $1,200.

The board asked for comparisons with other festivals. Director Stanley said Jacksonville's festivals are much smaller, and the Seafood Festival is much larger, with about 100,000 attendees and has over $100,000 in sponsorships. It also has an executive director and paid staff dedicated solely to the festival.

V. Old Business

a. Municipal Park Enhancement Project

Director Stanley reported that the agreement has been received and will go before the Board of Commissioners at the next meeting. A site visit with the project team was conducted the prior week. They reviewed the project, walked the area

including the tennis courts, the planned pickleball courts, and the tot lot, and suggested additional project elements.

Director Stanley is looking at adding cameras to the project for the tennis and pickleball courts and expanding to replace the cameras at the recreation center and extending down to the concession stand. The Recreation Center may not be able to be included, but the cameras would at least cover the tennis courts, pickleball courts, and parking lots. The director is still exploring options for park lighting and met with solar lighting company a couple of months ago. Sports lighting options could be explored for courts and Duke lighting for parks.

The board asked whether there were significant safety or security concerns. Director Stanley said the existing cameras are of little use. Footage is pixelated, plates cannot be read, and police cannot follow up on incidents. The cameras she is proposing are used by surrounding municipalities, and the vendor is willing to send test units. They are more expensive but offer advanced features. Staff can search recorded footage by description, such as clothing, car descriptions, and read license plates. The cameras can also count park patrons and vehicles, which would give the department park attendance data it does not currently have. The system would include a 10-year warranty and a 10-year license covering software upgrades. A board member said infrastructure, servers, and subscription costs need to be considered. Director Anna confirmed these are covered under the license and warranty.

Director Stanley discussed additional grant details. Items will be brought to the board only if a vote is needed. The grant requires public community meetings and is currently confirming those organizations. The board asked whether bids for the project would be prepared soon. Director Stanley informed the board no bids or requests for proposals will occur until both grants are received, which will not be until November of 2027.

The board asked about the status of the written response regarding the skatepark equipment. Director Stanley said it is still pending. She wrote the letter a year ago, and the regional consultant is following up.

b. Advisory Board Documents

Board Responsibilities
A board member explained that the expanded responsibilities document was meant to define what each responsibility means in practice, such as advocating for community needs. It was not meant to make every item required. Some content is already covered in the bylaws, such as meeting structure, roles, and approval of minutes. The board discussed whether to set a required number of events for members to attend. It reaffirmed the earlier conclusion that

involvement looks different for each member, depending on their stage of life and existing volunteer commitments. The board agreed that the one firm expectation is to attend board meetings and to notify staff when unable to attend. Other involvement can include bringing community perspectives to meetings.

After the bylaw changes, many of the document's bullets may be unnecessary. The board agreed to defer a detailed discussion. Members will compare the documents and mark what should be removed or adjusted. Director Stanley will assemble all the documents for one combined review once all the discussions are complete to include the mission and vison.

Strategic Plans
The board agreed that the mission, vision, and purpose language is standard and that the documents should complement each other. The board favored aligning the top sections with the strategic plan. No action was taken.

b. Future Agenda Topics

Next Meeting: Recreation Resource Services Presentation
Recreation Resource Services is visiting departments across the state and will attend the board's September meeting. The board will meet the regional consultant, Brittany Ship. Director Anna said the visit comes at a good time given the board is revising the responsibilities and strategic plans. The visit will be an informational presentation, and nothing will be on the agenda unless a vote is needed. The next meeting is September 16, 2026.

Additional Comments/Updates from Director

- Director Stanley announced that the Recreation Center is now in compliance with LWCF project for Municipal Park.
- A board member shared that she had spoken with Director Staney the day before she feels the need to step down from board. She hopes to continue volunteering for events and programs, which she enjoys and feels she does well. Director Stanley confirmed the member would remain on the volunteer list. Board members said the member can make an impact in the community in many ways and thanked her for her service.

VI. Comments

VII. Adjournment- Motion to adjourn was made by Elena M. and seconded by Matthew P. The motion carried by voice vote with no opposition. The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 PM.

Next Meeting September 16, 2026, 5:30 PM

Town of Swansboro
Swansboro Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
October 21, 2026

I. Call to Order & Roll Call: The meeting of the Swansboro Parks & Recreation Advisory Board was called to order on Wednesday, October 21, 2026, at 5:33 PM in Swansboro, NC.

Present:, Matthew Prane, Elena Messenger, Jennifer Steele, and Ryan Swanson.

Absent: Deb Pylypiw

II. Adoption of Minutes

a. September 16, 2026 Meeting Minutes—Matthew Prane made a motion to approve the minutes, and Jenn Steele seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The August meeting minutes remain outstanding and are expected to be presented at the next meeting.

III. Reports

a. **Upcoming Programs/Events-**Recreation programming is expected to resume sometime in November following Sarah's anticipated return; exact dates were not yet available. The annual pickleball tournament is planned for shortly before Thanksgiving

b. Updates- Two staff members have been hired, although one appointment might not work out. Two additional applications were received, with interviews planned after the November 2 grant deadline.

IV. New Business

V. Old Business

a. *Municipal Park Revitalization Project*- Director Stanley reviewed the Municipal Park site master plan draft and grant-related project options. The confirmed facilities included six dedicated pickleball courts, resurfacing of the tennis courts, tot-lot replacement, replacement of the gated Liberty wheelchair swing with a more accessible swing, a modified disc-golf course, security cameras, site work, furnishings, stormwater measures, and sidewalks.

Discussion

The Board reviewed the Municipal Park site master plan and discussed its proposed elements. Director Stanley explained that the plan serves as a guide outlining both immediate improvements and potential future enhancements.

Director Stanley explained that the disc-golf concept had expanded from four holes to an eight-hole course, with the option to extend beyond the wooded area into the park's green space. Board members supported using the additional space and favored a nine-hole course, if feasible, because it could accommodate small tournaments. Members also viewed disc golf as a comparatively achievable, lower-cost new facility that could strengthen the grant application; the budget discussion referenced an approximately $32,000 line item. Director Stanley will ask the design team to evaluate adding a ninth hole and expanding the course into the adjacent green space.

- The board was in favor of replacing the liberty swing. They liked the design and were in agreement that it would be more accessible.

- Director Stanly discussed future mental health or a quiet garden as a small, peaceful space, potentially connected with Ricky's Retreat, memorial programming, outside partnerships, or future grant funding. Members generally favored saving detailed consideration for a later discussion.

- Director Stanley identified minor corrections including updated splash-pad images and labels/pictures that better match proposed amenities.

- Members questioned whether proposed amenities—particularly Safety Town—aligned with community priorities identified in the broader master-planning process. Concerns included Safety Town's outdoor usability, permanent footprint, limited flexibility, site availability, stormwater impacts, and overall cost.

- Members supported presenting the Option 2 area as a flexible, multi-use outdoor activity and programming space rather than limiting it to bocce and lawn games. Possible uses included cornhole, shuffleboard, horseshoes, archery instruction, and temporary Safety Town programming.

- Board members expressed wanting to possibly remove an item from the budget to add lighting and asked if lighting would help the scoring of the grant. The director explained that the grant scores new facilities more highly than renovations. The base option already included qualifying new facilities, while lighting and security cameras would not add points.

- A board member expressed hesitation about recommending the site plan without first reviewing the full document, citing concern that the department could be bound to improvements not supported by the comprehensive master plan. Director Stanley clarified that the document is intended to serve as a guide, as stated on its first page, and provides a flexible foundation for grant applications and future design rather than a fixed commitment to every proposed improvement.

Recommended Action: To recommend and approve the site master plan for Municipal Park and to recommend one of the three options provided for the Municipal Park Revitalization Project.

Action: Matthew Prane made a motion to support and recommend the site master plan for Municipal Park and was seconded by Ryan Swanson. The motion passed unanimously. Matthew Prane made a motion to recommend and approve Option 2 (Multi-purpose/lawn game area) and was seconded by Jenn Steele. The motion was passed unanimously.

VI. Comments

VII. Adjournment- A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 pm by Matt P. and seconded by Ryan and all were in favor.

Next Meeting November 18, 2026

STAYING BUSY
- November 2026 -
Town of Swansboro Parks & Recreation

All activities take place at the Recreation Center (830 Main St Ext) in Swansboro, unless otherwise noted. The Recreation Center's hours are as follows: Mon-Fri, 9 AM-7 PM, Sat, 8 AM-12 PM, closed Sunday. Call (910) 326-2600 for more info. Be sure to visit our website at **swansboro.recdesk.com** to register for programs/events.

Adult Programs

Onslow County Senior Services Nutrition Site:
Contact Onslow County Senior Services for more information.
Mon-Fri, 9 AM-12 PM

Fitness Programs

2026 Open Pickleball League
January 2026 – December 2026
The 2026 Pickleball Open Play Membership will start January 1, 2026 and run until the end of the year, December 31, 2026.

Tai Chi
October 29th – December 10th 2 PM
Join Swansboro Parks & Recreation for Tai Chi with instructor Sifu Dr. Harold McMillion for a 6-week series, every Thursday starting at 2:00PM at the Swansboro Recreation Center. Tai chi is a series of gentle physical exercises and stretches. Each posture flows into the next without pause, ensuring that your body is in constant motion.

Dinksgiving Pickleball Tournament
November 21st 9 AM
Celebrate the season with some friendly competition at our Dinksgiving Tournament! Entry is $20 per person, which includes tournament play, raffles, food, and fun.

This is a mixed doubles tournament. You can sign up with a partner or register solo and be paired with someone. Substitutes are welcome in case of no-shows. Prizes will be awarded to 1st and 2nd place winners. The tournament will follow a double elimination format, with each match being single elimination. Register today and join us for a day of pickleball, food, and fun!

Events

Christmas Flotilla
November 27th 5 PM
Enjoy a magical evening at the Swansboro Christmas Flotilla, featuring beautifully decorated boats illuminated with holiday lights as they glide along the waterfront. Boats will enter the harbor at approximately 6 PM and circle for 20–30 minutes. Families can also visit with Santa, enjoy delicious food and warm drinks, including hot cider and cocoa, and take in the festive holiday atmosphere.
Have a boat and love the holiday season? Join this beloved Swansboro tradition by decorating your vessel and participating in the Christmas Flotilla. Showcase your creativity and holiday spirit as you light up the waterfront and help make this special community event a memorable evening f

Programs

Thankful Sprouts
November 6th 10 AM & 11:30 AM
Welcome to our Sprout Scouts program, designed specifically for our littlest ones ages 1 to 2 at the Swansboro Parks and Recreation Department! Our program aims to provide a stimulating and engaging environment where toddlers can explore, create, and play in a safe and nurturing setting.

Tiny Turkeys
November 20th 10 AM
Welcome to our Tiny Trekkers program, designed specifically for our little ones ages 3-6 at the Swansboro Parks and Recreation Department! Our program aims to provide a stimulating and engaging environment where children can explore, create, and play in a safe and nurturing setting.

Be on the lookout for additional programs
Register for programs at:
swansboro.recdesk.com
Like us on Facebook: Town of Swansboro
Follow us on Instagram: @swansboro_recre8


Christmas
WREATH
DECEMBER 1ST | 6 P PM
SWANSBORO RECREATION CENTER
$25

FROST & FOAM

Christmas Mug

DECEMBER 3RD | 6 PM



$15/PERSON

REGISTER:SWANSBORO.RECDESK.COM

SWANSBORO RECREATION CENTER

SantaFest

Saturday, December 5th

10 AM - 1 PM

Swansboro Recreation Center

CRAFTS PHOTOS WITH SANTA & MRS. CLAUS

HOT COCOA & POPCORN BAR GAMES



Holly Jolly Sprouts

Friday, December 11th

10 AM & 11:30 AM

Swansboro Recreation Center

Ages: 1-2

Cost: $5/child

Sensory Bins ✻ Crafts ✻ Snack

Register: Swansboro.RecDesk.com

MERRY LITTLE *Trekkers*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18TH
10 AM
AGES: 3-6
$5/CHILD

Register: Swansboro.RecDesk.com



SWANSBORO PARKS & RECREATION

UGLY SWEATER PICKLEBALL SMASH

DECEMBER 18TH
1 PM - 4 PM
$5
food / pickleball / contest

REGISTER:
SWANSBORO.RECDESK.COM

BY-LAWS

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

ARTICLE 1:

A. The Swansboro Parks and Recreation Board acts in an advisory capacity to the Mayor, Board of Commissioners and Parks and Recreation Director. The Board will advise in matters affecting parks and recreation policies, programs, personnel, finances, the acquisition and disposal of land and properties related to Town Programs, open spaces, environmental conservation and land preservation.

B. Duties and responsibilities include:
   a. Makes recommendations to set aside for use as parks, playgrounds, recreation centers, water areas, any lands or buildings owned or leased by the Town, suggest improvements of such buildings and structures within the funds allocated to the Parks and Recreation Department.
   b. Advise in the acquisition of lands and structures through gifts, purchase, lease or loan.
   c. Advise in the acceptance of any grant, gift, bequest or donation, ay personal or real property offered or made available for parks and recreation purposes and which is judged to be of present or possible future use for recreation or land preservation.
   d. Review the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan annually and provide recommendations.
   e. Advise the Mayor, Board of Commissioners, and Parks and Recreation Director on various Parks and Recreation related policy matters which have been referred to the Board.
   f. Serve as a sounding board for the Parks and Recreation Director to test plans and idea to evaluate initiatives, plans, and operational strategies.
   g. ~~Advocate for local Parks and Recreation services.~~ Advocate for the advancement and visibility of Parks and Recreation Services and their benefits within the community.
   h. The actions of the Parks and Recreation Board shall be advisory only and shall not constitute policy of the Town and shall not be binding upon the Town Board of Commissioners or Town. The Mayor, Board of Commissioners and/or Parks and Recreation Director may adopt all or part of any recommendation of the Board, with or without changes as Town policy.
   i. Recommend ~~and propose~~ new programs, events, and services that enhance recreational opportunities and benefits the residents of the Town.

ARTICLE 2:

A. Regular meetings of the Swansboro Parks and Recreation Board shall be held at 5:30 pm on the third Wednesday of each month and shall be held at the Swansboro Recreation Center, or at some designated place. Discussion of meeting frequency.

B. Special meetings may be called by the Chairman or upon request from a majority of the body. At least forty-eight (48) hour notice of the time and place of such meeting shall be given by the Parks and Recreation Director to each member and appropriate media organizations. Items of business at such special meetings shall be limited to those set out in the notice of the meeting.

C. A majority of the members constitute a quorum.

D. The order of business at regular meetings shall be as follows:
   a. Roll Call
   b. Approval of minutes of previous meetings
   c. Public Comments
   d. Special Reports – Committee Reports
   e. Old Business
   f. New Business
   g. Directors Comments, Board Comments
   h. Adjournment

E. Parks and Recreation Board members serve at the pleasure of the Board of Commissioners. However, any member who has three (3) consecutive unexcused absences may have their record of attendance reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Board. If deemed appropriate, the Parks and Recreation Board may recommend to the Board of Commissioners that the member be replaced due to lack of participation. If unable to attend a meeting, a member should notify the Board Chair of the Parks and Recreation Director in advance of the meeting.

F. The Parks and Recreation Board shall be composed of seven (7) members, 5 in-town and 2 ETJ area members.

G. Initial appointments shall be for staggered terms with all subsequent appointments being for three (3) year terms. Should a vacancy occur, appointment will be made to fill the unexpired term. There is no limit on number of terms served as long as the Board of Commissioners approve reappointments.

ARTICLE 3:

A. Board members must nominate and elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman each year. The nomination and election of the Chair and Vice-Chairman shall take place at the beginning of the regularly scheduled meeting in January.

B. The elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall take office immediately.

ARTICLE 4:

A. It shall be the duty of a Chairman to preside at all meetings and to sign official papers.

B. The Vice Chairman shall perform duties of the Chairman in the absence of the latter.

C. The Chairman shall have a vote in all Parks and Recreation Board matters. The vote of a majority of those members present shall be sufficient to decide matters before the Board.

ARTICLE 5:

Minutes of the meeting shall be taken of the Parks and Recreation Board. It shall be the duty of the Parks and Recreation Director to notify members of all meetings, to keep a permanent record of the proceedings of all meetings and to have a copy of the proceedings of each meeting sent to each member.

ARTICLE 6:

A. Committees shall be appointed by the Chairman. Vacancies on the committees shall be filled by the Chairman at any meeting.

B. Committees may be created and appointed for such purposes as deemed necessary at any meeting.

C. The Chairman, Town Manager, and Parks and Recreation Director shall be ex-officio members of all committees and, as such, notified of all committee meetings.

Date: _____ Chairman: _____

Attest: _____

Swansboro Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Board Member Responsibilities and Expectations

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1. Responsibility to the Community
Board members shall:

- Advocate for the recreational needs and interests of the community.
- Attend and participate in Parks and Recreation programs and events when feasible to remain informed and engaged.
- Listen to community input and ask thoughtful, constructive questions.
- Support and communicate recommendations with the Board once formally adopted.
- Promote and advocate for Parks and Recreation services, programs, and initiatives.

2. Responsibility to the Board
Board members shall:

- Conduct themselves with professionalism, respect, and courtesy at all times.
- Be punctual and prepared for all meetings.
- Review materials in advance and remain informed on agenda topics.
- Contribute meaningfully to discussions by offering informed, constructive input.
- Respect differing viewpoints and engage in productive dialogue.
- Represent the Board as organized, professional, and aligned with its advisory role.

3. Communication Standards
Board members shall communicate in a manner that is:

- Professional, respectful, and solution-oriented.
- Consistent with public meeting laws and transparency requirements.

Approved methods of communication include:

- Email (for informational purposes; not for deliberation among a quorum)
- Phone conversations (one-on-one)
- In-person discussions

Important:
Communication involving a quorum (majority) of Board members regarding Board business—whether in person, by phone, or electronically—may constitute an official meeting and must comply with applicable open meetings laws. Members shall avoid group communications that could be interpreted as deliberation outside a properly noticed meeting.

4. Bylaws

- The Board operates in accordance with its adopted bylaws and applicable Town ordinances.
- Bylaws shall be reviewed annually.
- Board members may recommend amendments during regular meetings.
- The Board shall not act outside the authority established by Town ordinance or its advisory capacity.

5. Strategic Plan

- The Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan serves as a guiding framework for Board recommendations.

- Board members shall align discussions and recommendations with the goals and priorities outlined in the Plan.
- The Board reviews the Plan annually and may recommend updates as appropriate.

6. Meeting Structure

Regular meetings generally follow the structure outlined in the bylaws:

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Public Comment
4. Reports (Staff and Committees)
5. Old Business
6. New Business
7. Director and Board Comments
8. Adjournment

7. Vacancies

- Board composition and vacancies are determined by the Board of Commissioners in accordance with Town policy.
- Current vacancies shall be communicated as needed.

8. General Expectations

Board members are expected to:

- Provide comments that are constructive, relevant, and aligned with agenda topics.
- Request agenda items in advance through the Chair or Parks and Recreation Director.
- Follow all bylaws, policies, and applicable laws.
- Act in the best interest of the community and the Parks and Recreation Department.
- Support the Board's advisory role by offering recommendations, including ideas for programs and services that benefit the Town.

NRPA Advisory Board Member Resource Guide

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations!
You have volunteered, been appointed, been nominated or been cajoled into serving on your community parks and recreation board. Your next question is, or should be, "*Now what do I do?"*

The training and orientation available to citizen board members is as varied as the existing agencies, geographic areas of the country, and types of boards. This Resource Guide seeks to present an overview of information needed to assist citizen board members in the area of parks and recreation to perform their roles effectively. This Resource Guide was created primarily as a tool for new citizen board members, particularly those who do not have access to meetings and conferences that offer training opportunities for board members.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Citizen Branch encourages attendance at face-to-face gatherings because of the invaluable networking that occurs, but sometimes attendance is not possible due to time or agency budget constraints. By developing a printed resource, we are able to reach more citizen board members. NRPA and the Citizen Branch of NRPA offer sessions and training opportunities as part of the NRPA Annual Congress (usually held in September or October) and at regional meetings and schools. These trainings offer information that is specifically oriented toward citizen board members and their agency directors as well as an opportunity to network with other citizens and professionals.

This Resource Guide also serves as a refresher for long-time board members who want to stay current with the latest educational materials. Other relevant resources can be found at www.nrpa.org.

BOARD STRUCTURES

There are three basic board structures among the majority of park and recreation boards: independent boards, s, and semi- independent board independent boards. The semi-independent board independent boards are most often combinations of the first two but tend more strongly toward one or the other type of structure. The three boards are considerably different in their function and level of authority. Most of the information provided in this guide will apply to advisory board members; however a description of the three types of board is included below so that the reader will clearly understand the different board structures.

The Advisory Board

The advisory board is typically associated with a park(s) and/or recreation department administered by a division of government: state, county, parish or municipality. In most cases, the governmental entity is administered by an elected body, which has management and policymaking responsibility for a broad range of governmental services including park(s) and/or recreation. This elected body has the final authority for making all decisions but often looks to an advisory board for recommendations and input regarding decisions that affect the park(s) and recreation department. The advisory board may provide community input to the department director and staff regarding facility operations and programming.

The optimum size for an advisory board is generally five to nine members but larger advisory boards do exist. Boards composed of at-large members, representatives of the entire community, regardless of where they live, their particular interests or memberships, normally fall within this range.

Larger advisory boards often represent geographic areas, school districts or school service areas, or major sub groups that make up the parks and recreation community such as youth and adult sports associations, tree commissions, natural areas, friends groups, arts organizations and preschool or teen councils to name some of the most common.

In the case of at-large advisory boards, members are appointed by the elected body either as a whole, or by the elected chairperson, mayor, governor, etc. In some cases, existing advisory board members will provide the first screening of new members, making recommendations to the elected official(s), who may or may not appoint the recommendations. Appointments are generally for a specific term

In the case of an advisory board representing specific groups or geographic areas, the representative can be a political appointment, chosen by the organization they represent or they may serve because of becoming the president or chair of their respective group. In this case, it is possible to have some representatives change annually while others serve for various lengths of time, depending on the election criteria of the individual organizations.

In all cases, the role of this type of park(s) and/or recreation board is just what the name implies: advisory. The group serves as a resource to the decision makers, be that staff, director or elected officials. The advisory board can convey how the citizens as a whole, or the segment/organization/program they represent, feel about policies, programs, proposals, or decisions.

The Independent Board

(May also be know as an Administrative, Governing, or Governance Board)
The independent board is an autonomous group whose final authority lies with the board members, not another unit of local government. This type of board develops and implements policy; buys, sells and holds title to property, assesses taxes, and has the final authority in financial matters. If a board is the governing body of a public agency, members are usually elected, often in a non-partisan election, by the citizenry within the agency boundaries. In rare instances, a head of government such as a mayor or a city council or county board of commissioners may appoint public agency independent board members. However, when one comes to public board service in any way other than public election, it is usually to serve on an advisory or semi-independent board instead of an independent board. If the board functions on behalf of a nonprofit organization, the members or recipients of services may elect the board or board members are sometimes appointed by officers or elected by a portion (other board members perhaps) of the membership.

Independent boards range in size from five to fifty plus. The majority of local park and recreation agency boards are composed of five to seven members. Private sector and nonprofit boards dealing with parks and recreation are quite varied. Local agency boards are generally elected at-large and do not represent specific areas or interests. In fact, it is important for the members of these boards to have a “big picture” view. Some independent boards may also look to advisory boards and local friends groups to provide input related to geographical areas or special interests.

The roles and responsibilities of the independent board are the most clearly defined. These boards are the final authority on all matters related to their domain.

Governmental independent boards are determined by statutes that spell out and define their right to exist in a state, county, parish or municipality. Likewise, non-profit independent boards are governed by state and local statute and established by the organizations' charter and bylaws.

The Semi-independent Board

(May include aspects of both the independent or governing board and the advisory board)
The semi-independent park and recreation board is a hybrid of the independent board and the advisory board and has some aspects of both of these two boards. Members serving on a semi-independent board may be either appointed by the elected entity to which they answer, or as in the advisory board, hold their seat by virtue of having been elected to chair another group or organization, which is represented on the semi-independent board. (See paragraph 4 of the advisory board above).

What separates the semi-independent board from the advisory board is that the semi-independent board still advises another independent body, which is usually elected and a unit of government. The semi-independent board does have some decision-making power where its decisions are not subject to a higher authority. Often these semi-independent boards will have limited policy-making authority for park operations, programming fees, and facility operating hours so long as they operate within the guidelines of federal, state or local codes and ordinances. In addition, the semi-independent board may advise the independent body in areas such as staffing, park development, and property sales and acquisitions. Some semi-independent boards have general policymaking responsibility, do not have taxing authority but may hire their director. Taxing authority is the major distinguishing feature among the boards.

In some cases, the semi-independent board will be found when two or more jurisdictions have merged or have overlapping geographical boundaries. This often occurs when a formerly independent park and/or recreation board with property, programs, and taxing authority, is annexed into an existing municipality or when a new municipality is formed. While the employees, fiscal functions, even ownership of the facilities may transition into this new or existing entity, the authority to collect taxes to operate the program may remain with the existing board. In this case, the semi-independent board retains their control over the funds raised from their taxing authority but those funds may or may not be the total budget required for the operation of the agency. This arrangement requires a cooperative working relationship among the funding/policy-making entities.

Other semi-independent boards may actually operate as an advisory board in certain aspects, and be a legally constituted not-for-profit board doing fundraising and programming. This is often found when one entity or unit of federal, state or municipal government, or an independent park board, owns the facilities but the semi-independent board advises them as to the development and programming of these facilities and also does fundraising and some programming in the name of the facility or under the auspices of the independent board.

These varying types of boards are as different as the communities or locales where they exist. The important thing to remember is that they only have decision-making authority for part of the operation and they must refer other recommendations or decisions to a higher authority for a final decision.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and Responsibilities of a Citizen Board Member

If you are a recently appointed board member or a prospective member, this section is especially for you. First, allow us to congratulate you and extend our appreciation for your community involvement and your commitment to providing high quality park and recreation

services to your community. This section will provide you with a perspective of what you should expect as a board member, what roles and responsibilities come with the position and a listing of some questions that you may have and some answers to those questions. The NRPA hopes you find this information helpful and wishes you the best in your service as a citizen board member in your community.

Role of a Citizen Board Member

Most of this section pertains to all types of boards. You will need to understand the function and level of authority for your specific board and determine what information is applicable for your use. Citizen boards play a critical role in public parks and recreation, offering agencies an advantage in gaining public trust, fostering partnerships and securing necessary funds, which allow their organizations to thrive. Citizen board governance identifies parks and recreation agencies as accountable to the community. Citizen board members also lend organizations their personal credibility. This becomes increasingly important in raising public and private funds, which can be a necessary and critical component to your agency's existence. Finally, citizen board members bring a vision and enthusiasm to the cause. Your infectious drive and dedication can literally propel an organization to new heights.

The degree to which citizen board members benefit public parks and recreation agencies depends, in part, on their relationship with their director. Staff can act either to negate or to multiply the impact of citizen board members. Perhaps this quote by board development expert John Carver says it best:

"No single relationship in the organization is as important as that between the board and its chief executive officer. Probably no single relationship is as easily misconstrued or has such dire potential consequences. That relationship, well conceived, can set the stage for effective governance and management." John Carver, 1990.

The role of the citizen board is directly related to the age and stage of development of the organization for which it serves. The external environment, culture and values of each member, as well as the habit and leadership of its chair and executive also affect the role of the citizen board.

While this statement is particularly true of the independent board, is it also true, to a lesser extent for other boards. Good relations with and among the board members, especially the board chair, can affect the success of the parks and recreation professional's career in any community. The citizen board offers multiple perspectives and skills and helps sharpen organizational focus.

Some advisory and semi-independent boards work under the policies and procedures established by their governing body. Every board should adopt a comprehensive set of by-laws or operating procedures. Advisory boards may need to have their rules or procedures approved by their governing body but it is important that they, too, have by-laws or governance procedures so everyone has a clear understanding of roles, expectations and responsibilities.

The by-laws or the rules of procedure or operation should clearly identify the administrative and governance policies of the agency or department. These may be separate documents or one document with specific chapters or sections. By-laws should include, but not be limited to; board structure, terms of board members, and how business will be conducted during all meetings. Illustrated in Appendix C –Board Manual Template is an outline of the various

components that should be considered in a comprehensive set of by-laws and/or governance procedures.

It may be the responsibility of the board and chief executive/ director to recommend or develop policy.

Many policies concerning the day-to-day operations of the agency are the sole responsibility of the director. It is the responsibility of the chief executive/ director to inform board members of implemented policies. Board members should not attempt to usurp the authority of the chief executive or staff at any level. The chief executive is hired to direct the agency and oversee the day-to-day operations of the agency.

Another role of the board may be to plan for the future. Long-range planning can be a time consuming process but it is necessary for a well functioning agency/department. Potential future problems, needs and opportunities must be identified. The key to the success of this planning is the corresponding development of a long-range financial plan that properly allocates identified resources to implement the plans. Significant levels of financial and human resources are required to develop a meaningful and useful long-range plan. The board and director/chief executive should conduct these planning processes together. The board should avoid delegating this important responsibility solely to the director/chief executive and staff. .

The advisory board and director will likely need to brief and gain support from their governing body before moving on to the next step. It is then the responsibility of the director/chief executive to prepare reports and inform the board about progress, performance and financial status on a pre-determined timeline.

Another vital function of citizen board members is to establish and foster relationships with other governmental and community entities. The park and recreation agency is part of the public system. It should be the goal of each board member and the director/chief executive to build and maintain healthy working relationships with service groups, the Chamber of Commerce, religious groups, neighborhood associations and civic associations. Good relationships with other tax-supported units of local government like school districts, city or village government, police, fire, county officials, etc, are also very important. . Some helpful hints in ensuring this are to:

- Involve groups in future planning - especially if it will affect their operations.
- Send groups agency brochures and publications to keep them informed about the agency.
- Invite groups to important events, groundbreakings, dedications, and ribbon cuttings.
- Coordinate with other agencies to avoid duplications of services or overstepping established boundaries.
- Encourage and look for partnership opportunities.

The most important function of a citizen board member is working with the community residents. Whether elected or appointed to a board position, you are representing the residents served by the agency and must be fair and impartial when working with the public. As an ambassador to the public, a citizen board member shall endorse the following protocol:

- Commit to conducting agency affairs in a manner that wins public respect and support for the agency and guarantees its integrity in the community.

- Welcome suggestions and constructive criticism from the public. Board members should seek opportunities to explain to the public the services and programs of the agency and to correct false impressions. It is important to bring such feedback to the attention of the chief executive/ director.
- Represent the interests of the entire community responsibly and responsively.
- Have knowledge and understanding of the laws and legal requirements of the jurisdiction in which the park and recreation agency exists.

Responsibilities of a Citizen Board Member:
Citizen board members are expected to:

- Attend meetings regularly - commitment is paramount.
- Do your homework and contribute to the discussions - review the information provided, be prepared with questions and relevant discussion points. Clarification of agenda items or need for additional information should be discussed with the director/chief executive prior to the meeting.
- Vote based on what you believe is best for the community, recognizing that you may need to occasionally compromise. A board member must be willing to abide by and support the decisions, policies and programs agreed upon by the board.
- Be aware of the importance and value of parks and recreation in your community– gain knowledge, ask questions, and work closely and in cooperation with the director/chief executive.
- Resist political, personal and special interest pressures – have courage, maintain integrity, set high personal standards for yourself and fellow board members, and avoid potential or perceived conflicts of interest.
- Be familiar with and adhere to Robert's Rules of Order or whatever source your agency has identified for meeting protocol.
- Serve as your agency's ambassador – promote and support agency events, programs, services, etc.
- Encourage citizen participation – recruit your fellow residents to participate in agency events, programs and services, and encourage them to volunteer in the park system.

The Role of the Citizen Advisory Board Chair
The role of the citizen board member chair, if the advisory board has a citizen chair, is different than the role of other citizen board members. More responsibilities are given to the board chair than to other board members. If the advisory board has a citizen chair the responsibilities of that position are usually clearly defined. Some of these responsibilities may include being a planner, organizer, communicator, consensus builder, caretaker, housekeeper and troubleshooter. All of these are examples of leadership, which is why the role of board chair can be summed up in the term "leader".

A citizen board chair must be willing to invest time and energy in a job that commands the respect of both the governing board members and the community served. , Board members look to the chair for guidance, support and leadership. The board chair must assess and direct board and committee assignments to ensure that the work is on target with the vision of the organization and achieved in the most effective way.

Responsibilities of the Citizen Advisory Board Chair:
The advisory board chair maybe expected to:

- Lead board meetings - making sure everything runs smoothly.
- Prepare the agenda and other information needed for the citizen board meeting in cooperation with the director/chief executive.

- Coordinate the planning of the board's activities for the year and ensure that an ongoing planning process exists.
- Ensure that new citizen board members are provided an orientation to the organization.
- Encourage others to voice their opinion.
- Help organize and maintain committees of the citizen board.
- Be aware of the performance of all citizen advisory board members and committees. *This role generally falls to the elected official of the local unit of government (City/County/Township/State) for an advisory board.*

Deleted: committees.*This*

Conducting the meetings of the board is an important chair responsibility. One key to a successful citizen board relationship involves effectively run meetings. Some pointers that the chair and director/chief executive should consider:

- Putting thought into the agenda design and clarifying desired outcomes.
- Using meetings as board development opportunities, such as communicating what is new in the field, hearing from "customers", having an in-depth review of a popular program or issue, etc.
- Getting materials out ahead of time so board members have time to prepare for the meeting.

By keeping the following goals in mind during meetings, the board chair's leadership qualities will be obvious.

- Start and end the meeting on time.
- Create and maintain a positive tone during the meeting.
- Keep the meeting moving by following the agenda.
- Introduce each agenda item and facilitate discussion.
- Do not let discussions stray from the agenda issue.
- Understand and have a working knowledge of parliamentary procedures.
- Bring items to a conclusion.

Just because you are leader of the citizen board does not mean that you have any less right or responsibility to participate as a board member. Although you may want to let others voice their opinion first, you are certainly entitled to express your own opinion. However, your opinion should not dominate nor force itself onto other members of the citizen board.

The Role of the Director/Chief Executive

A director/chief executive is responsible for the daily on-going operations of the park and recreation agency. In order to perform these duties, the director/chief executive today wears many hats. Today's director/chief executive must be a visionary, a leader, a manager, a communicator, a conflict solver and a technology wizard. He or she must add value by increasing resources via fundraising, grant writing, fee-for-service contracts, partnerships, levies, etc. He or she may face difficult challenges including budgets that are tightly stretched, not allowing much variance or discretionary spending. This makes it difficult to respond to new opportunities, especially when these opportunities present themselves between budget cycles. Part of the growing complexity within parks and recreation agencies involves technology infrastructure. Technology advancements can increase the effectiveness of an agency, but require significant investment of time and fiscal resources for successful implementation. To accomplish all of this, including the long-range goals of the organization, the director/chief executive must continually enhance the visibility and image of the organization. Enhancing and developing the board can extend the agency's visibility in the community for optimum effectiveness.

The director/chief executive encourages staff development, and prioritizes work for the board or (commission/council/administrator/city manager and staff, always keeping his or her eyes on the highest priorities.

The Responsibilities of the Director/Chief Executive

The beginning of a relationship can set the tone for the lifetime of that relationship. This rule applies to the unique association between the director/chief executive and his or her board.

In an advisory board, this may have already been set forth by the governing body or in local statute or code. It is especially important to provide a thorough orientation program for new board members. The director/chief executive may even want to consider an informal "mentoring" program. See Appendix D for the Citizen Board Orientation Manual template.

The director/chief executive has little margin for error. The director/chief executive must report the input of the advisory board to another commission/ board and/or elected official(s). Staff, the advisory board, and the governing entity are counting on him or her, so it is important not to under-manage. The director/chief executive must build a strong relationship with all board members, including the chair. Both roles are critical to any organization, so the two must support each other. It is important for members of an advisory board to understand that the director/manager is responsible to another elected governance body (city/county/township council/commission or other unit of government) and in many cases to another paid administrator (city/county manager).

The most important relationship to the successful operation of any agency is the one among the city/county/township manager, the commission/council, and the director/chief executive. The relationship must maintain open communications, clear expectations, vision and direction, trust, and mutual respect for the roles each plays. Care must be taken to avoid misunderstandings and misperceptions of both verbal and non-verbal communications.

All parties are responsible for the development and maintenance of these relationships. Identification and mutual understanding of the expectations on behalf of the board members, governing officials, and director/chief executive is the key to forging an effective relationship and achieving smooth day-to-day operations. While there is no single prescription for an effective partnership and various dynamics and personalities come into play, a clearly defined set of guidelines and parameters of where one authority begins and another stops can help clarify each party's role and responsibility.

Guidelines for Advisory Board and Director/Chief Executive

The director/chief executive must be trained and educated in the ability to lead the delivery of high quality park, recreation, open space, and conservation services to the community.

In the case of an advisory board, the director/manager and staff are employees of the local unit of government that has authority. .

The board shall communicate its direction to the director/chief executive corporately or through the chair of the board. Routine communications and informational flow from board members may take place directly with the director/chief executive. Advisory board members should recognize that the director/manager receives his/her direction from a city/county manager/administrator who manages under the direction of the mayor and commission/council or directly from elected official(s).

An advisory board working within a local unit of government such as a city, township, county, parish or state does not generally have final decision making or policy setting authority. The director/manager of the department generally works for a city manager/administrator or, under certain forms of government, a strong mayor or a professional commissioner in charge of two or three other departments in addition to parks and/or recreation. In this case, the following chart indicates the possible roles that the board and the director/manager of a local unit of government department play within a successful partnership towards effective agency operations.

Advisory Board/ Director-Manager Responsibility Chart

	Director/Manager	Board
Accounting/auditing	-oversees -reviews & monitors monthly financial reports from accounting department -identifies problem areas	-reviews reports and assists with establishing budget priorities. -may assist in budget presentations
Attorneys	-works with legal department or contract attorney	
Board meetings	-prepares agenda with board input and chair assistance -forwards information/direction from local unit of government	-requires progress reports from director/manager -forwards recommendations to decision makers
Budget	-plans -develops -administers -recommends funding sources -submits to the city manager/administrator/finance director	-makes recommendations to director/manager -supports at budget hearings -supports/lobbies for approval or increases -defends cuts or lobbies for reinstatement.
Consultants	-conducts background checks -prepares specifications -interviews candidates -submits choices to the local unit of government as a report to the council/commission	-reviews applicants/proposals -makes recommendation to elected officials
Facilities	-develops reports and master plans -reviews reports and forwards recommendations to council/commission	-reviews reports and master plans -gathers public comments, if appropriate. -makes recommendations to local unit of government if necessary and/or appropriate
Lobbying	-provides information on local, state and national legislative initiatives	-does not participate in partisan politics - lobbies for legislation and funding at local, state and federal levels under the guidance/ authority of the local unit of government
Maintenance	-ensures well maintained and safe facilities and park lands -develops standards -develops risk management plan	- may review director/manager guidelines for facility development and standards and may make recommendations to local unit of government

Personnel	-recruits with assistance of personnel department -hires with assistance of personnel department -supervises -trains -evaluates	- may provide input to personnel department on job description for director/manager -if asked, reviews applications and/or participates in the interview panel for director/manager
Planning	-conducts research -develops goals and objectives -hires consultants	-holds public meetings on plans -makes recommendations to elected officials
Policies	-researches -drafts language	-reviews -recommends to director/manager, city manager/administrator or elected officials, depending upon procedures in place.
Public	-actively seeks public input -works with citizen advisory Councils, civic groups, and neighborhood associations -addresses complaints	-solicits public input -receives complaints and refers to chief executive for resolution -identifies public input on board meeting agenda
Vendor contracts	-reviews bids -recommends to board or directly to elected officials of local government depending upon procedures in place	- may review -may make recommendation to elected officials

Source: Adapted from; Are You on Board? Theodore B. Flickinger, Ph.D.[1]

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS for/by CITIZEN BOARD MEMBERS

How do I know I can be an effective citizen board member?

Let's face it, not everyone is cut out for this job. For you to be successful as a board member, you must be interested in serving the community in this capacity. You should also closely examine your motivations and abilities to serve the community in an effective manner. The following self-examination chart, found here and on the next page, will be helpful in determining whether you have what it takes to be an effective citizen board member:

ANSWER EACH QUESTION TRUE OR FALSE.	TRUE	FALSE
I understand my role as a member of the park board/advisory committee.		
I understand my relationship to the agency's chief executive and other employees.		
I make positive contributions toward helping the board establish clearly stated and coordinated goals and objectives.		
I am committed to all citizens of the community or district.		
I am prepared for every board meeting.		
I always ask the director/chief executive for an explanation in private if I don't like something that a staff member is doing.		
I support needed legislation at both the state and federal levels.		
I attend educational meetings and conferences to further my knowledge as a board member.		
I am comfortable receiving and considering citizen suggestions and/or complaints.		

[1] Theodore B. Flickinger, PHD, Are You On Board?, p.111

Deleted: ,

I respect my fellow board members.		
I recognize excellent performance of the staff.		
I encourage and support effective public information programs.		
I encourage effective press, media, and public awareness programs.		
I regularly set aside time to study and learn so I can become a better board member.		
I am able to function effectively under pressure.		
I try to be reasonable and consider the workload of those involved if I make requests.		
I show a willingness to try new ideas, approaches or methods.		
I ask questions when I don't understand a policy, suggestion, recommendation or situation.		
I try to treat board members and staff in an unbiased, impartial and friendly manner.		
I try to create a feeling of openness, unity and enthusiasm when dealing with agency matters.		
I maintain a sense of humor.		
I try to be conscious of the needs and problems that exist on the board.		
When asked to serve on a committee or handle a special assignment, I do so with accountability and pride in the pending results.		
I know the importance of attending all board and related committee meetings.		
I have the courage of my convictions and will voice my concerns during discussions, but will fully support the group decision once it is made and is final.		
I identify with the agency's purpose, goals and objectives, and I put the welfare of the community ahead of my own interests.		
I believe that I am capable of earning the trust and mutual respect of my fellow board members, staff and the citizens of the community.		
I believe my community deserves high quality park and recreation services within the community.		
I believe that all public business should be discussed at an open public meeting, except for the areas of land acquisition and personnel matters.		

*If you answered **TRUE** to 25 or more of the aforementioned questions, you are or will be an effective citizen board member.* Source: Adapted from Are You on Board?, Theodore B. Flickinger, Ph.D. [2]

What is the advisory board's role?

The role of an advisory board depends upon the board's charter, by-laws and legal authority bestowed on it by the governing board. In almost all cases the citizen advisory board is only advisory in nature.

What should be covered in a board meeting?

The advisory board should focus agenda items on issues put to it by the governing authority. The advice provided by the advisory board should promote the organization's vision and mission, not day-to-day operations unless so requested. Public sessions should be focused on:

- Long range planning
- Design approval
- Committee reports
- Community/visitor comment
- Policy Issues

Citizen board members should be actively involved in the work of the board. When they have information that needs to be discussed by the entire board, members should contact the board chair, or in some cases the director/chief executive, to have this item placed on the next meeting agenda.

The board-meeting packet should include the agenda, director's report, supporting material, meeting minutes, and committee reports.

[2] Theodore B. Flickinger, Are You On Board?, p 40-43

How should the citizen board operate?
A sample agenda for a park and recreation advisory board could include:

1. Call to order
2. Call the roll
3. Recognize visitors
4. Approve the agenda
5. Review previous meeting minutes
6. Report on good news
7. Present the director's report
8. Present committee reports
9. Conduct unfinished business
10. Call for new business
11. Announcements
12. Public comments
13. Adjournment

What role should citizen board members play with the media?
The media can quote anything said in an open forum, but the citizen advisory board chair should be the only individual addressing the media on behalf of the advisory board.

What are the main tasks of the advisory board? These include serving on board committees, long range and strategic planning, making recommendations and representing the public point of view to the elected representatives of a unit of government.

What can a citizen board member do to remain effective during their tenure on the board?
Just like a park and recreational professional, citizen board members need to remain informed on current industry and community trends, issues, and initiatives. Therefore, training for citizen board members does not end at the completion of the orientation program, but rather is an on-going process with a personal commitment to continue your education as a board member. This can be accomplished through many approaches. A few are illustrated below:

- Attend local, regional, state and national conferences and workshops on parks and recreation.
- Choose sessions that relate to your interests and matters relevant to the agency you represent. Share the information you gather with fellow board members and the chief executive.
- Read related park and recreation industry publications, trade magazines, newsletters and browse related websites.
- Attend agency and board member retreats and actively participate in discussions.
- Network with board members from other agencies. Typically, other agencies are experiencing or have experienced the same issues and initiatives as yours. Share information and experiences with the other attendees. Relate that information to your board and director/chief executive.
- Become involved in state and national citizen parks and recreation advocacy organizations. .

What are the important qualities and motivations for being a citizen board member?
The most important quality a board member can possess is the "right attitude". Knowledge, expertise and interest are certainly helpful, but a positive attitude and sincere interest in the importance of parks, recreation, conservation and open space in your community and beyond are the most important qualities.
Other qualities of effective board members are:

- Believing in the agency's mission, purpose, goals and objectives.
- The ability to place the larger interest of the agency above personal concerns or convictions.
- A willingness to serve as an effective intermediary between the agency and outside affiliated groups and organizations.
- A willingness to give freely of one's time and possessing the energy to learn.
- Respecting the varied opinions, points of view and backgrounds of fellow board members, staff, elected officials in the decision-making chain, staff and community at large.
- Being able to inspire the community's confidence, respect and support.
- Having the ability to accept board decisions.
- Respecting the democratic processes.
- Participating in discussions with demonstrated reasoning, good judgment and the courage of personal convictions.
- Demonstrating support for the director/chief executive as manager of the agency/department.

Individuals join park and recreation agency boards for different reasons. Many have a desire to serve their community by improving conditions and contributing to the welfare of the community. Some individuals gain a sense of satisfaction and power that comes with board service. Others get involved to have a new experience or find opportunities to make new friends. Other motivations for serving stem from social status, peer endorsements or even family tradition. Some individuals may have aspirations for higher political office and use this as a stepping-stone on their way to other civic service. Regardless of the motivations, a citizen board member must realize and accept that he or she is a leader who has accepted a major civic responsibility. The citizen board member must be committed to advancing the agency /department's mission and must do so within the defined roles and responsibilities enumerated in a previous section of this document.

Whether it is a sense of civic duty, belief in the importance of parks and recreation or wanting to provide service and value to a community, serving as a citizen board member is an important and vital position in every community across this nation, regardless of whether you serve in a governance or advisory capacity.

BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION

Orientation of a new board member can make a major difference in the time it takes for that person to become a fully participating member of the board and their effectiveness. Board orientation is intended to prepare new board members for their role in the organization. It is extremely useful for **all** members to ensure that everyone is operating from the same "script." Orientation is a strong team-building activity that should be conducted once a year, either before a regular board meeting or during a retreat. Orientation of new board members shortly after election/appointment is essential.

2. Matthew's

Parks and Recreation Department Purpose, Mission, and Vision

Purpose

To enhance the quality of life for all residents by creating and maintaining parks, programs, and recreational opportunities that promote health, safety, connection, and community pride.

Mission

To provide accessible, well-maintained parks and inclusive recreational programs that serve residents of all ages and abilities while responsibly stewarding public resources and implementing the community's adopted master plan.

Vision

To build a vibrant and connected community where every resident has access to exceptional parks, recreational facilities, and life-enriching programs that support wellness, foster relationships, and reflect the long-term goals and values of the community.

Alternative Purpose Statement (More Aspirational)

To strengthen our community by investing in places and programs where people can play, learn, grow, and connect.

Core Principles to Support the Mission

1. **Community-Centered** – Decisions are guided by the needs and priorities of residents.
2. **Master Plan Driven** – Projects and investments align with the adopted Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
3. **Accessible and Inclusive** – Opportunities are available to people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
4. **Health and Wellness Focused** – Parks and programs promote physical, mental, and social well-being.

Matthews

5. **Responsible Stewardship** – Public funds and natural resources are managed wisely.
6. **Partnership Oriented** – Collaboration with schools, nonprofits, and community organizations expands impact.

Concise Version for Public Materials

Purpose

Connecting people, places, and programs that enrich community life.

Mission

Delivering inclusive parks and recreation opportunities aligned with the community's master plan.

Vision

A healthy, active, and connected community with exceptional parks and recreation for all.

Strategic Recommitment Statement

The Parks and Recreation Department is committed to realigning its priorities, investments, and decision-making with the adopted master plan to ensure that future development reflects the needs and aspirations of the community.

Recommended Public-Facing Set

Purpose

To improve quality of life by creating places and programs that bring people together.

Mission

To provide accessible parks, facilities, and recreational opportunities for all residents while faithfully implementing the community's master plan.

Vision

A thriving community where outstanding parks and recreation opportunities inspire health, connection, and lifelong enjoyment.

Swansboro Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Strategic Plans

Mission: To enhance the quality of life of town residents through quality parks and multi-purpose indoor/outdoor recreational facilities and spaces

Mission statement: "To enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Swansboro through recreation programs, facilities and experiences designed to meet the leisure needs of the community and to provide people of every age, race and creed, and ability an opportunity to come together, participate, create and share the positive experiences of life."

Values:

- Promote diversity, inclusion, wellness and quality
- Pursue safe, family friendly and welcoming spaces
- Build a strong sense of community
- Focus on positive experiences
- Promote the benefits of parks and recreation
- Advocate for actions that benefit local, regional and state parks and recreation services

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

Mission: Create an effective Parks and Recreation Board for the Town of Swansboro
Goal: To develop informed and effective board members through new member orientation and ongoing training and teambuilding opportunities

- Develop and implement an Orientation Manual
- Provide and encourage training opportunities for board members (i.e. NCRPA conferences, regional workshops, etc.)
- Develop and conduct teambuilding activities
- Request financial assistance to attend workshops, conferences, etc.

PROGRAMMING

Mission: Advise in the enhancement of quality of life services for Swansboro residents through recreation programs
Goal: Advise in the development of diverse, inclusive and innovative programs

- Be informed of current Department programming opportunities and their benefits
- Make recommendations and/or suggestions
- Advise the director to pursue programs that are revenue neutral or generating
- When possible, volunteer to assist in programs sponsored by the department

LAND AND PROPERTY ACQUISITION

Mission: Advise the board of commissioners (or Director) on the acquisition of land and property that will enhance the quality of life in Swansboro
Goal: Identify opportunities for enhancing community parks and recreation facilities and spaces

- Refer to and support the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan
- Review and/or revise the comprehensive plan at least every five (5) years
- Inventory available town property that may meet public need and/or interest
- Prioritize top priorities
- Develop community support
- Advocate for acquisition

MARKETING AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Mission: Assist the director in gathering feedback and/or informing citizens of Parks and Recreation opportunities and issues
Goal: Recommend improvements to the dissemination of information, social media and/or marketing processes.

- Be informed of current department processes
- Make recommendations to improve processes
- Assist in identifying organizations with heavy citizen patronization
- Develop and/or assist in building relationships with their leaders
- Assist in communicating town parks and recreation opportunities.
    - Events.
    - Meetings
    - Fundraising
- Be informed of new and/or changes in communication processes

DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PARKS AND FACILITIES

Mission: Make recommendations in maintaining and developing safe, family friendly parks and facilities
Goal: Advise and/or recommend actions that enhance safety and innovation of town parks.

- Members should periodically visit and become familiar with town parks
- In coordination with the director, perform an annual review of parks
- Assist in soliciting community feedback for park improvements
- Advise and/or make recommendations for improvements

REVENUE AND FUNDING

Mission: Increase revenue for Swansboro's Parks and Recreation Department
Goal: Advise and assist the director in identifying and developing consistent opportunities for raising funds for Swansboro's Parks and Recreation Department

- Assist in building positive relationships with sponsors and potential sponsors
- Continually show appreciation for sponsor support
- Receive monthly updates on department revenues and expenditures
- Conduct an annual review of the department's fee structure

- Grants
  - Assist in researching grants opportunities
  - Assist with grant writing
  - Advocate appropriate governing bodies for grant approvals

ADVOCATE FOR PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

Mission: To support legislative action by local, county and state entities that will benefit parks, recreation, cultural and conservation services in Swansboro and in the surrounding area
Goal: To become an active participant in expressing support for legislative actions that would be beneficial to local, regional and state parks and recreation services

- Be informed of local, county and state issues and actions that may favorably, or adversely, affect local parks and recreation services
- Advocate for actions that will improve Swansboro and regional parks and recreation services
- Review and discuss the benefits of parks, recreation, the arts and land/water conservation
- Learn about and become more active with the NC Parks and Recreation Association and other entities that can assist the town in meeting its parks and recreation goals
- Participate in the annual Parks and Recreation Advocacy Day at the NC Legislature

Swansboro Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Strategic Plan

Department Mission and Vision Alignment

Mission

To enhance the quality of life for residents of the Town of Swansboro through quality parks, programs, and multi-purpose indoor and outdoor recreational facilities and spaces.

Mission Statement

"To enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Swansboro through recreation programs, facilities, and experiences designed to meet the leisure needs of the community, and to provide people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities opportunities to come together, participate, create, and share positive life experiences."

Core Values

The Board supports and promotes the following values:

- Promote diversity, inclusion, wellness, and quality of life
- Ensure safe, welcoming, and family-friendly environments
- Foster a strong sense of community
- Encourage positive and meaningful recreational experiences
- Promote the benefits and impact of parks and recreation services
- Advocate for initiatives that strengthen local, regional, and state parks and recreation services

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Mission

To support the development of an informed, effective, and engaged Parks and Recreation Advisory Board operating within its advisory role.

Goal

Strengthen Board effectiveness through training, structure, and ongoing development.

Strategic Actions

- Develop and maintain a comprehensive **Board Orientation Manual** aligned with bylaws and Town policies
- Provide onboarding for new members, including roles, responsibilities, and legal considerations (e.g., open meetings requirements)
- Encourage ongoing education related to parks and recreation trends, governance, and community needs
- Promote active participation, preparedness, and professional conduct consistent with Board expectations

Programming and Community Impact

Mission

To advise on the enhancement of quality-of-life services for Swansboro residents through diverse and impactful recreation programming.

Goal

Provide informed, strategic recommendations that support the development of diverse, inclusive, and innovative recreation programs that benefit the community.

Strategic Actions

- Remain informed on current Parks and Recreation programs, services, and participation trends
- Recommend and propose new programs, events, and services that align with community needs and Board priorities
- Provide constructive feedback on program effectiveness and community impact
- Advise the Parks and Recreation Director on opportunities for sustainable programming, including revenue-neutral or revenue-generating initiatives when appropriate
- Support and advocate for Department programs within the community
- When feasible, attend or volunteer at Department-sponsored programs and events to enhance Board awareness and visibility

TOWN OF WAXHAW
PARKS, CULTURAL & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
2026 Work Plan

The Town of Waxhaw Parks, Cultural & Recreation Advisory Board, hereinafter referred to as "the Board," works in conjunction with the Town of Waxhaw Parks and Recreation Department, hereinafter referred to as "Parks and Rec," staff to assist with Waxhaw's most visible quality of life initiatives. Board members are leader volunteers, public officials appointed by the Town of Waxhaw Board of Commissioners, hereinafter referred to as "the BOC," charged with advising Parks and Rec and the BOC on Waxhaw-centric cultural, environmental conservation, and recreation needs and ensuring the equitable distribution of amenities for all residents.

The purpose of the Board is to promote, advise, and assist Parks and Rec, the BOC, and other departments on matters related to parks, culture, environmental conservation, and recreation initiatives. This includes but is not limited to:

- Identifying and pursuing new opportunities for funding sources;
- Volunteering at events and programs;
- Reviewing policies and rules regarding Parks and Rec facilities;
- Development of long-term planning for events, programs, and facilities;
- Promoting the need for parks, culture, environmental conservation, and recreation as part of a well-rounded community;
- Reviewing and recommending proposed projects, designs, and acquisitions related to parks, trails/greenways, and other recreation and cultural amenities, and;
- Assisting other advisory boards and committees of the Town;

To that end, the Board has developed the following work plan for the 2026 work year to position Parks and Rec, the BOC, and the Town to meet future park and trail/greenway development, cultural, environmental conservation, and recreation needs.

As the Town has experienced much growth in recent years, the completion of several Parks and Rec projects has languished as other projects have risen in priority. In addition, several policies that impact Parks and Rec amenities and programming require updating to make them consistent with current needs. Finally, collaboration among the various advisory boards and committees has also arisen as the BOC and the Town seek to create greater efficiencies and opportunities for greater public outreach. The 2026 work plan will address these issues, focusing on the following criteria.

Public Outreach and Engagement

The Board will disseminate information to the public concerning the progress of plans and projects through their interactions with the public by any means to achieve this end. The Board will develop consistent messaging and direction for its members so they may serve the community as ambassadors, share information with the public, and be a conduit for feedback concerning the various plans and projects.

To ensure the Board secures as much public input as possible on current and future plans and projects, Board members will volunteer for at least fifty percent (50%) of the Town's events and programs during the year including at least one parade and one large event (Kaleidoscope Fest or Autumn Treasures). Board members are encouraged to volunteer at other events as well. Board members will promote volunteer opportunities through their interactions with the public by any means to achieve this end. The Board will work closely with Parks and Rec to develop a volunteer database for its events and programs.

Budgetary Support

The Board will work closely with Parks and Rec to research, apply for grants, and develop other funding sources for operational and capital projects and improvements. Board members will provide feedback and suggestions concerning grant applications and update the BOC concerning the progress of funding opportunities and the status of grant applications.

The Board will work with 'Friends of" non-profit 501(c)(3) organization to support the plans, projects, initiatives, and efforts of Parks and Rec.
Two members from the Parks, Cultural and Recreation will maintain presence on the board of the "friends of" non-profit.
The "Friends of" organization's purpose is to create a direct partnership with the Town, Parks and Rec,

and the general public to provide financial support and resources for capital projects, support the plans, projects, initiatives, and efforts toward preserving and growing our network of community parks and trail/greenway system. As outlined in the 2019-2028 Parks & Recreation Strategic Master Plan, a park foundation can assist Parks and Rec in acquiring land, developing facilities, sponsoring programs, and buying equipment for park and recreation needs.

Committee Relations

The Board will work closely with other advisory boards and committees, especially the Historic Preservation Commission, Public Art Committee, and Downtown Waxhaw Association and their respective committees. The Board wishes to ensure that proposed plans and projects are consistent with other plans and projects and, where possible, to maximize funding opportunities. Board members are encouraged to attend the meetings of these advisory boards and committees and report back on the business of these bodies, especially when there may be opportunities for collaboration. The Board will work to ensure that the Community Corner remains an open public space and will seek to collaborate with the Downtown Waxhaw Association to achieve this. The Board will also seek to collaborate with the Downtown Waxhaw Association on any placemaking initiatives in Downtown.

Complete Active Park and Trail Projects

Parks and Rec have developed an outline for future plans and projects for the phasing of improvements of parks and trails/greenways. The Board will assist Parks and Rec with developing strategies and projects for the phased improvements of parks and trails/greenways, especially related to the completion of the Downtown Park, the expansion of Twelve Mile Creek Greenway, and the implementation of the Pedestrian Plan. Continued support for projects, plans, initiatives involving the Learning Center, Sk8 park, Barnes park, and The Meeting place through research, applied grants, and provided feedback. The Board will review and update park rules and policies. The Board will continue working toward the future development of green space, including parks, trails/greenways through recommendations and feedback.

Environmental Conservation

The Board will work to bring environmental conservation initiatives throughout the Town under the purview of the Board and develop the scope of initiatives and projects the Board could undertake in this effort. The Board will maintain continued support for the replanting of Twelve Mile Creek and stabilization efforts. The Board will continue to research and implement ways to promote conservation efforts, such as “Adopt a Stream” programs, periodic trash clean ups, etc. to encourage community involvement.

Conclusion

The preceding work plan and its strategic goals help advance the Town and Parks and Rec's mission, vision, and values. The Board considers the potential to overlap with the plans and projects of other advisory boards and committees to maximize town resources and ensure that outcomes are consistent for the greater good of the Town.

Respectfully submitted this 21st day of January 2026.

Beth Ferri, Parks, Cultural & Recreation Advisory Board Chair
Andrew Abbuhl, Deputy Director of Parks and Facilities
Justine Haynes, Programs Manager
Dena Sabinske, Parks and Recreation Department Director

The Swansboro Parks & Recreation Department offers several memorial options to honor individuals, families, groups, or special occasions. All prices include materials, installation, and a commemorative plaque.

- Memorial Bench – $1,800
  - Installed for a 10-year term, with renewal available at the end of the term
- Memorial Swing – $1,000
  - Installed for a 10-year term, with renewal available at the end of the term
- Commemorative Plaque on an Existing Bench or Swing – $350



PROGRAM GUIDELINES & IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Memorial benches and swings are placed for a 10-year maintenance term and remain public amenities available for general use. Placement is based on availability and long-term site suitability, with the final location and orientation determined by the Parks & Recreation Department.

Applications are accepted year-round, and installation typically occurs within six months of approval, depending on site conditions and material availability.

All plaque wording must meet town guidelines and is subject to approval prior to production. Personal decorations or memorial items, such as flowers, candles, or keepsakes, are not permitted to ensure public safety and ongoing maintenance standards.

Renewal opportunities may be available at the conclusion of the 10-year term.

During the maintenance period, the department will maintain memorial benches, swings, and plaques. If a memorial is vandalized, stolen, or damaged due to environmental conditions, every reasonable effort will be made to repair the item. If repair is not possible, one replacement memorial will be provided at no cost to the donor.

SWANSBORO PARKS & RECREATION MEMORIAL PROGRAM



What is the Memorial Program?

The Memorial Bench & Swing Program was created by the Swansboro Parks & Recreation Department to provide individuals, families, and community groups with a meaningful way to honor or remember a person, group, or special occasion.

Through this program, donors may contribute memorial benches or swings that are placed in Swansboro parks and other appropriate outdoor spaces. These memorials serve as lasting tributes while remaining public amenities for all to enjoy.

Placements are made at locations determined by the Parks & Recreation Department based on availability, suitability, and long-term maintenance considerations. Exact placement is at the discretion of the department.

Applications are accepted year-round, and all donation costs include the commemorative plaque**.**

APPLICATION

Name:_____

Organization (If applicable):

_____

Address:_____

City:_____ State:____

Contact Number:_____

Email:_____

Name of the person / organization you would like to honor:_____

_____

Message that will appear on the placard (maximum of 100 letters/numbers and/or three lines):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signature:_____

Date:_____

Please return to Swansboro Parks and Recreation Dept.
830 Main Street Ext.
Swansboro, NC 28584

What is the process for purchasing a Memorial Bench or Swing?

1. Contact the Swansboro Parks & Recreation Department at 910-326-2600 to begin the memorial process.
2. Select a Memorial Option
   - Plaque on an existing bench or swing
   - New memorial swing
   - New memorial bench
3. Choose a Preferred Park or Area
4. Complete the Application
5. Once approved, payment is made to the Town of Swansboro.
6. Installation

The Parks & Recreation Department will coordinate installation. Benches, swings, or plaques are typically installed within six months of approval.

APPLICATION FOR MEMORIAL OR TRIBUTE TREE PLANTING

1a. Name of person in whose <u>memory</u> contribution is made:

_____ **or**

1b. Name of living person to be <u>honored</u> by the contribution:

_____

2. Type of tree planting preferred:

____ a. Shade tree ____ b. Flowering tree

____ c. Evergreen tree ____ d. No preference

3. Person or persons making this contribution:

_____

_____

4. Amount paid: _____

5. Date of application: _____

6. Town staff member receiving application:

_____

Memorial and Tribute Tree Program



TOWN OF SWANSBORO NORTH CAROLINA

PURPOSE

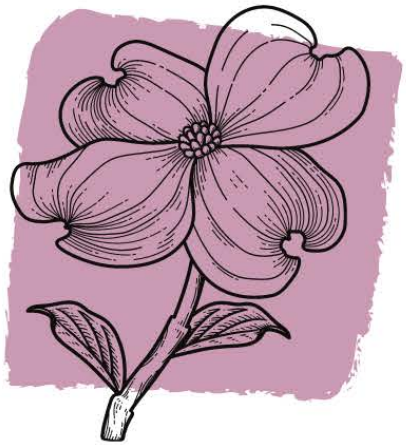
The purpose of the Town of Swansboro Memorial and Tribute Tree Program is to allow friends, family members, residents, and various organizations to: (a) honor the memory of loved ones and friends; (b) express their appreciation or thanks for friends, loved ones, employees, persons in public or military service, persons of accomplishment, or community organizations; and (c) to celebrate special events -- such as births, birthdays, graduations, weddings, retirements, anniversaries, Father's or Mother's Day, and similar events -- in tribute to others.

PARTICIPATION

Individuals, families, groups, and organizations may participate in the Memorial and Tribute Tree Program by making donations to plant trees in public spaces, in a manner consistent with the Town's urban forestry program and this policy.

TREE PLANTINGS

In order to insure that trees to be planted are appropriate and have a good opportunity for survival, tree species will be selected by the Town and will normally be native tree species or hybrid species with a proven history of durability in the Swansboro area.



Tree plantings will be made within the appropriate season of the year to allow root establishment and to support the best opportunity for survival. Donors may express a preference for (1) a shade tree, (2) a flowering tree, or (3) an evergreen tree. The Town will provide appropriate care for trees planted under the program but cannot guarantee tree survival.



PLANTING LOCATIONS

Trees to be planted in the Memorial and Tribute Tree Program will be planted on public property or within landscaping easements obtained by the Town. Planting locations shall be determined by the Town, based on urban forestry program needs, soils, light, topography, water availability, site plans, and maintenance considerations.

DONATIONS

The donation required for a Memorial or Tribute Tree is $150 per tree. The trees to be planted for each donation will normally be 1.5 to 2 inches in caliper, 5-8 feet in height, in 25 gallon containers. The donation amount is designed to cover the cost of the tree, transportation from the nursery, planting and soil amendment materials, planting labor, basic recognition, and early stage care.

RECOGNITION

The Town will provide an acknowledgement of donation to the contributor, a notification will be sent to the honoree (or, in the case of a memorial contribution, to a designated family member), the contributor's and the honoree's name will be entered in the registry of memorial and tribute tree donations, and the name of the honoree will be read at the To annual Arbor Day celebration.