

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

Meeting minutes

February 26th, 2026 @ 6:00 pm

Commission Chambers – Libke Public Safety Building

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting was called to order on Thursday, February 26th, 2026, at 6:00 PM. Kori Buth conducted the roll call with the following members present: Tim Lainhart, Kevin Cayson (online), Melissa Deyoe, Emily Lisborg, Karen Buehrig, Sam Wolf (online), Emma Lugo (online), Dakota Hufford (online), and William Foster. Erin McClellan arrived after roll call.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Hadley, a 23-year resident of the McLaughlin neighborhood in Oregon City, addressed the committee requesting a fence around the off-leash dog area at Barclay Park. She highlighted that Oregon City appears to be a "dog park desert," particularly in the McLaughlin area, with a population of around 40,000 and over 25 official parks but only one fenced dog area located on the other side of town, making it difficult for downtown residents to access.

Hadley explained that while Barclay Park serves as an off-leash dog area, it is not safe or usable in its current state without fencing. She conducted a community forum where all 26 respondents agreed the park was not safe or reliable for their dogs and supported the installation of a fence. Key safety concerns identified included the park's location on a corner of two streets with blind spots due to hills, dogs wandering into the forested hill making retrieval difficult, and increased foot traffic and trash from nearby facilities creating unsafe conditions for off-leash dogs and conflicts with other park users.

Hadley emphasized that a fenced area in the middle stretch of the park, where there is no tree canopy, would create a safe community space for dogs, their owners, and other park visitors while fulfilling the Parks Department's stated purpose of providing a safe and enjoyable recreational experience.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Bee City Policy Update

Tom Kissinger provided an overview of the Bee City USA initiative, explaining that it was identified as a City Commission Goal during the biennial goal-setting process. The documents in the packet outline goals and objectives based on criteria from the Xerxes Society for achieving Bee City USA designation. Tom emphasized this was the beginning of the conversation, with plans to bring the topic back to both PRAC and NRC multiple times for comment and refinement.

The proposed policy would establish Oregon City's commitment to pollinator conservation and education through the Bee City USA program. Key priorities include recognizing that pollinators are essential to healthy ecosystems, food security, and the local economy. The policy aims to create and enhance pollinator habitat on public lands, reduce pesticide use where appropriate, educate residents about pollinator conservation, collaborate with community partners, and serve as a model for pollinator-friendly practices.

The document outlines goals including native plant selection, habitat creation, mowing practices, water sources, and ties into the city's integrated pest management plan, which was included in the packet as the current guiding document for pest management.

Emily Lisborg expressed appreciation for seeing this on the agenda, noting the NRC had been discussing it for approximately two years. She provided context about nearby Bee City affiliates, including West Linn, Lake Oswego, Gresham, Wilsonville, Tualatin, Sandy, Milwaukie, Hillsboro, and Estacada. Emily raised questions about meeting frequency requirements, noting that the Xerxes Society requires more regular meetings than the proposed annual joint meetings between NRC and PRAC, and mentioned that Bee City programs typically include specific committees with chairs, co-chairs, and volunteers that could be different from existing committee members.

Tom Kissinger acknowledged the feedback about meeting frequency and explained they would need to consult with Xerxes Society staff to clarify requirements. The current proposal suggested joint committees serve as a steering committee for Bee City USA, with regular meetings being each committee's individual meetings to provide public opportunity for comment.

William Foster inquired about specific sites for future projects. Kissinger responded that no sites had been specifically selected yet, and that would be part of future committee work.

Discussion also covered the Wesley Lynn dog park development, with Tom Kissinger explaining that while it involves habitat restoration that may benefit pollinators, it's not specifically designed as a pollinator garden like other City projects.

Emily offered additional feedback, noting missing requirements from the Xerxes list including a native plant list and native plant supplier list, offering to help facilitate or assemble these resources. She also mentioned that Xerxes offers training programs as part of the Bee City affiliate program, including webinars and in-person training in Portland.

Tom indicated they would continue refining the policy through consultation with both committees and Xerxes Society staff over the coming months, with the goal of presenting a refined plan to City Commission for approval before submitting the application.

Tree City Update

Pete Walter, Planning Manager and staff liaison to the Natural Resources Committee, reported that Oregon City has been a Tree City USA since 2013 and successfully renewed their application last year. Any tree planting activities in 2026 would be recognized in the year-end application, and all tree and natural resources efforts, including the IPM program and EAB approach, would be part of the annual application.

Tom Kissinger added that the City has a commission goal related to trees and Tree City USA, as well as an emerging Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) crisis requiring attention. Commission Goal 7.4 explores grant-funded tree canopy assessment, and staff have been working to meet and exceed this goal.

Through partnership with Oregon Department of Forestry, the City secured free access to a state-sponsored tree plotter software for tree inventory and canopy assessment. Staff are currently uploading existing tree data collected by Public Works, Planning, and Parks staff, with plans for additional tree surveying in spring. Kissinger invited volunteer groups to assist with spring tree surveying efforts.

Regarding EAB, Tom explained that Emerald Ash Borer was recently discovered in Redland, meaning it's in the local area and requires planning. The tree plotter software will support

mitigation planning efforts. Staff from Parks, Planning, and Public Works are developing a response plan that will be brought forward for review and comment.

Spring will be crucial for surveying efforts, as fall surveying becomes difficult once leaves die. The City has identified numerous ash trees in parks with riparian areas and water quality facilities. Future planning will address replacement planting and tree canopy mitigation.

The City is collaborating with various groups including the County, soil and water conservation districts, and ODF to coordinate regional response planning.

Pete Walter added that Dave Trotter had reviewed the EAB plan and found it satisfactory, with particular concern about local contact and outreach. He noted that Oregon City does not regulate trees on private residential property but does regulate trees in rights-of-way, overlay districts, and requires tree permits for non-residential properties. The City has updated its website with EAB response information and appropriate agency links.

Tom Kissinger announced that Oregon Department of Forestry and Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District plan to lead a public workshop on emerald ash borer detection and management, likely at Hillendale Park in May.

Karen Buehrig inquired about the Friends of Trees planting event, and Pete Walter confirmed it would be a joint Arbor Day/Friends of Trees event at Hillendale Park on March 14th. The event will serve as a staging area for neighborhood tree planting and include planting an Arbor Day tree at the park. Residents can still sign up for trees through the Friends of Trees website.

NEXT SCHEDULED PRAC MEETING - MARCH 26th, 2026

The next Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting was scheduled for March 26th, 2026.

ADJOURN TO METRO COMMUNITY CHOICE GRANT WORKSHOP

Scott Archer noted that following the business meeting, there would be a Metro-hosted Community Choice Grant Program workshop. Metro colleagues would facilitate the workshop and provided tamales for attendees. Committee members and the public were invited and encouraged to participate in the workshop following adjournment of the formal meeting.