

# Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

## Meeting minutes

April 23<sup>rd</sup> @ 6:00 pm

Mt. Hood Room – City Hall

625 Center Street  
Oregon City, OR 97045

### Call To Order and Roll Call

Vice Chair Erin McClellan called the April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026 PRAC meeting to order at 6:00 PM. A roll call was conducted by Kori Buth with the following members present: Melissa Deyoe (online), Ken Worcester, Karen Buerig, Erin McClellan, Tim Wuest, and Kevin Cayson. Chair, Tim Lainhart, was absent.

Vice Chair McClellan expressed excitement about seeing all attendees participating in civic engagement and thanked everyone for their passionate involvement. She noted that the committee had received over 50 written comments from the public, all of which had been read by committee members and City Commission members and were part of the official public record. She clarified that these written comments would not be read aloud during the meeting since they were already officially recorded.

### Public Comments

Erin McClellan explained that this section was for comments on items not on the agenda, noting that the aquatics report was part of the agenda and would be addressed later. She asked if anyone present wanted to offer public comment on non-agenda items. No members of the public came forward to speak during this portion of the meeting.

### Approval of Minutes

March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026 - PRAC Meeting Minutes

Kevin Cayson made a motion to approve the March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026 PRAC meeting minutes. Tim Wuest seconded the motion.

*Motion: Kevin Cayson moved to approve the March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026 PRAC meeting minutes. Tim Wuest seconded the motion.*

A roll call vote was conducted with the following results: Melissa Deyoe - Yes, Karen Buerig - Yes, Tim Wuest - Yes, Kevin Cayson - Yes, Ken Worcester - Yes, and Erin McClellan - Yes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

### General Business

#### Water Safety

Melissa Sebastian, Aquatics and Recreation Manager, presented information about Water Safety Month, which takes place in May. She emphasized that warmer weather increases water recreation activities, making water safety reminders crucial for the community.

Sebastian shared water safety statistics, including drowning rates and emergency responses. Melissa also provided operational information about the Pool, such as programming efforts, expansion of swim lessons, and staffing updates.

### **Swimming Pool Operational Assessment**

Vice Chair McClellan clarified that PRAC is not a decision-making body but provides recommendations to Parks and Recreation staff and City Commission when asked. She noted that no recommendation or vote would be requested during this meeting, but that might occur at a future meeting.

Scott Archer, Parks and Recreation Director, introduced the presentation by providing context about the Oregon City Swimming Pool's 60th anniversary of operations. He explained that when the Pool opened in 1966, it served a community of approximately 8,500 people, compared to the current population of nearly 40,000. Despite being older and undersized for the current population, the City has continued investing in the facility to ensure its operation.

Archer described the pool as a single-body, rectangular 25-meter pool where demand exceeds the ability to meet necessary service levels for the current population's wide range of desired uses and programs. While acknowledging it's impossible to accommodate every need due to limitations, he emphasized the City's commitment to providing the best balance of scheduling and offerings for the highest priority community needs for aquatic and dry land programming.

Scott announced that the City is currently planning for the pool's future replacement through a nearly year-long process involving community engagement to determine the location and design of a future facility. He encouraged public participation through social media and the City's website, noting that realistically, planning, funding, building, and opening a new facility would take several years at minimum.

Given the timeline for replacement, Archer explained that the City determined during the budget process to hire an outside firm to assess the pool and ensure examination of safety and efficiency issues while maximizing community benefit from services and programs. In fall 2025, the City hired Councilman Hunsaker, a leading national aquatic planning, design, and operational consulting firm, to conduct a comprehensive assessment.

Johnathan Nies from Councilman-Hunsaker presented the operational assessment findings. He explained that during his October site visit, he found the 60-year-old facility to be a beloved community asset that was likely a crown jewel when constructed but could no longer support its intended programming due to aging.

Nies identified that the operational model, scheduling, and staffing were misaligned with community priorities identified in the Parks Master Plan. Lower priority programs were dominating peak hours, creating financial deficits and unmet demand for swim lessons. He also identified wading pool risks and management structure issues.

Erin McClellan clarified that priority classifications came from the approved Master Plan, not Nies's report. Nies confirmed these priorities were developed through statistically valid community surveys, with adult fitness ranking highest, swim lessons second, and swim team lowest at 9 percent need.

Karen Beurig expressed concerns about the proposed 3-6 PM swim lesson focus, noting as a working parent she needed evening hours for her child's lessons. She suggested surveys of current swim lesson users would provide valuable scheduling preference information.

The discussion revealed that swim lessons already start at 4:00 during summer months, and there were questions about maintaining after-school sport opportunities if lessons were

pushed too early. Sebastian noted the current program coordinator position helps provide oversight during extended operating hours of nearly 100 hours per week.

Scott Archer clarified that this assessment didn't focus on significant revenue increases, noting a planned department-wide fee and rate study would examine market rates, as he believed the City was undercharging across many areas compared to market rates.

Following the presentation, Vice Chair McClellan announced that extensive public comment would be taken, with speakers limited to 2 minutes each due to the large number of participants.

Tim Waud, a lifelong Oregon City resident and business owner, spoke as a member since 1977 of the Oregon City Swim Club. He expressed profound concern about proposals that would undercut the swim team's ability to operate successfully, threatening decades of excellence. Watt emphasized that swim teams are economic engines, hosting annual competitions that draw hundreds of families to Oregon City, benefiting local restaurants, shops, and services while putting the City on the map as a premier swimming destination.

Kenji Kasubuchi, a 10-year Oregon City swimmer, discussed how pool resources helped him develop discipline, physical strength, and work ethic needed for high-level competition. He expressed pride in representing Oregon City and concern that proposed changes would impact future generations' ability to represent the community. Kasubuchi noted his progression from younger participant to state-level competitor, emphasizing that reduced pool time would affect younger swimmers' opportunities to improve, stay committed, and reach higher levels.

Rowan Schmidt, a lifelong Oregon City resident and 10-year swimmer, testified about swimming providing support and well-being beyond physical activity. Schmidt shared personal experience with anxiety, explaining how swimming became the most effective coping mechanism, providing joy, calmness, and emotional control during overwhelming times. The swim team provided a positive community with supportive, valued, and respected relationships that became best friendships.

Julie Grotjohn, an Oregon City resident since 2001, spoke from multiple perspectives as a collegiate swimmer, coach, master swimmer, swimming official, former lifeguard, lesson instructor, and parent of current and former swim team athletes. Both her children learned to swim at the Oregon City pool after years on waitlists due to needing after-hours access because of work requirements, and both became lifeguards and instructors to give back.

Chris Leoni, a Milwaukie resident, added his voice as a greater community member, also identifying as an Italian citizen. He encouraged continued prioritization of the swim team while looking toward the future and new facilities, emphasizing the generational flow and pipeline of swimmers as a team effort supporting water safety.

Matthew Crum, head coach for the Oregon City swim team and Oregon City resident, noted the team's six decades of training thousands of community swimmers. While proud of team achievements, he emphasized pride in coaching the next generation of lifeguards, swim instructors, lap swimmers, and aquatic program enthusiasts, describing the team's contribution to the whole ecosystem of essential community aquatic programming benefits.

Additional swimmers and advocates, Dorian Smith, Evangeline Kulp, Carey Kulp, Kelvin Kulp, Travis Cook, Haven Crum, and Katharine Bieker shared personal testimonies about the team's importance to their lives, community connections, and development. Speakers emphasized concerns about proposed time reductions, the impracticality of 8 PM ending times for student athletes, and the team's role in developing future lifeguards and instructors.

Bryan Watt, former PRAC member and chair, provided additional context as Oregon City High School swim coach for sixteen years and club coach since 2010. He reported continued growth and excellence in the high school program representing about 60 Oregon City families annually.

Following extensive public comment, Vice Chair McClellan thanked all speakers, particularly young people who demonstrated civic engagement. She mentioned opportunities for teens to serve on City councils and provided information about checking the City website for such opportunities.

### **Clackamette Park Plan Update**

Scott Archer provided an update on the Clackamette Park planning process. The City has hired an engineering firm for final design and engineering work, with preliminary renderings nearing public readiness. A major public engagement process is about to begin, including PRAC input at appropriate points and City Commission consultation.

Archer announced key upcoming dates: a May 12th City Commission Work Session at 6 PM at the Robert Libke Public Safety Building for preliminary design rollout and process discussion, and a May 21st community open house at the same location and time representing the project's first community open house. He encouraged PRAC's attendance at the open house for committee representation.

The project team is finishing a project website design for communication and feedback collection, working on social media campaigns, and planning to bring preliminary design concepts to the May PRAC meeting for initial committee feedback. Archer confirmed that boat ramp considerations and RV park decisions will drive the design of the rest of the park.

### **General Project Updates**

Archer provided updates on multiple ongoing projects:

**Wesley Lynn Dog Park:** Preliminary meetings with planning and public works departments revealed no major concerns or issues with the proposed project. Working with Lugo Hansen landscape architecture firm for final design and bidding preparation, the project anticipates summer construction beginning with substantial completion targeted for fall 2026. Fall timing coordinates with final planting, though some elements may be completed sooner.

**Chapin Park Playground:** Staff has been attending neighborhood association meetings, particularly in hilltop area neighborhoods interested in the project as a major hill park. Two design options are being presented to gather community preference feedback. A community survey is live on the City website with continued social media promotion planned.

Additional funding opportunities are being pursued through the local government grant program (state grant) and potential connections with Metro Community Choice grants if related proposals are selected. Construction timing depends on design option selection and funding confirmation, with more solid timelines expected in the coming months.

Vice Chair McClellan asked about the relationship between Metro Community Choice grants and design options. Archer explained that Metro funding from their 2019 parks and nature bond requires connection to natural elements and nature-based features. The nature play design would be eligible for Metro funding support, while the farm-themed option would not qualify. Community engagement will drive design selection, with different funding opportunities available depending on the chosen option.

**Park Place Park:** Budget allocation exists for improvements, with neighborhood engagement underway to determine preferences for pathways, covered shelters, benches, or other amenities. A community survey is active with strong neighborhood meeting interest and

participation encouragement. Final design is targeted for fall and winter with construction planned for the following spring and summer. Archer confirmed that previous poison oak issues have been mostly eradicated.

Hillendale Park: Working with a designer on early-stage initial concept development using Metro local share grant funding. The project focuses on replacing the existing restroom and adding a single-stall restroom on the north side of the park near ball fields, pickleball courts, and playground. Construction is hoped for summer of next year.

Tim Wuest asked about pickleball court repairs, and Archer confirmed ongoing conversations through annual agreement renewals. The pickleball club has formalized rental arrangements, invests in court improvements, and provides City programming. The club is seeking additional grant funding for further improvements, with large, active membership and well-utilized facilities.

Metro Community Choice Grant: Archer described this community-driven project funding from Metro's bond measure, involving region-wide project proposals that were refined through Metro collaboration with local agencies. After community workshops, projects advanced to round 2 voting on Metro's website. Archer committed to sharing voting links and project information with PRAC members, encouraging community participation to ensure Oregon City receives funding for proposed projects.

Karen Buerig asked about dog park fencing at Barclay School, referencing a public comment from the Metro meeting. Archer explained the history of three experimental off-leash areas recommended by PRAC years ago: Barclay, Wesley Lynn (being converted to a fully developed fenced dog park), and Park Place Park. Nothing precludes fencing at Barclay; it's a matter of prioritization, budget, and decision-making about park fit. The site remains a designated off-leash area with plans for better marking of boundaries. Recent Commission discussions addressed activity concerns at the location.

## **Member Reports**

Vice Chair McClellan praised the summer guide received in the mail, complimenting the team on its readability, imagery, and copywriting quality. She expressed pride in the publication and requested that congratulations be passed on to all involved teams, acknowledging the significant effort required for such productions.

Archer thanked McClellan for the feedback and provided context that this represents the first standalone Parks and Recreation guide, separate from the monthly Trail News publication that previously included Parks and Recreation content as one section. The department is seeking continued feedback as they develop this new publication format.

Ken Worcester noted positive experiences getting children outdoors on recent dry days, commenting that parks were in better condition than expected for the season. He praised maintenance staff efforts during challenging spring conditions when equipment operation becomes difficult.

Tim Wuest raised concerns about pickleball court access at Hillendale Park, noting that a previously accessible parking area near the courts had been gated and locked by Clackamas County, requiring players to walk much farther to reach the courts. Archer acknowledged this as county property and committed to revisiting previous inquiries about gate access, noting difficulty obtaining clear responses from the County about the access restriction.

Kevin Cayson also thanked staff for the summer guide quality and noted appreciation for local artist Hailey Verhaalen being among the Concert in the Park lineup.

Kevin also thanked both Jonathan Nies and Melissa Sebastian for their presentations during the evening.

**Next Scheduled Meeting - May 28, 2026**

The next PRAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

**Adjournment**

Erin McClellan adjourned the meeting, with thanks to all participants.