

City of Birmingham
Parks And Recreation Board Meeting Minutes
December 3, 2024, 6:30 p.m.
851 South Eton - Conference Room

I. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Present: Vice Chair Pam Graham; Board Members Susan Collins, Jessica Einstein, Sarah Kupczyk, Anne Lipp; Alternate Board Members Narlu Castellano, Joseph Wrobel

Absent: Chair Heather Carmona; Board Member Steve Sweeney; Student Representative Ella Bassett

Staff: Department of Public Services Director Zielinski; Parks and Recreation Manager Laird, Forestry and Environment Foreman McGaughey, Parks And Recreation Foreman McNab, Recreation Coordinator Schultz

Guests: Jeffrey Johnson

Vice Chair Graham served as acting Chair for the meeting in Chair Carmona's absence.

By Board consensus, Ann Lipp served as acting Vice Chair for the meeting.

III. Announcements, Introductions Of Guests & Chairperson Comments

Acting Chair (AC) Graham offered year-end comments, in which she expressed gratitude to the Board and staff for their work and effort.

1. Ad Hoc Senior/Recreation Center Committee (SCC) - Update

AC Graham provided the update.

IV. Open To The Public For Items Not On The Agenda

V. Approval Of The Minutes - November 12, 2024

Motion by Lipp

Seconded by Graham to approve the minutes as set forth in our packet from the November 12th meeting, as corrected.

Motion carried, 7-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Collins, Einstein, Graham, Lipp, Kupczyk, Castellano, Wrobel

Nays: None

VI. Unfinished Business

1. E-Bike Municipality Comparisons, Park Rules and Ordinance

Staff presented the item and answered informational questions from the Board.

Board members raised the following points during discussion:

- Ordinance language could include guidance that e-bike users should behave safely and respectfully on the trails, and the City could consider adding more specific language about conduct in the future if necessary.
- E-bikes are a relatively uncommon mode of transportation in Birmingham and the surrounding areas presently.
- Some businesses in other cities offer e-bikes for rent. If these circumstances were to occur in Birmingham, including language in the rental contracts about appropriate use could reduce the likelihood of potential issues.
- It is difficult to distinguish between class one and class two e-bikes visually.
- It might be most appropriate to trial a permit process for all e-bike usage within Birmingham parks through the Department of Public Services. If this is implemented, violations should be handled with an initial warning since it may not occur to e-bike users that a municipal permit would be required.
- Other options could include:
 - Allowing class one, or classes one and two, e-bikes to be used without a permit and requiring that higher classes receive a permit, or
 - Allowing class one, or classes one and two, e-bikes with a permit and prohibiting all higher classes, or
 - Allowing class one, or classes one and two, e-bikes to be used without a permit and prohibiting all higher classes, or
 - Requiring that e-bike users sign an agreement regarding the rules of e-bike use in the parks.
- While medical exemptions for allowing e-bike usage could be explored, questions of legality or staff knowledge would also be relevant.
- If a permitting process and a permit fee is implemented, applicants with medical exemptions should have the permit fee waived.
- Since e-bikes can be operated entirely manually, requiring medical exemptions for all e-bike usage could prevent manual riders on e-bikes from accessing Birmingham trails.

Motion by Lipp

Seconded by Graham to recommend that staff work with the City Attorney to determine what is required as far as a rule or regulatory change to permit the use of e-bikes of class one or two in our parks, and to accommodate language requiring safe and respectful operation.

Motion carried, 5-1.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Einstein, Graham, Lipp, Kupczyk, Castellano

Nays: Wrobel

Abstain: Collins

AC Graham asked that staff track any public or departmental comments received once the new policy is implemented.

Public Comment

Mr. Johnson commented that speed guidelines can be helpful for e-bike users, and that he was seeking clarification on the process of registering his e-bike with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

VII. New Business

1. Booth Park Entry Plaza & Trail Improvements Project - Update

Staff provided the update and answered informational questions from the Board. The Board briefly paused formal discussion to test possible chair options for the Park, and then resumed formal discussion.

Board members raised the following points during discussion:

- The Rhonda chair style might be more comfortable for taller people. This chair style can also be stacked ten high, which could be useful for park maintenance.
- The Mom chair style can be stacked four high.
- One Board member found the Mom chair style more comfortable. The remaining Board comments regarding comfort favored the Rhonda chair style.
- A hole in the back of the chair can make it harder to seat smaller children or to rest items on the chair.
- Both options were aesthetically pleasing.
- The architect should be informed that staff and the Board thoughtfully evaluated the chairs, and that they were both good options.
- This project has been on track for summer 2025. If the City receives the MDNR grant for this project, then this project would be delayed. In the interim, there would be opportunities to improve City parks in other ways, and to modify parts of the plan.

Motion by Einstein

Seconded by Graham to move forward with the Rhonda chair.

Motion carried, 6-1.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Graham, Lipp, Carmona, Kupczyk, Wrobel, Sweeney

Nays: Castellano

VIII. Miscellaneous Communications

Communications may be found in the evening's agenda packet.

IX. Reports From Staff
1. Spotted Lanternfly

FEF McGaughey presented the report and answered informational questions from the Board.

Board members raised the following point during discussion:

- Using the City's communications to publicize the issue, as well as the City's preventative efforts and collaboration with regional groups, would be worthwhile.

X. Items For Next Meeting
XI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.



Connie Folk, Ice Arena and Facilities Superintendent

Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist