

City of Birmingham
Parks And Recreation Board Meeting Minutes
May 6, 2025, 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: Chair Heather Carmona, Vice Chair Pam Graham; Board Members Susan Collins, Jessica Einstein, Sarah Kupczyk, Anne Lipp, Steve Sweeney; Alternate Board Members Narlu Castellano, Joseph Wrobel (non-voting); Student Board Member Abigail Murphy (left 7:07 p.m.)

Absent: Student Board Member Jack Bassett

Staff: Department of Public Services Director Zielinski; Ice Arena and Facilities Superintendent Folk, Parks and Recreation Manager Laird, Parks and Recreation Foreman McNab

III. Announcements, Introductions Of Guests & Chairperson Comments

1. USTA-May is Tennis Month

The Chair delivered the proclamation.

2. The City of Birmingham Ice Show-May 17th Show Times: 11am and 4pm

3. Department of Public Services Open House-May 17th Event Time: 10am-2pm

4. Annual Rouge River Clean-Up-May 17th Event Time: 10am-12pm

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

VC Graham provided the update and encouraged listeners to communicate their opinions about the future direction of the project to the City Commission.

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

Mark Werder supported improving conditions at Springdale and Lincoln Hills golf courses.

Kevin Meade supported improving the user experience of the online pickleball and tennis court reservation system.

Michael Davies supported a bridge being built between Linn Smith Park and Linden Park.

V. Approval Of The Minutes - April 1, 2025

Motion by Lipp

Seconded by Collins to approve the minutes.

Motion carried, 7-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Kupczyk, Einstein, Sweeney, Collins, Carmona, Graham, Lipp

Nays: None

VI. Unfinished Business

1. Proposed Time Change to Parks and Recreation Board Meeting

Board members raised the following points during discussion:

- Meeting at 6:00 p.m. could be prohibitive for people who work outside of Birmingham.
- This change in timing could reduce commenters' ability to attend meetings, and might also reduce the age and experience diversity of present and future board members.
- Moving it to 6:00 p.m. could make it easier on staff members, and could also leave people more time to put their children to bed.
- More board members supported leaving the time as-is, presently.

Motion by Einstein

Seconded by Lipp to keep the time.

Motion carried, 7-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Kupczyk, Einstein, Sweeney, Collins, Carmona, Graham, Lipp

Nays: None

2. Booth Park Update

The Chair introduced the item and staff presented the item. Staff answered informational questions.

Board members raised the following points during discussion:

- It could be worth considering furniture that is also site-specific public art for this and future projects. This could be done in collaboration with the Public Arts Board.
- The locations for the benches were well-selected.
- The landscaping nearest the benches should be selected so as not to attract stinging insects.
- The bench should be comfortable.
- Wood would likely be uncomfortable to sit on in skirts or shorts. Splinters could also become a concern.
- It might be more appropriate to consider a few smaller picnic tables rather than one large one.
- Having to re-oil the benches on an annual basis indicates that the material might be more porous than is preferable.
- A composite material might be more suitable.
- The Douglas Fir finish is described as smooth.
- The material for the swing cables should be identified.
- The swing design echoes the bathroom design.

Public Comment

Diane Kramer supported in-person evaluations for benches in order to select for increased seating comfort.

Mr. Werder commented that the picnic table was some distance from the entrance.

Staff answered questions from Coral Par.

3. Playground Design Input Session

Staff introduced the items and Lance Shipman from Penchura. Mr. Shipman presented the items and answered informational questions.

a. Pumphouse Playground

Board members raised the following points during discussion:

- Children using wheelchairs are often not able to access playground equipment.
- Children using wheelchairs would not be able to navigate directly up to the swingset at this playground.
- At least one of the swings should be accessible for wheelchair users.
- Poured-in-place surfaces and pathways should be installed selectively but deliberately. A poured-in-place surface increases usability throughout the year, reduces maintenance time and costs, improves safety, and improves accessibility for users across the lifespan.
- Accessibility and aging-in-place are priorities of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the City's 2040 Plan.
- If some proposed amenities need to be scaled back in order to include some poured-in-place surfaces, that should occur.
- Per nearby residents, the amount of seating in the park was sufficient.

Public Comment

Abby Werder supported using the first concept because it covers a wider range of ages and retaining the name Pumphouse Park.

Kevin Zurro concurred with Ms. Werder, and supported the proposed changes, installing a saddle spinner in addition to the other proposed equipment, removing the old poles that remain in a few spaces within the park, closing the gap between the ground and the fence that is between the country club and the park, and an expedient installation process.

Wendy Leary supported focusing the playground equipment on the younger age range and installing 'children at play' signs on the street.

Mr. Werder commented about the schematic showing the smaller houses, saying it did not align with the character of the neighborhood.

Another resident disagreed with Mr. Werder.

b. Lincoln Well Site Playground

Board members raised the following points during discussion:

- This first round of feedback should be treated as just a starting point for this process.
- The next presentation for both parks should include callouts for features that are or can be made accessible.

Public Comment

Elizabeth Paranjpe supported playground equipment that aligns better with the subtler aesthetic character of the neighborhood, reintroducing a sandbox, gearing the playground towards the younger age range, and providing comfortable places to sit for caregivers.

Carol Keidan supported playground equipment featuring earth tones.

Ms. Par concurred with Mses. Paranjpe and Keidan regarding design considerations, and supported retaining the fountain, reintroducing the sandbox, retaining seating and adding seating in the shade, adding a pollinator area, adding a bench swing that could be used by adults, and adding amenities such as a place for adults to play checkers or chess.

Tricia Meade concurred with Mses. Paranjpe, Keidan, and Par, supported replacing two of the spinners with one bench swing in the shade, and commented concerns that adding more attractions could cause the number of visitors to outpace the available parking.

Kevin Meade concurred with Mses. Paranjpe, Keidan, Par and Meade regarding design considerations, and supported reintroducing the sandbox and adding the more horizontal play structures in earth tones versus the more vertical play structures.

Cathleen Greiner concurred with the other commenters about appropriate design for the context, supported the swingset design, adding a bench swing, adding a treetop structure, adding accessible paths, and reintroducing a sandbox.

Brigetta Greiner supported retaining the swings, adding a treetop structure, having sufficient seating and tables, and reintroducing a sandbox.

Trevor Andrews supported the taller play structure over the treetop structure, focusing on the 5-12 age range, retaining the swings, retaining the sandbox, adding more interesting features in the space adjacent to the tennis courts, adding higher monkey bars, and adding rope features similar to the ones at Pierce.

A resident of 1751 W. Lincoln commented concerns about drainage issues within the park.

VII. New Business

VIII. Miscellaneous Communications

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

A brief discussion occurred on how public comments made during 'Open To The Public For Items Not On The Agenda' are addressed by staff.

IX. Reports From Staff

1. Park Updates

X. Items For Next Meeting

XI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Connie Folk

Connie Folk, Ice Arena and Facilities Superintendent



Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist