

**City of Birmingham**  
**Parks and Recreation Board Meeting Minutes**  
**September 9, 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; Alternate Board Member Narlu Castellano, Joseph Wrobel (not voting); Student Board Member Jack Bassett

**Absent:** Board Member Steve Sweeney; Student Board Member Abigail Murphy

**Staff:** Department of Public Services Director Zielinski; City Planner Blizinski, Ice Arena and Facilities Superintendent Folk, Parks and Recreation Coordinator Kirkwood, Parks and Recreation Manager Laird, Parks and Recreation Foreman McNab

**III. Announcements, Introductions Of Guests & Chairperson Comments**

**1. Introduction of Clinise Kirkwood, Parks and Recreation Coordinator**

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

**V. Approval Of The Minutes - August 5, 2025**

Motion by Graham

Seconded by Lipp to approve the minutes.

Motion carried, 7-0.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Nays: None

**VI. Unfinished Business**

**1. Poppleton Park Playground Improvements**

Staff presented the item and answered informational questions.

Board members raised the following points during discussion:

- All contributors were thanked for their work on the proposal and for being responsive to community feedback.
- It should be noted in the proposal that existing trees are not shown on the map.
- Given that a significant majority of users walk or bike to the Park, and that the Board is trying to increase accessibility, it would be appropriate to provide a greater number of accessible parking spots.
- Adding a pole in the loading space of the accessible spots would help prevent vehicles from parking in the loading space.

- There was hope that the 10 foot swings would be tall enough for taller users to use. The idea of getting a nameplate for a particularly regular user of the swings was raised.
- Caregivers would likely adequately monitor their children when they are at the top of the play structure. Children will also likely be able to make their way back down when they climb up.
- There was a fair bit of support for adding monkey bars.
- There are other climbing opportunities in this proposal.
- The addition of more swings was in response to community demand.
- Staff should verify whether the mister might make wheelchair-accessible areas damp. It might be appropriate to move it away from that area.
- A custom color is likely not necessary. Children might enjoy the brighter colors.
- Some neighborhood residents preferred more muted colors, which was important for the Board to acknowledge.
- It was likely a more community-responsive use of funds to increase the number of swings rather than changing the structure to a custom color.
- The color options for the structure will likely be generally seen as an improvement over the present structures. This one will also be a bit more muted than some other nearby parks, which is appropriate because this is a neighborhood park.
- This proposal has more poured in place surface than the previous proposal.
- There should be two or three spinners installed.
- Having two different color umbrellas will be useful for wayfinding.
- The park could be laid out in a way to allow the addition of adult fitness equipment later on.
- Parallel parking had more support.
- The proposal should remove any pathways that will not be included, and the pathways should be drawn as closely to scale as possible.
- Fewer drawings, removing the winter drawings, and removing the previous drawings could make the presentation more streamlined.
- The curb could be cut only where there was safe loading and unloading for three accessible spots.
- Oxford Street could be painted with the available parking spots.
- Any options for an adult restroom changing station as part of the temporary restrooms should be explored further by staff.

#### Public Comment

Kelsey Howe supported a reduction in the use of poured in place surface due to environmental and health concerns, and supported the installation of monkey bars to encourage grip and upper body strength in children.

Kristi Lewis expressed gratitude for the changes to the swing sets and for the care shown towards the Lewis family.

Bella Fichtenberg commented regarding opportunities for younger and older children at the Park and supported the addition of monkey bars.

#### Motion by Lipp

Seconded by Kupczyk to approve the updated concept plan and playground layout for the Poppleton Park Playground Improvement project as presented, provided the following:

- A. We should add monkey bars;
- B. We should add more spinners;
- C. We should consider the placement and spread of the mister; and,
- D. We should consider the colors in connection with the wayfinding and muster points.

And to forward the foregoing to the City Commission for their consideration and final approval, together with recommending that the parallel parking option along Oxford Street be pursued with emphasis on accessible spaces.

Board member comment on the motion was as follows:

- The one spinner presently included in the proposal may be sufficient.

Motion carried, 7-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Nays: None

**VII. New Business**

**1. 2026 Parks and Recreation Board Schedule**

Motion by Kupczyk

Seconded by Einstein to approve.

Motion carried, 7-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Nays: None

**VIII. Miscellaneous Communications**

**1. All Communications received - Poppleton Park Playground Improvements**

**IX. Reports from Staff**

**1. July Scavenger Hunt**

PRF McNab and PRM Laird presented the item.

Board member comment was as follows:

- Birmingham schools do a Birmingham-themed curriculum for second graders. The schools might be interested in using the Parks' Scavenger Hunt as part of that curriculum.

**X. Items for Next Meeting**  
**1. Review of Park Rules and Regulations**

**XI. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.



Connie Folk, Ice Arena and Facilities Superintendent

Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist

approved