

CITY OF BERKLEY
PUBLIC NOTICE
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
7:00 P.M. December 11, 2025 AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 P.M.

Present: J.D. Otto, Melissa Hammond, John Nicolai, Andrew Boring, and Mike Kerby

Also, present: Dan McMinn, Greg Patterson, and Tyler Sprague

Unable to Attend: Betty Smith

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion to approve by J.D. Otto and supported by Melissa Hammond

APPROVAL OF 11/13/25 MINUTES: Motion to approve by John Nicolai and supported by J.D. Otto, with a correction to the spelling of Berkley under the Program Updates section.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: No public comments

BOARD BUSINESS:

1. 5-Year Plan

- The board received the draft plan by email, which will also be presented at next Monday's City Council meeting.
- Tyler Sprague of Johnson Hill Land Ethics Studio attended for this portion of the meeting to outline the plan-approval process and provide a high-level overview of the plan's seven chapters and appendices.
- Tyler Sprague noted that key recommendations centered on the Community Center Building, which survey and public input identified as aging and limited in its ability to support programming. Other suggestions mentioned during the meeting were creating dedicated senior space and exercise area, a community pool, and dog park.
- Mike Kerby noted he reviewed the plan and appreciated the town comparisons and the new Accessibility Ratings for city parks. He pointed out that Bacon Park scored the highest at a 3, while most parks rated lower. Tyler Sprague explained that ratings above 3 reflect universal-design standards that go beyond ADA requirements and are typically achievable only in newly-built facilities. Mike expressed appreciation for having park ratings included, as this information was not previously available.
- John Nicolai commented that he read that 60% of those surveyed were not happy with the community center facility.
- Andrew Boring asked for Tyler Sprague's recommendation on a pool and whether a pool or an ice rink would be more costly, as well as any available cost estimates. Tyler recommended a dedicated process to evaluate the future of the community center building, noting that public feedback suggests it is worth revisiting what the community wants and whether there is willingness to invest. Tyler added that the building could potentially accommodate either a pool or an ice rink and has significant potential to serve as a central community asset.
- Mike Kerby noted that facilities like a pool or community hub would likely require a dedicated parks and recreation millage to ensure long-term maintenance. Tyler Sprague agreed that a dedicated millage could help address those needs.
- John Nicolai asked whether the findings leaned more toward creating a community hub. Tyler Sprague responded that pools can be difficult to maintain and fund, but not impossible;

the city would need to fully evaluate the steps and long-term obligations involved. Tyler emphasized that the goal is to identify opportunities first, then determine how and where they could be implemented. John noted that the top three community requests were a community center, a pool, and dog parks. Tyler highlighted the importance of public-private partnerships as a way to support such projects, including potential agreements with larger companies.

- Tyler Sprague shared that survey responses were statistically valid, with most respondents between ages 30–50. He mentioned that pocket parks can be a cost-effective option for communities with limited space.
- J.D. Otto asked whether grants could involve business partnerships. Tyler Sprague confirmed this is possible, noting that the plan includes a table outlining available grants and that the city can apply while a partner contributes funding. He added that grants are competitive but plentiful.
- Melissa Hammond asked whether there is a correlation between feedback received during the survey period and the ability to pass a millage. Tyler Sprague responded that during the process, it will be important to convey survey findings, proposed solutions, and funding options. He emphasized transparency, including providing tax-impact calculators to illustrate potential cost increases.
- J.D. Otto asked about the pathways for public feedback. Tyler Sprague explained that the plan will be available for a 30-day public review period, followed by a public hearing in January and an additional meeting where comments can be submitted and addressed. Dan added that a public hearing will also be held during this meeting to gather input.
- Tyler Sprague noted that the Appendices contain the raw survey data.

2. By Laws Discussion

- J.D. recommended including the by-Laws as a 2026 goal and suggested using the Library Board's By-Laws as a template, with potential discussion in February.

3. Community 1 Updates

- Dan McMinn noted the bathroom project is nearing completion: floors and paint are finished, ceiling drywall work is done, and only a few fixtures remain. The team is also exploring options for year-round heating and installing access-control systems to allow keyless locking and unlocking.

4. Program Updates

- Dan McMinn provided several programming updates.
- It has been a busy stretch heading into the holiday season. Last Friday included three large events: a Senior Fitness class with about 40 participants and a visit from the Grinch; senior bingo with a similar turnout and appearances by Santa, Mayor Dean, and Councilmember Patterson; and a S'mores event on the front lawn, paired with indoor card-making for seniors.
- The winter programming guide for January–March 2026 is now available online.
- The senior holiday party will be held tomorrow at Camp Ticonderoga, with all three buses transporting attendees; the event includes a meal and a prize for every senior.
- Vacation Camp will run December 22–23 and 29–30, with activities including skating in Hazel Park, visiting the Science Center, and a trip to Blake's Orchard to cut down a Christmas tree; 13 children are currently registered.

- Community Center Staff Updates: Bobby Green has obtained his chauffeur's license and will be able to chaperone for the entirety of the camp. Josie Modrack has launched a new partnership with Articipate to offer arts workshops—two in January and two in February—each with a different theme, with an emphasis on collaborating with local businesses.
- J.D. Otto inquired when the Community Center Bathroom Project completed. Dan McMinn estimated the project wrapped up a week or two after the board's last meeting.

5. Board Goals

- By year-end, the board must submit its annual accomplishment summary, including this year's achievements and next year's goals.
- Goals for next year: finalize the bylaws; actively engage with community members to promote reconstituting the Friends of Berkley Parks group (outreach through PTA meetings suggested by Melissa Hammond and outreach to the Dad's Club Organizations suggested by Andrew Boring); complete the Master Plan; strengthen relationships with city management and council for more effective advisory input; and filling a vacant board seat.
- Accomplishments for this year: resumed monthly meetings; highlighted programming successes from Parks and Recreation staff; and completed preliminary work on the five-year plan.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Andrew Boring apologized for missing recent meetings due to family commitments, offered well wishes to Betty Smith, and noted that Dan McMinn is doing a great job.
- J.D. Otto expressed appreciation for the program guides and noted that the team continues to elevate its work, which is a great benefit to the community.
- John Nicolai appreciated the discussion of the five-year plan, Tyler Sprague's visit, and the goals for next year, noting that the information will be valuable for readers and that the Parks and Recreation team is doing a great job.
- Greg Patterson stated that he has been officially re-assigned as liaison to the board, echoed the positive comments about staff, and complimented last Friday's Senior Bingo and Hot Chocolate/S'mores events.
- Dan McMinn wished everyone happy holiday and noted that Johnson Hill Land Ethics Studio has been excellent to work with.
- Mike Kerby wished Betty Smith well, expressed appreciation for the five-year plan discussion, and likes the goals the board developed.
- Melissa Hammond appreciated having Tyler Sprague attend the meeting, was pleased to hear the updates on the Community One bathrooms and ongoing programming, and thanked the Parks and Recreation Department for a successful year.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:33 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: January 15th, 2026