

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Committee of Council
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Monday, April 27, 2026, at 6:30 P.M.

Mary Berges, Chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee, called the meeting to order.

Committee Members Present

Ward 1 Council Member Jennifer Demaline
Council Member At-Large Michelle Patton

Others in Attendance

Ward 2 Council Member Anne Marie Etienne; Ward 3 Council Member Tony Moore; Ward 4 Council Member Scott Radcliff; Council President Brian Fischer; Mayor Bryan Jensen; Law Director John Gasior; Planning/Economic Development Coordinator Pam Fechter; Public Safety/Service Director Duane Streater; Recreation Coordinator Susan Beres; Clerk of Council Barbara Brooks; Audience Members: Pat Jankowski, Larry Escalante

Review of Current Parks

Committee Chair Mary Berges opened the meeting by acknowledging City Engineer Ryan Cummins for preparing a City-wide Parks map distributed to attendees, which identified City-owned Park parcels (dark green striped), City-owned passive Park parcels, Avon City Schools properties (purple striping), and Metro Park-owned parcels (pinkish red). She highlighted that this map provided a comprehensive overview of not only the properties owned by the City but also those belonging to Avon City Schools and the Metro Parks. Ms. Berges particularly appreciated how the map clarified the types of Park parcels, distinguishing between active Parks, passive Parks, and other land under the Schools' and Metro Parks' custody. Recreation Coordinator Susan Beres was also thanked for her presence to assist with questions and provide guidance regarding the various Parks and the proposed survey efforts, underscoring her integral role in answering questions and guiding the Committee through the specifics of the Parks.

Active Parks Update

Ms. Beres provided a detailed overview of recent improvements and upcoming plans across the City's active Parks:

Signage: New Park signage was completed at Veterans Memorial Park entrance and Schwartz Road Park over the winter. The entrance of Veterans Memorial Park saw its new signage installed during the winter, creating a refreshed look for visitors as they enter. Similarly, a new sign was installed at Schwartz Road Park, where efforts also included the reduction of the bed at the front due to a lot of dying plants. Future signage is planned for the Case Road side of Veterans Park, continuing the goal of enhancing accessibility and clarity for Park-goers. Moreover, plans are in place to introduce a new sign for the Department's new office when they move, which is expected to present a different look. As part of a broader initiative, the City aims to improve Park signage to enhance visitor experience and navigation.

Veterans Memorial Park: A new playground and turf were installed on one side of the Park. Worn turf under the swings on the opposite side was replaced with blue-colored surfacing, enhancing the aesthetic and providing a more engaging play environment for children. The replacement addressed previous wear issues, making the area safer and more visually appealing. Future plans include the installation of a new sign on the Case Road side, part of ongoing efforts to enhance Park signage across the City for better navigation and visitor experience.

Every Child's Playground: The Park received significant upgrades with the addition of new adaptive equipment, broadening its accessibility and appeal. Equipment introduced includes a "Quantis" net climber, designed to engage children in physical activity and improve motor skills, and a flex swing that accommodates users of all abilities, promoting inclusive play. Three bays of zip lines were added, including one with an adaptive seat, offering thrilling experiences for all children. The gravity rail, previously troublesome and unpopular, was successfully replaced, improving both safety and enjoyment. Plans for the Park's further development include constructing a pavilion at Every Child's Playground and another at Eagle Point Park. These pavilions will offer essential amenities, create spaces for gatherings, and represent a significant step towards completing the Park's infrastructure and enhancing community use.

Northgate Park: Ms. Beres reported meeting with a vendor to assess potential enhancements to the existing space. One piece of equipment was identified as underutilized and occupying considerable space, and its removal is being contemplated. This would allow for the installation of new features, such as an overhead climber and ground-level balance paths. Ms. Beres mentioned scheduling a second vendor visit for the following week to gather further input and ideas. An important aspect highlighted was the need for shade structures, considering the Park has only one significant tree and a pavilion offering limited shade, emphasizing the necessity for additional shaded areas.

Ms. Beres also addressed community feedback regarding different themes and features that could improve the Park's appeal and user experience. This feedback indicated a demand for diverse equipment that could cater to various age groups, potentially increasing the Park's attractiveness to families and groups seeking versatile recreational spaces. Furthermore, she highlighted the importance of periodic evaluations to ensure the Park's facilities continue to meet community needs and expectations, and she plans to engage more vendors to explore innovative solutions for these improvements.

Skate Park: Ms. Beres observed that the Skate Park had not seen new equipment installations in several years, a situation compounded by the original vendor going out of business. As a response, she has reached out to the American Ramp Company to evaluate the current equipment for any necessary replacements. Ms. Beres indicated there's a community-driven interest in substantial enhancements, such as implementing a concrete bowl-style design, although she expressed some hesitation about that design due to its potential impact in the Park's current setting. The existing location's proximity to the Little League fields presents concerns, particularly regarding the noise and behavior issues previously reported.

Mayor Jensen elaborated on these issues, recounting noise complaints and reports of inappropriate language near the Skate Park, which have been brought up by local businesses and parents at Little League events. The Mayor proposed that relocating the Skate Park to another area, such as the Eagle Point Park region, may better address these concerns, enabling the Skate Park to exist without conflicting with other community activities. Ms. Beres and Mayor Jensen both recognized the value of skateboarding facilities and the need to provide teens with safe, dedicated spaces to pursue such activities, but stressed the importance of balancing these facilities' locations with neighborhood harmony.

Schwartz Road Park: The Park was reported to be in generally good condition, boasting newer equipment that contributes to its appeal and functionality. Recently, the Park saw the removal of a hazardous teeter-totter, a decision made following numerous issues associated with it. The removal has opened up space in the Park, potentially for new additions in the future. In addition, a broken component of a slide within the Park is currently awaiting a replacement part, necessitated by the fracture of part of the slide. This repair is pending, reflecting the City's commitment to maintaining safe play environments for children.

Furthermore, there is consideration being given to replacing some of the existing metal benches scattered through the Park. These benches have begun exhibiting signs of wear, both cosmetically and structurally, and replacing them could address ongoing issues and enhance the overall Park experience. Presently, Schwartz Road Park is outfitted with newer Park structures that incorporate shade, highlighting the City's ongoing efforts to improve user comfort and utility. However, the immediate needs include addressing mulch requirements, as additional mulch is currently needed to maintain proper playground surfacing, which is an integral part of keeping the equipment and surrounding areas safe and well-maintained.

Future City Hall / Former Village School Playgrounds: Ms. Beres reported that a safety inspection identified significant issues, particularly with the swings, which are positioned too close to a walkway and fall outside safe zone standards. The inspector's assessment suggested that the swings' fall zone was too close to the walkway and presented potential safety hazards that needed to be addressed. The structure closer to the soccer fields was identified as the better candidate for retention, probably due to its relative newness, being around 20 years old, and being structurally sound by comparison. Meanwhile, the other playground structure exhibited rust and other deterioration, requiring potentially costly repairs to bring it up to standard. Ms. Patton raised the important point that the smaller of the two structures was donated in memory of a child with special needs. She urged the Committee to be mindful of that history when considering any changes, indicating a need to respect memorial dedications in future plans.

Mayor Jensen outlined a broader vision for the area, discussing various improvements and relocations. This included relocating Safety Town from its current position to the basketball courts, which would allow for more outdoor programming. For example, during good weather, some classes could be conducted outside when traditionally they might have been held indoors. Linked with this was the exploration of creating e-bike and scooter safety training spaces, which would provide dedicated areas for learning and practicing vehicle safety skills. Additionally, plans for

adding a walking trail around the perimeter of the Park were discussed, which could serve as a recreational attraction for families wanting to walk or jog.

Furthermore, constructing restroom facilities was detailed as a crucial future development. Currently, the area lacks necessary amenities that would support Park visitors, particularly useful if the area's usage increases. He noted that parking had already been expanded to accommodate City inspection vehicles, showing some initial steps have already been taken to enhance the area's infrastructure. Finally, it was acknowledged that consolidating soccer activities at Schwartz Road Park and away from the City Hall site remains a long-term goal, with various factors needing to be considered alongside this relocation plan to ensure continued access and usability for residents.

Restroom Facilities: Ms. Patton inquired about the accessibility and configuration of Park restrooms. Ms. Beres confirmed that the newer facilities at Northgate, Eagle Point, and Every Child's Playground are single-occupancy family restrooms equipped with changing tables and designed for accessibility. These facilities are configured to allow any individual or family unit to utilize the restroom in privacy and are designed to be accommodating to all visitors, ensuring ease of access for individuals with mobility challenges.

In response to Ms. Patton's query, Mayor Jensen elaborated that while the current restrooms were not originally designed to include adult changing tables, the City recognizes the growing need for such accommodations. Future restroom constructions will incorporate this feature, which effectively requires doubling the size of the restroom to accommodate the larger tables designed for adults with disabilities. He stressed the importance of making facilities inclusive and accessible, highlighting the City's commitment to enhance the users' experience by integrating features that better serve a broad spectrum of needs.

The Committee discussed the value of these facilities in community Parks, emphasizing that family restrooms equipped with changing tables are crucial for accommodating families with young children. These restrooms are designed to ensure comfort and convenience, allowing parents to simultaneously care for children of various ages in a single, secure environment. The discussion concluded with a mutual understanding that providing robust and accessible restroom facilities reinforced the City's broader aims of inclusivity and community-friendly recreational spaces.

Middle School Turf Field / School Partnerships: Mrs. Demaline highlighted the absence of permanent restroom facilities at the City-contributed turf field at the Middle School, expressing concern that portable options are inadequate given the high volume of activities hosted there. Mrs. Demaline emphasized the inconvenience faced by attendees and participants during events due to the lack of facilities.

Mayor Jensen acknowledged this issue and confirmed that discussions with the School Superintendent have resumed. He emphasized that the need for restroom facilities at both the Middle School turf field and the High School tennis courts are among the top priorities in these discussions. Mayor Jensen shared that the City and School are exploring collaborative efforts to address these needs more effectively. Aside from restrooms, he noted that plans to develop a road connection aligning with Kinzel Road from the High School are also part of the renewed discussions. This road alignment is anticipated to improve access and traffic flow between School

facilities, further fostering cooperation between the City and the School system for shared community infrastructure projects.

Pickleball and Tennis Courts: Mrs. Demaline inquired about plans for additional pickleball courts elsewhere in the City. Mayor Jensen explained that the current focus is on expanding pickleball at the High School, where recently purchased portable nets have effectively doubled court availability from approximately five or six to around eleven or twelve. The increased number of courts reflects a direct response to the growing popularity of the sport within the community. Mayor Jensen noted that the courts are heavily used, particularly in the evenings and weekends, with the demand peaking around 6:00 or 6:30 PM as both adults and younger residents utilize the facilities. As a result of this high demand, reservations are not currently permitted to ensure the courts remain accessible to the public without prioritization. The goal is to maintain open public access and encourage the communal spirit associated with the sport.

Mayor Jensen also referenced ongoing considerations for further expanding pickleball facilities, particularly the potential to relocate soccer activities from the future City Hall site. This move would free up space that could potentially accommodate additional pickleball courts, catering to the evident demand. By centralizing such activities, the City aims to create a hub for local athletic engagement, making it easier for residents to find and partake in their preferred sports activities. Additionally, relocating soccer to Schwartz Road Park is aligned with broader strategic plans to optimize the use of City Park spaces, ensuring that the needs of diverse sports enthusiasts are met effectively within the community.

Disc Golf: Mrs. Demaline highlighted a considerable interest within the community regarding the establishment of a disc golf course, specifically mentioning potential locations at Veterans Park or Eagle Point Park. In response, Ms. Beres shared that she had been contacted by a person who played a significant role in the development of the highly acclaimed disc golf course in North Ridgeville, recognized as one of the top-ranked courses in Northeast Ohio. Ms. Beres indicated her intention to meet with the Mayor to discuss the potential feasibility and benefits of introducing a similar course in Avon.

Mayor Jensen supported this interest, confirming that the Eagle Point Park area, particularly to the south, is currently overgrown and is under evaluation for potential trail clearing and open space development. He suggested that disc golf could align well with these plans. Mayor Jensen further described that Eagle Point Park offers ample space, and the potential development of a disc golf course there would be a suitable use that maintains the natural beauty of the area while providing a new recreational opportunity. Additionally, there is a broader vision for enhancing public accessibility and utility in that region, making it a promising option for this new feature.

Staff additions are anticipated to expedite the effort of clearing brush and preparing the area, which is part of a larger initiative to open up Park areas for community use while ensuring environmental preservation. The discussions about this project underscore the City's commitment to diversifying recreational offerings and addressing community interests. Both the Council and the Parks & Recreation Department recognize the increasing popularity of disc golf as a low-cost, accessible

activity that complements other recreational programs, making it a desirable venture for the community.

Inclusive Programming: Ms. Patton proposed the introduction of archery as a new recreational program, emphasizing its unique appeal to youth who may not gravitate towards traditional athletic or performing arts activities. She highlighted a similar initiative undertaken by a DARE officer in Westlake, which aimed to engage kids who hadn't found their niche in conventional school or community activities. Ms. Patton underscored the importance of providing diverse offerings that create a sense of belonging and inclusivity, allowing children who may not fit into typical social categories to find their groups and develop new skills.

In addition to archery, Ms. Patton voiced her strong support for a previously discussed idea of offering swim times specifically for families with children with disabilities. Drawing from her personal experience, Ms. Patton highlighted the difficulties her family has faced during standard public swim sessions where crowded conditions and her son's interactions with other swimmers posed challenges. She advocated for the City to consider accommodating these families by providing comfortable and secure swim settings, enabling children with special needs to safely enjoy aquatic activities. This proposal aligns with broader efforts to enhance accessibility and inclusivity in Avon's recreational programming, ensuring the City's services cater to the diverse needs of its residents.

Adult Programming: Mr. Radcliffe advocated strongly for expanded adult fitness programming, both in Parks and in an indoor recreation center format, noting this is a growing interest among residents as children age out of youth sports programs. He emphasized the community's need to cater to residents who find themselves at a different point in their lives, seeking activities beyond youth-oriented programs. Mr. Radcliffe pointed out that, as families and residents transition through different life stages, the demand for adult-focused offerings continues to rise, with many expressing interest in having more fitness classes and recreational options available to them. His insights reflect the evolving recreational needs of Avon's citizens, where adults who may have previously focused on supporting their children's activities now seek personal engagement in the community's fitness and leisure offerings. By providing these expanded opportunities, the City aims to enhance the quality of life for its adult population, supporting wellness, social interaction, and community involvement.

Required 10-Year Survey of Parks & Recreation Department

Legal Framework and Ordinance Status

Ms. Berges provided background on the legal basis for the survey, outlining its origins and its evolution over time. Codified Ordinance Section 276.03 was originally established with a five-year survey cycle to ensure regular feedback from the community on Park and Recreational needs. However, this was later amended by Ordinance 119-12, which adjusted the cycle to require a survey no less than every ten years, acknowledging that a ten-year interval might provide a more comprehensive overview of the City's changing recreational landscape.

The last survey cycle began in 2016 and included efforts to collect community input about Park usage, facility conditions, and potential improvements. Ms. Berges pointed out a significant change since then: the dissolution of the Parks and Recreation Commission by voters during the November 2017 general election. This dissolution left a gap in the designated responsibility for conducting these surveys, as the Ordinance specifically tasked this Commission with such duties.

Due to this change, Ms. Berges emphasized the necessity for the Ordinance to be amended to reassign the responsibility of conducting the survey to another qualified party to ensure the City's compliance with the Ordinance's requirements. This amendment would allow the City to continue gathering valuable resident input, which could then inform the planning and improvement of Parks and Recreational resources.

Discussion of Frequency and Administration

The Committee engaged in a detailed discussion regarding the future Administration and frequency of the Parks and Recreation survey. The survey, originally a task for the now-dissolved Parks and Recreation Commission, needs reassignment to ensure compliance with City Ordinance requirements. Mayor Jensen proposed that the Parks and Recreation Committee of Council could authorize and oversee the survey process, suggesting that the Recreation Coordinator position should administer it. This would effectively fill the Administrative gap left by the defunct Commission.

Law Director, Mr. Gasior contributed by suggesting an amendment to the Ordinance language. He recommended setting a maximum interval of ten years for conducting the survey, which would grant the Council the flexibility to initiate a survey whenever deemed necessary, rather than adhering to a rigid schedule. This flexibility would allow the City to respond dynamically to changes in community needs and priorities over time.

The Committee discussed recommending that the Recreation Coordinator conduct the survey every five years. Mr. Radcliffe and others supported this frequency, noting the rapid evolution of recreational behaviors and community priorities, particularly in a post-COVID environment. Members also observed that modern technologies, including AI-assisted analysis, could simplify the process and make conducting the survey less burdensome than in the past. By consensus, the Committee recommended amending the Ordinance to assign responsibility for the survey directly to the Recreation Coordinator and require that it be conducted no less than every five years. This recommendation is set to be forwarded to Council for a formal Ordinance amendment, thereby institutionalizing a schedule that balances regular feedback with Administrative efficiency.

Survey Preparation

Ms. Beres reported that she has already begun preliminary work with a software vendor who has experience designing community Parks and Recreation surveys. She offered to circulate a draft to all Committee and Council Members via email to gather input on desired questions to incorporate before the survey is finalized. Ms. Beres explained that the vendor provides a comprehensive platform that would facilitate an efficient survey process, ensuring ease of participation from residents and thorough analytics.

She noted that it's important to ensure all relevant topics are covered in the survey, including current Park usage, facility satisfaction, and potential new programming interests. To comply with the existing ten-year requirement from the 2016 survey, the revised survey must be finalized and distributed no later than December 2026. The Committee emphasized the importance of resident input in this process, recognizing it as crucial for aligning Park and Recreational offerings with community needs.

The Committee expressed support for moving forward promptly and offered their assistance in reviewing and contributing to the draft. They acknowledged the potential for using AI-assisted tools to analyze the data, which would allow for a more expedient process. Ms. Beres reassured members that she would seek their feedback before finalizing the survey, aiming for an early dissemination to maximize resident participation.

Adjourn: 7:26 P.M.

Ms. Berges adjourned the Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Committee of Council

Respectfully submitted by Anne Kish, Assistant Clerk of Council

PASSED: _____

SIGNED BY: _____
Mary Berges, Chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee

ATTEST: _____
Anne Kish, Assistant Clerk of Council