

City of Colorado Springs

Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Advisory Board Minutes

Location: 1401 Recreation Way, Colorado Springs, CO 80905

Date: January 8, 2026

Time: 7:30 AM

Meeting Attendance

Members Present: Andrea Perry, Steve Harris, Larry Bogue, Julia Sands de Melendez, Amandla Atilano-Roque, Debbie Swanson, Steve Lenzo, Kimberley Sherwood

Members Absent: Andrea Perry, Mike Sullivan

Staff Present: Kim King, Lonna Thelen, Eric Becker, Anna Bingman, Andrea Solano, Caroline Miller, Mark Snow, Alex Crochet, Matt Mayberry, Connie Schmeisser, Jake Butterfield, Emily Duncan, David Deitemeyer, John Weaver, Daniel Gould

Call to Order

Board Chair Steve Harris called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Citizen Discussion

- Carol Beckman, citizen, thanked Anna Bingman, Staff Assistant, for her work of meeting facilitation, communication, and coordination. She noted that Anna began facilitating this meeting as well as the TOPS Working Committee, shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic began and had to learn how to run the meetings virtually, which was a difficult task. She stated that Anna would be missed.
- Julie Parcel, citizen, is a neighbor of Portal Park. She asked staff to have the pool area cleaned up and stated that she has reached out to Colorado College and the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs to see if any of the students in their art programs would be interested in painting a mural on the pool house. She also said she approached the Ent Center for the Arts on donating extra benches to the park. While she has been happy to see the renewed energy around the Park at the recent community meetings she has attended, she adamantly disagrees with restoring the pool, stating that it is sitting on top of a sinking mine and there is no point in attempting to make it work again.
- Matthew Hadley, citizen, reminded the Board about the growing parkour community in Colorado Springs. He informed them of their rising membership and event registrations and

encouraged park planners to consider elements that would encourage the sport of parkour in their design.

- Allen Beauchamp, Community Engagement Coordinator for the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC), attended the TOPS Working Committee the day prior and said he was wowed by the amount of work completed and ongoing. He stated that he is looking forward to a dynamic 2026, and thanked staff for all their hard work.
- Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, also thanked Anna Bingman for her facilitation at these meetings. Next, he noted the ongoing discussion about volunteer projects and limitations due to liability. Mr. Sutela has created a proposal that he believes could solve some of these issues. He stated that his organization is committed to working with the Department to take a constructive step forward and provide more volunteer opportunities.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: To approve the December 11, 2025 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board meeting minutes.

1st – Kimberley Sherwood, 2nd – Larry Bogue, Approved, Unanimously, with Board members Debbie Swanson and Amandla Atilano-Roque abstaining.

Action Items

There were no action items on this agenda.

Presentations

Landings Business Park Land Use Plan – Park Land Dedications (Presented by Caroline Miller, Senior Program Administrator, and Jason Alwine, Senior Associate at N.E.S. Landscape Architects) Item 1

- Caroline Miller, Senior Program Administrator, and Jason Alwine, Senior Associate at N.E.S. Landscape Architects, presented the Board with the Landings Business Park Land Use Plan –Park Land Dedications. The first presentation concerned the Park Land Dedications, and included Landings Business Park; Land Use Review; and finally, Park Land dedications. The second presentation concerned the land use plan, and included site location and context; project description; PLDO requirements; and finally, request for Parks Board consideration.

Banning Lewis Ranch Village A – Filing 59 Neighborhood Park (Presented by Connie Schmeisser, Senior Planner, and Ken Puncerelli, CEO of LAI Design Workshop on behalf of Clayton Properties)

- Connie Schmeisser, Senior Planner, and Ken Puncerelli, CEO of LAI Design Workshop on behalf of Clayton Properties, presented the Board with the Banning Lewis Ranch Village A – Filing 59 Neighborhood Park. This presentation included the location; overview; park land obligations;

concept plan; playground area; play field area; landscape play; other amenities and signage; and finally, the summary.

Staff Updates

Design and Development Year-in-Review and Look Ahead (Presented by the Design and Development Team, including Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager; David Deitemeyer, Senior Program Administrator for TOPS; Connie Schmeisser, Senior Planner; Jake Butterfield, Capital Projects Coordinator; Emily Duncan, Trails Development Coordinator; Daniel Gould, Senior Landscape Architect; and John Weaver, Parks Asset Supervisor)

- The Design and Development Team presented the Board with the Design and Development Year-in-Review and Look Ahead. This presentation discussed projects, some property by property, including the Park System Master Plan; e-bikes; Blodgett Open Space; Austin Bluffs Open Space; Fishers Canyon Open Space; Snyder Quarry – Black Canyon Open Space; Sinton Trail – Holland Park to Chestnut Street; Legacy Loop – West Pikes Peak Greenway; Pikes Peak Greenway – Cottonwood Creek to Mark Dabbling Boulevard; Rock Island Trail – Sand Creek to Constitution Avenue; Grey Hawk Park planning and construction; facilities projects; 2026 bridges; Westside Community Center and Starsmore Discovery Center; Garden of the Gods Waterline; Veterans Memorial; Rampart playground; Woodland Hills playground; Open Space kiosks and wayfinding; Stratton Park Master and Management Plan; and finally, the Parks Asset Management program.

Horticulture Update (Presented by Alex Crochet, City Horticulturist)

- Alex Crochet, City Horticulturist, presented the Board with the Horticulture update. This presentation included community engagement and outreach; outdoor learning lab; flowerbeds; land stewardship; growing techniques study; seed library; inaugural plant fundraiser; and finally, 2026 areas of focus. Alex informed the Board that he will be presenting to the City Council on February 9th at their Work Session
- Board member Kimberley Sherwood formally requested a Board tour of the Greenhouse facility. Alex Crochet suggested the May timeframe before plants are distributed. Staff will work on finalizing this.

Kim King, Interim Director, provided the following announcements:

- Kim announced that this would be the last meeting for Anna Bingman, Staff Assistant, as she has accepted a new position at Colorado Springs Utilities. In her departure, Andrea Solano, Administrative Assistant, will take on facilitation of the Parks Advisory Board and TOPS Working Committee.

- The hiring process for the Director is in motion, with the tentative timeline of having a new Director in place by late April or May.
- There are several items being presented by staff to City Council, including the Horticulture presentation, a special districts update to include the Special Improvement Maintenance Districts, and the Park System Master Plan.
- Interviews for potential Board alternate members will be taking place next week, with confirmation in February.

Matt Mayberry, Cultural Services Manager, announced that 2026 is the start of a big year of celebrations for both the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, as well as the 150th anniversary of Colorado's statehood. August 1st is Colorado's birthday, and there will be multiple fun events to celebrate both locally and statewide.

Board Business

Westside Community Center Working Committee – Board Liaison Selection and Time Change Item 1

- Mark Snow, Community Recreation Manager, informed the Board that the Westside Community Center Working Committee needs a Board liaison. While multiple Board members have expressed interest in serving as the liaison, they also have explained the other commitments they have that can cause an issue with meeting attendance. To help this, the Westside Community Center Working Committee has considered moving their monthly meetings to accommodate schedules to make sure there is a liaison. The meetings will be moved from the third Thursday of each month at 2:00 p.m., to the third Wednesday of the month at 3:00 p.m. At this time, Board Chair Steve Harris and Board member Kimberley Sherwood said that they would like to help, however may not be able to attend the next two meetings. Caitlin Moldenhauer, Associate Attorney for the Corporate Division – City Attorney's Office, clarified that the by-laws of the Working Committee require one Board liaison to be selected in a voting role, however other Board members could still attend the meetings. Board member Kimberley Sherwood accepted this role, with the understanding that she will miss the next two meetings. Board member Larry Bogue offered to attend the January 21st Working Committee meeting.

General Board Business

- Kimberley Sherwood – Ms. Sherwood said she would be interested in having a e-bike tour this spring of the southeast portion of the City to look at trail continuity in the area. Staff said they would work on this request.
- Debbie Swanson – Ms. Swanson asked for an update on the City Auditorium. Kim King, Interim Director, stated that she meets with the new operator monthly. Currently, the Auditorium is going through an evaluation to see what's in there, how it can be used, and any other changes or updates that need to be made. Next, Ms. Swanson stated she appreciated the proposal Mr.

Sutela submitted and believed the tiered approach to volunteer work could provide great partnership and results. Finally, Ms. Swanson reiterated the growing sport of parkour that was discussed during citizen comment and encouraged staff to continue finding ways to implement elements that could be used in new park designs.

- Amandla Atilano-Roque – Ms. Atilano-Roque informed the Board that this would be her last meeting, as she has stepped into a new role in her professional life and can no longer commit the time to this role. She expressed her deep admiration for the work of both the Board and the Department.
- Steve Lenzo – Mr. Lenzo reiterated Ms. Swanson’s comments about volunteerism and encouraged the Department to do whatever necessary to make it easier to volunteer. Next, Mr. Lenzo commented that someone had driven around on the grass at Cottonwood Creek Park and asked if there were any long-term maintenance issues from this. Eric Becker, Park Maintenance and Operations Manager, responded that there shouldn’t be, however the tire marks were extra visible due to the frost on the ground, making the damage seem worse.
- Steve Harris – Mr. Harris thanked Ms. Atilano-Roque for her service on the Board and commented that the timing works well with the interview for new alternates. Next, Mr. Harris said he is working with staff to update the Board’s by-laws and align them with Board practices. Mr. Harris asked for an update on Portal Park, as he recalled that there had been a potential project to paint the pool house already. Eric Becker responded that staff had received a bid for painting, but it was not in this year’s budget. Kim King, Interim Director, said she would work with the YMCA to remove any remaining pool gear. There is a community meeting later tonight at Edison Elementary at 5:30 p.m. to discuss the future of Danville, Portal and Flanagan Parks.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the January 8, 2026 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board meeting at 11:39 a.m.

1st – Kimberley Sherwood, 2nd – Debbie Swanson, Approved, Unanimously.