



Locust Park Advisory Board Meeting

Minutes

Joel Huneycutt Community Room

6:00 PM

March 2, 2026

Board Chair
Board Members

Kara Finch
Blair Dover, Kerry Sanford, and Felix Salzedo

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:10 PM. Kara Finch was excused due to scheduling conflict. Board members Blair Dover, Kerry Sanford and Felix Salzedo were in attendance. Emily Jones & Jessica Honeycutt were in attendance from Locust Parks & Recreation staff. Kerry Sanford presided over the meeting in place of Board Chair, Kara Finch.

2. Adopt Agenda

M/S/A Board Members Kerry Sanford and Blair Dover (3-0)
Motion To adopt agenda as presented

3. Minutes - adopt August 4, 2025

August 4, 2025

M/S/A Board Members Felix Salzedo and Kerry Sanford (3-0)
Motion To approve minutes from August 4, 2025 meeting

4. Director's Report

2025 Review, 2026 Goals

Emily Jones, Park Director, and Jessica Honeycutt, Program Coordinator, reviewed the 2025 year-end report, including programming and events. Program participation continues to grow, with strong attendance across offerings. Existing events, including the Christmas Tree Lighting, continue to expand, and staff remain focused on identifying and developing new programming opportunities. For 2026, an additional movie night has been added (for a total of eight), including a patriotic-themed showing and an additional fireworks celebration in recognition of America250. Additional programming opportunities are also planned throughout the year.

Emily Jones also provided an update on 2025 athletics. Emphasis was placed on recent changes ensuring Locust residents receive priority registration access and resident pricing for programs. Scheduling adjustments have also been implemented to help address parking constraints when baseball and soccer overlap at the complex, including limiting soccer games to Saturdays in the spring, consistent with the fall schedule, to reduce weekday congestion during peak baseball and softball usage. Additional incentives have been introduced to encourage coach retention and recognition. Overall, athletics registration numbers continue to increase year over year.

Looking ahead to 2026, plans include development of a new tennis and pickleball complex on recently acquired

land off Hwy 200, which would allow for the conversion of existing tennis courts into additional parking. Facility improvements are also needed at the athletic complex, including lighting repairs and baseball field updates. Long-term planning also includes relocating the museum and park offices within the next one to two years.

5. Sub-Committee Report

6. Special Report

Athletics Fee & Market Analysis

The board discussed the athletics fee structure and considered implementing a tiered system. The following model was reviewed as an example; however, no official recommendation was made:

- Tier 1: Locust residents
- Tier 2: Non-residents who attend Locust Elementary School or who live in communities where that sport is not offered (e.g., soccer is not offered for residents of Stanfield or Endy)
- Tier 3: Non-residents who have the option to participate in athletics within their own community but choose to play in Locust instead.

Emily also presented a comprehensive comparison of athletics fees between Locust Parks & Recreation and surrounding communities, including visual graphs across multiple categories. The comparison showed that Locust's programs are competitively priced and, in some cases, provide a better overall value. A detailed breakdown of cost per player and per team was also reviewed, outlining both hard costs (uniforms, insurance, etc.) and soft costs (field maintenance, staffing, etc.) to give the board a better understanding of how fees are chosen and where that money goes.

7. Unfinished Business

End of Season Athletics Survey: Changes with Results

Vacant Park Advisory Board Position

Accessibility in Parks Grant Application Update

Emily reviewed the End of Season Athletics Survey distributed by Hunter. Overall results were very positive, with minimal negative feedback. A high coach return rate for spring sports indicated strong satisfaction with the previous season. Satisfaction regarding program costs also increased, likely due to the upgraded uniform quality introduced during the fall season in response to prior feedback. Plans are also in place to add player names to the backs of jerseys for the upcoming spring season.

The vacant Park Advisory Board position was not discussed, as no applications had been received at the time of the meeting. The position will be reposted, with the goal of presenting applicants to the board prior to the next meeting. A recommendation is expected to be voted on at that meeting and presented to City Council for consideration at the June meeting.

Emily provided an update on preparations for the upcoming Accessibility in Parks grant project. Topographical work is currently being completed at the park to assist with planning. Progress slowed somewhat during Emily's

maternity leave, but the decision was made to partner with Benesch for planning, the firm that assisted with the 2023 Park Master Plan. Additional updates will be provided as planning progresses.

8. New Business

Upcoming Special Events

Upcoming Athletics

Special Events: The 2026 events calendar was shared with the board, including movie nights, concerts, sprinkle & splash events, special holiday events and the farmers' market. The change in location of the Farmers' Market was also discussed, as it is now moving behind The Brew Room in Town Center to save costs associated with the portable restroom rental that was previously required.

Athletics: Spring sports (soccer, baseball and softball) practices will begin next week, with games starting in April and ending in May. Babe Ruth practices will begin in April and games will be May-June. Hunter will be going on paternity leave some time in April and Emily and Jessica will assume his duties while he is out.

9. Board Closing Comments

10. Adjourn

M/S/A Board Members Blair Dover and Kerry Sanford (3-0)
Motion To Adjourn at 7:45 PM