City of Maricopa

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Meeting Minutes

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

Committee Chair Kevin McDill
Vice Chair James Liggins
Committee Secretary Priscilla Behnke
Committee Member Tholin Johnson
Committee Member Kenneth Longman
Committee Member Devin Pitcher
Committee Member Jason Royal

Wednesday, August 26, 2026 **6:00 PM** **City Hall**

1. Call To Order

Chair McDill called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Roll Call

Council Liaison: Councilmember Eric Goettl
City Staff: Parks and Recreation Director Rocky Brown

Present; 7 - Committee Member Devin Pitcher,Secretary Priscilla Behnke,Committee Member James Liggins,Chair Kevin McDill,Committee Member Kenneth Longman,Tholin Johnson, and Committee Member Jason Royal

3. Minutes

3.1 **MIN 26-50** The Committee will approve the minutes from the July 29, 2026 meeting. Discussion and Action.

A motion was made by Committee Member Longman, seconded by Committee Member Johnson, that these Minutes be Approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

4. Call to the Public

Tena Dugan, a Maricopa resident, addressed the Committee regarding conditions at City parks. She expressed concerns regarding the condition of grass and landscaping at Pacana Park and maintenance of the dog park. She also asked whether City staff or supervisors routinely inspect park conditions and requested clarification regarding maintenance performed during scheduled dog park closures.

James Singleton, a Maricopa resident, addressed the Committee expressing gratitude for having the pool available to the swim team for practice at 5 am, and requested consideration of a pool cover due to the increase in storms and the closures associated to the mess.

The Committee acknowledged the concerns and requested that they be noted for follow-up.

5. Agenda Items

5.1 PRAC 26-34 The Committee will hear reports from the chair and committee members. Discussion only.

Committee members provided updates and observations regarding Parks and Recreation facilities and activities.

Kevin McDill noted recent work occurring on the Pacana Park ballfields and requested an update later in the meeting.

Kenneth Longman addressed the condition of indoor pickleball nets at Copper Sky. Staff stated that new equipment was in stock and that improvements to the Fieldhouse equipment were anticipated.

No action was taken.

5.2 PRAC 26-35 The Committee will hear reports from the Council Liaison. Discussion only.

Councilmember Eric Goettl and Parks and Recreation Director Rocky Brown provided an overview of the City's existing and planned trail system and related Capital Improvement Program projects.

Staff discussed:
- *The City's adopted trail map and construction standards;*
- *Existing and planned multi-use paths and sidewalk connections;*
- *Capital Improvement Program timelines and funding;*
- *Connections between residential areas, schools, commercial development, Copper Sky, and other community destinations;*
- *The role of private development in completing portions of the trail network;*
- *Challenges involving easements, utilities, drainage, private property, and right-of-way;*
- *The need to improve east-west pedestrian and bicycle connectivity; and*
- *Development of an interactive City trail map that may eventually be made available to the public.*

Committee member Devin Pitcher discussed gaps in pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, particularly between the east and west sides of the community.

Councilmember Goettl stated that he would follow up with City staff regarding specific trail and sidewalk connections discussed by the Committee.

No action was taken.

5.3 PRAC 26-36 The Committee will discuss volunteer opportunities for the upcoming Stagecoach Days Fishing Derby event. Discussion and Recommendation.

The Committee discussed volunteer opportunities for the Stagecoach Days Family Fishing Derby scheduled for Saturday, October 17, 2026.

Chair McDill indicated that he planned to volunteer, and additional Committee members indicated interest or tentative availability.

Staff discussed volunteer needs, including registration and assistance with fishing equipment. The Committee also discussed the success of the prior year's event and the anticipated benefit of returning the event to a Saturday.

A motion was made by McDill and seconded by Devin Pitcher to approve Committee member participation in the Fishing Derby.

The motion passed unanimously.

Additional event details will be coordinated with staff.

5.4 **PRAC 26-37** The Committee will hear an update from city staff regarding partnerships for teen services and nominate committee member representation for the Teen Services Request for Qualifications. Discussion and Action.

Director Brown provided an update regarding the City's efforts to develop partnerships for teen services and the current Request for Qualifications process.

Staff reported that the RFQ had received three responses and explained that submissions would be reviewed and prioritized, with interviews conducted as appropriate.

Director Brown also reviewed current and proposed youth and teen programming opportunities, including:

- *A proposed teen open-swim event at Copper Sky;*
- *Potential futsal programming in the new Fieldhouse;*
- *Junior lifeguard and other youth volunteer/shadowing opportunities;*
- *Potential junior sports, child watch, fitness, and referee opportunities;*
- *Teen open-gym nights;*
- *Expansion of enrichment programming through community providers;*
- *Partnerships with organizations currently using City facilities;*
- *Library programs;*
- *Youth sports and recreation programs; and*
- *The Maricopa Youth Council.*

Youth Programming Discussion

Committee members discussed the need for programming that serves youth whose interests extend beyond traditional team sports.

Committee Member Priscilla Behnke referenced Parks and Recreation budget information from Fiscal Year 2021-22 and noted that the City's former esports program had generated significant revenue. She requested information regarding why esports and other youth-specific programming had been discontinued and where funding previously dedicated to those programs had been reallocated.

Members expressed interest in exploring the return of esports programming.

The Committee also discussed:

- *Youth mental health and social isolation;*
- *The importance of safe places for teens to gather;*
- *Mentorship and consistent relationships with trusted adults;*
- *Life skills and career preparation;*
- *Opportunities for youth who do not participate in sports;*

- *Career and vocational exposure;*
- *Graphic design, technology, space-industry and other skill-building opportunities;*
- *Partnerships with nonprofit, educational, faith-based, behavioral health and private-sector organizations;*
- *Transportation barriers that can prevent youth from accessing programs; and*
- *The City's role in supporting, complementing and promoting services provided by community partners.*

Committee members emphasized the importance of creating opportunities for teens to connect with peers and trusted adults and to envision educational, career and community opportunities after high school.

Parks and Recreation Funding Discussion

During discussion regarding youth-program funding, Behnke asked how the City's level of investment in youth services was reconciled with spending on major entertainment events, specifically referencing the City's Flo Rida concert.

Councilmember Goettl explained that municipal revenues come from multiple funding sources and that many revenue sources have legal restrictions on how they may be spent.

Councilmember Goettl stated that revenue associated with hotel and short-term rental taxes, commonly referred to as "bed tax" revenue, is subject to statutory requirements relating to tourism. He stated that tourism-related revenues may be used for events intended to attract visitors from outside the City and that similar revenue may potentially support other tourism-related activities, including sports tourism.

Behnke requested additional clarification regarding the funding source for the concert and the City's prioritization of youth programming.

Councilmember Goettl and staff agreed that additional review should be conducted regarding prior youth-program budgets, including where funding previously dedicated to youth-specific programming had been reallocated and whether prior programs could be restored or restructured.

Youth Court/Volunteer Program

Kevin McDill also discussed the previously proposed youth court/volunteer program.

Councilmember Goettl reported that local support and volunteer capacity existed but that implementation depended upon approval and support from Pinal County. Members discussed continuing outreach regarding the program.

Transportation

Members discussed transportation as a potential barrier to participation in youth programs.

Staff noted the City's public transit options, including demand-response transportation, while acknowledging limitations in service hours and routes. The Committee discussed increasing awareness of existing transportation options for youth and families.

RFQ Committee Representation

The Committee discussed representation on the Teen Services RFQ review panel.

Committee Members Tholin Johnson and Kenneth Longman were identified to participate in the review process.

A motion was made by Secretary Behnke, seconded by Committee Member Liggins, to approve the Committee representation. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

5.5 PRAC 26-38 The Committee will nominate committee member representation for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Request for Qualifications. Discussion and Action.

Director Brown reported that the Request for Qualifications for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was scheduled to close on September 8, 2026.

Staff requested one PRAC member to participate in reviewing and selecting a consultant.

Committee Member Devin Pitcher volunteered to serve as the Committee's representative.

Staff clarified that the consultant-selection process would be followed by a broader master-planning process that would include additional opportunities for Committee and community participation.

A motion was made by Committee Member Pitcher, seconded by Chair McDill, to appoint Devin Pitcher as the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee representative for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan RFQ review process. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

5.6 PRAC 26-39 The Committee will hear an update from city staff regarding a Parks and Recreation Vending Program. Discussion only.

Director Brown presented a proposed Parks and Recreation vending program intended to provide additional opportunities for local vendors, entrepreneurs and community members.

The proposed program includes:
- *A mobile vending cart;*
- *Portable vendor/hawker trays;*
- *Designated food truck or vending locations; and*
- *A reservation process administered through the City's recreation registration system.*

Director Brown stated that the mobile vending cart cost approximately $5,000 and that individual portable vendor trays cost approximately $82 each.

The Committee discussed potential hourly and daily rental structures, deposits, cleaning requirements, permitting, food-safety requirements, scheduling, vendor access, reservation windows and methods for preventing a single vendor from monopolizing available opportunities.

Members also discussed the importance of ensuring that City vending opportunities do not conflict with vendors already participating in tournaments, fundraisers or other

reserved events.

Committee members provided pricing and program feedback through a live survey.

Staff stated that feedback from PRAC, City staff and City leadership would be compiled before finalizing the program. Staff will then establish the program in the City's registration system, conduct internal testing, promote the program and monitor participation and usage.

Rates and procedures may be adjusted based on demand and program performance.

No action was taken.

5.7 **PRAC 26-40** The Committee will hear an update from city staff on parks. Discussion only.

Director Brown provided updates regarding current Parks and Recreation projects.

Fieldhouse at Copper Sky

Staff reported continued progress on construction of the Fieldhouse at Copper Sky.

A flooring product initially installed in the facility was found to have a manufacturing defect and was removed and replaced. Staff stated that the issue did not result in additional cost to the City and that the replacement flooring allowed the project to remain substantially on schedule.

The Fieldhouse ribbon cutting and open house is planned for Saturday, October 10, 2026, with activities anticipated from approximately 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Copper Sky Pickleball and Volleyball Courts

Staff reported continued progress on the Copper Sky outdoor court expansion and renovation project.

The sand volleyball courts had been restored, and work on the pickleball courts was continuing.

A ribbon cutting is planned for Tuesday, September 22, 2026, at 8:00 a.m.

Staff is also developing an evening recreational pickleball event intended to introduce the new courts in a fun and accessible format. Additional activities involving the local pickleball community are being considered.

Lake View Park and Ballfields

Staff reported completion of significant maintenance work on Lake View Park ballfields in preparation for Little League activity.

Maintenance crews were also working on Pacana Park fields and would continue rotating through City sports fields during the summer maintenance window.

The Committee discussed the labor and maintenance requirements associated with natural infields and the potential long-term advantages and costs associated with artificial turf.

Pacana Park Dog Park

Staff acknowledged concerns regarding the Pacana Park dog park, including grass conditions, shade and pine needles.

Director Brown stated that staff intends to evaluate options for improving the dog park after completion of priority sports-field maintenance.

Copper Sky Dog Park

Staff reported completion of improvements to worn areas of the Copper Sky dog park. Pavers were installed in a heavily used shaded area where grass had repeatedly failed.

Staff reported positive feedback regarding the improvement.

Lake View Park Phase 2

Staff reported that plans for Lake View Park Phase 2 had been submitted for design review and that Development Services staff participated during the design process to help identify issues earlier.

Copper Sky Boat Rental Program

Staff reported that the private contractor operating boat rentals at Copper Sky would be ending its contract because the service had not been financially sustainable.

The contractor's boats would be removed from the lake.

The City does not currently plan to operate the boat-rental program directly. Staff will evaluate future uses for the existing dock and related amenities.

Fall Sports and Field Allocations

Staff provided an update on fall sports registration and upcoming spring field-allocation requests.

Staffing

Director Brown reported that the Parks and Recreation Department was recruiting for a vacant business-management position responsible for functions including financial oversight, contracts, partnerships, capital projects and grants.

No action was taken.

5.8 **PRAC 26-41** The Committee will discuss future agenda items and next meeting date. Discussion and Recommendation.

The Committee discussed potential future agenda items.

Items requested for future consideration included:

- *Continued planning for the Stagecoach Days Family Fishing Derby;*
- *An update regarding conditions and potential improvements at the Pacana Park dog park;*

- *A report comparing youth and teen services offered by Parks and Recreation beginning approximately 2020 through the present, including:*
  - *Dedicated staffing;*
  - *Programming;*
  - *Equipment and resources;*
  - *Changes or discontinued programs;*
  - *Budgets*
  - *Identified service gaps; and*
  - *Plans for future youth and teen programming;*
- *Information regarding youth-service models used by other municipalities;*
- *Exploration of opportunities for youth who do not participate in traditional sports.*
- *Youth participation in sports operations and employment-development activities, including officiating, scorekeeping, announcing and similar roles.*

The Committee agreed that its next regular meeting would be held on: Wednesday, September 23, 2026.

6. Adjournment

With no further business before the Committee, Chair McDill adjourned the meeting at 8:07 p.m.