



Inver Grove Heights Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

Wednesday, August 13, 2025 at 7:00 PM

8150 Barbara Avenue, Inver Grove Heights, MN 55077

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Roll Call**

3. **Presentations**

- A. Recognition of Commission Terms for Wilfred Krech and Benjamin Stone
- B. Mississippi River Greenway Natural Resource Management Plan - Tom Lewanski, Dakota County
- C. Communication and Marketing (Parks & Recreation) - Olivia Skelton, Communications Specialist

4. **Announcements**

- A. Annual Commissioner Appreciation Dinner - Tuesday, September 23, 2025 5:00 - 8:00 pm. Location - South Valley Park Shelter
- B. Next Regular Meeting – Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 7:00 pm

5. **Consent Agenda**

All items on the Consent Agenda are considered routine and have been made available to the Commission at least two days prior to the meeting; the items will be enacted in one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Commission member or citizen so requests, in which event the item will be removed from this Agenda and considered in normal sequence.

- A. Approval of Agenda
- B. Approve Minutes from June 11, 2025, Meeting

6. **Public Comment**

Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the Commission on items that are not on the agenda. Comments will be limited to three (3) minutes per person.

7. **Unfinished Business**

Items that are brought back to the Commission for action from a previous meeting

8. **Regular Agenda**

- A. Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission 2025 Sub-Committee Assignments
- *continued*

9. **Administrative Presentations**

- A. Department Happenings
 - 1. Recreation Superintendent Update

August 13, 2025 - Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee Agenda

2. Parks Update Superintendent Update
3. Parks and Recreation Director Update

10. **Commission Comments**

11. **Adjourn**

**Inver Grove Heights
Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
City Hall Police Conference Room - 8150 Barbara Avenue
Wednesday, June 11, 2025 - 7:00 p.m.**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Cook called the June 11, 2025 Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. SWEARING IN:

Parks and Recreation Director Lares administered the Oath of Office to incumbent Commissioner Bill Skar and new Commissioners Lukas Johnson and Luisa Torres.

Chair Cook led a round of introductions to welcome Commissioners Johnson and Torres.

3. ELECTIONS:

Motion by Commissioner Barker, second by Commissioner Skar, to nominate Steve Cook as Chair.

Ayes: 8

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Skar, second by Commissioner Mulcahy, to nominate Niki Barker as Vice Chair.

Ayes: 8

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

4. ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair Steve Cook; Commissioners: Bill Skar, Tracy Mulcahy, Kurt Stangler, Niki Barker, Abby Heidenreich, Lukas Johnson, Luisa Torres

Absent: Commissioner Sandy Christensen

Others Present: Parks and Recreation Director Adam Lares, Parks Superintendent Brian Swoboda, Recreation Superintendent Julie Dorshak

5. PRESENTATIONS:

A. Chelsea Swenhaugen, Recreation Coordinator – Summer Recreation Programs

Recreation Coordinator Swenhaugen presented the following updates:

- Kids Rock – 142 children registered this year, and 90-100 attend daily
 - A new registration system, Playground, rolled out in March
 - Parents have had positive feedback so far
- Kidtresting – new 6-week program starting in June
 - Movement-based learning for toddlers (12- to 24-months) and their parents
 - Will expand in fall (more programs for older toddlers)
- Food Fest events 4:00 to 8:00 pm on Thursday, July 17 and Friday, August 15 at Rich Valley Athletic Complex
 - Live band, 10+ food trucks, and beer

- Summer intern Adam is busy assisting with Horse Camp and other programming

Chair Cook mentioned that he saw the new Veterans Memorial Community Center playground being used by Kids Rock attendees.

Recreation Coordinator Swenhaugen said she had received positive feedback from children and parents about it.

Chair Cook thanked all the staff involved in getting the playground operational by the start of summer recreation programming.

Commissioner Skar asked how easy it is for adults to play sports informally at the Veterans Memorial Community Center.

Recreation Coordinator Swenhaugen mentioned the free agent program for pickleball, softball, and adult volleyball players. Interested adults can sign up online for free. She said this year there is no kickball program, but there could be one in the future (depending on interest).

Commissioner Torres asked about adult archery programs.

Recreation Superintendent Dorshak said that Recreation Coordinator Rachel Mikel is currently working on creating adult archery classes at the new South Valley Park Archery Range for Fall 2025.

Commissioner Mulcahy said the Community Garden plots looked great.

Recreation Coordinator Swenhaugen said it was a very popular program.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- A. July Meeting (Park Tour) - Wednesday, July 9, 2025 - 5:00 pm
- B. August Meeting – Wednesday, August 13, 2025 - 7:00 pm
- C. Rock Island Swing Bridge (Inaugural Lighting Celebration) - Thursday, June 17, 2025 – 7:00-8:30 pm

7. CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. Approval of Agenda
- B. Approval of the Minutes from May 14, 2025 Meeting

Motion by Commissioner Barker, second by Commissioner Stangler, to approve the May Minutes and the Consent Agenda.

Ayes: 8

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There was no unfinished business.

10. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. Park Tour Locations

Parks and Recreation Director Lares conveyed Parks staff's recommendation to visit the following parks given current construction and/or potential redevelopment:

- Sleepy Hollow Park
 - 2026 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) - playground replacement
- Ernster Park
 - 2027 CIP - playground replacement
- Rich Valley Park
 - 2028 CIP - playground replacement
 - Master planning currently underway for southwest area of Athletic Center complex
 - Dakota County proposed a Veterans Memorial Greenway Trailhead Plaza in the area
- Heritage Village Park
 - Phase 4 completed in 2024 (shelter, restrooms, etc.)
 - Phase 5 will begin summer 2025
- South Valley Archery Range
 - Construction began 2025
 - Public opening planned August 2025
- Southern Lakes Park
 - Playground replacement completed in 2025
- Veterans Memorial Community Center Park
 - Playground replacement completed in 2025
- Groveland Park
 - Ballfield renovation began in 2025

Chair Cook commented that he is looking forward to seeing the Southern Lakes Park project, especially given the robust community input.

Commissioner Skar proposed moving the July meeting date back one week so he could attend and also suggested adding a site visit to the potential future Northwest Area Park.

Parks and Recreation Director Lares said he would email the Commission to ask about changing the date of the July meeting. He said he would ask the property owner about visiting the Northwest Area site.

Commissioner Mulcahy asked about planned park improvements for 2026.

Parks and Recreation Director Lares said that the 2026 CIP includes parking lot rehabilitation and trail resurfacing work in addition to the Sleepy Hollow playground replacement.

B. Park Dedication – Nord 61

Parks and Recreation Director Lares presented Parks staff's recommendation that the Commission recommend that City Council accept Park Dedication Fees in the form of cash for the platting of parcels for the Nord 61 development at the corner of 65th and Argenta Blvd.

Per City Ordinance, property developers are required to pay a park dedication fee in either land or cash. The developer is not proposing any public park areas as part of the development. The fee for the Nord 61 development of 119 townhomes is \$476,000 (\$4,000 per townhome).

Commissioner Barker asked if future residents of the townhomes would want more park amenities in the area.

Parks and Recreation Director Lares said that for developers in the Northwest Area generally, adding a park is required, but the development plan for Nord 61 includes a private park/clubhouse (resident-only use), which is why staff recommends the acceptance of a cash fee. He added that Nord 61 residents will also have access to existing neighborhood and community parks nearby.

Commissioner Torres asked whether developers are required to keep existing trees in parks and green space areas.

Parks and Recreation Director Lares said there are regulations requiring developers to replace removed trees; for any trees not replaced, developers pay a fee to fund tree planting in public parks and City properties.

Commissioner Johnson asked how private park usage is enforced.

Parks and Recreation Director Lares said that as private property, that will be up to the developer/homeowners' association. He mentioned a nearby private playground that is gated to manage usage.

Motion by Commissioner Skar, second by Commissioner Heidenreich, to recommend that City Council accept \$476,000 in Park Dedication Fees for the Nord 61 Development per the City Ordinance requirement.

Ayes: 8

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

C. Brightside Room Next Steps

Parks and Recreation Director Lares updated the Commission on next steps for the renovation of the Brightside Room at the Veterans Memorial Community Center (VMCC).

In the June 2, 2025 joint work session, City Council and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) favored the indoor playground option over the multipurpose space option due to community feedback and to help with the goal of full cost recovery for the VMCC. Staff received clear direction to advance design efforts for the indoor playground.

Staff will:

- Work with a vendor on a preliminary design
- Bring this design to PRAC for feedback
- Edit the design
- Bring it back to PRAC for approval (recommendation to City Council), with construction planned for the second half of 2026
- Determine an appropriate fee structure by researching similar local sites

He noted that the estimated construction cost for the playground has increased from the earmarked \$350,000 to \$450,000 (accounting for adding lighting, adjusting the HVAC system, etc.)

Commissioner Torres asked whether a vendor had been selected.

Parks and Recreation Director Lares said that playground equipment is a niche market with relatively few trusted vendors, and this is a smaller project. For these reasons, the City will use a procurement contract rather than a Request for Proposals (RFP) process.

Commissioner Skar asked whether outdoor playground companies typically also handle indoor playground equipment.

Parks and Recreation Director Lares said there are vendors who do both. Typically, indoor playgrounds provide full enclosures for safety. However, there are some companies that use outdoor structures (without enclosures) for indoor play (e.g., Plymouth's indoor playground). Because the Brightside Room has lots of vertical space, full enclosure may make more sense.

Commissioner Barker commented that it is not a huge room, so making the most of the space will be important.

Parks and Recreation Director Lares said there were many options.

Commissioner Mulcahy asked why the space is called the Brightside Room.

Recreation Superintendent Dorshak said that the name was suggested by Veterans Memorial Community Center staff in memory of a former staff member, Bethany Adams, whose motto was "Just look on the bright side." She said that the goal was to use bright colors in the design of the room to honor her.

Chair Cook said that there will also be more natural light in the room with the planned renovations.

Parks and Recreation Director Lares said that Facilities Maintenance Superintendent Aaron Fitzloff is working with an architect to enhance natural light in the space, and there will be also bright paint as well as signage to draw attention.

10. ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS

1. Parks and Recreation Director Update

Parks and Recreation Director Lares updated the Commission on the following:

- City Council paused submitting additional capital requests regarding Heritage Village Park Phase 6 to the governor
- The plan is to reintroduce those requests during the February legislative bonding session
- City Council aims to prioritize park acquisition and development in the Northwest Area

Chair Cook asked about impacts on the City's parks from the recently concluded legislative session.

Parks and Recreation Director Lares said there were none.

He thanked Parks Superintendent Swoboda and Recreation Superintendent Dorshak for their dedication in a very busy period.

2. Parks Update Superintendent Update

Parks Superintendent Swoboda updated the Commission on the following:

- Parks Department seasonal staff have been busy with the following:
 - Mowing/landscaping - frequency increased due to rain/heat
 - Lots of prep and cleaning work as tournaments at Rich Valley Park continue – 80 games in 3 days
 - 3 cleanings per day for picnics at South Valley Park
 - Mulching, trimming, prepping the Disc Golf Course at North Valley for the World Senior tournament event
 - Shelter work and landscaping at Swing Bridge ahead of opening event
 - Doing Groveland Ballfield restoration work
 - Just fences and bases remaining
 - Adding more amenities to the Archery Range
 - Elevated platforms should be completed mid-June
 - Targets, signage, picnic tables, trash cans still to come
- Goats have been moved to their third, larger paddock (12 acres)
- Budget work continues
- Planning equipment replacement for 2026
- VMCC and Southern Lakes playground replacements are complete
- First preconstruction meeting for Phase 5 Heritage Village recently held

Commissioner Torres asked how to see the goats.

Parks Superintendent Swoboda said that there would be 80 in the paddock and said they tend to sleep in the late morning/early afternoon. He said they would be tough to find and suggested listening for them.

Commissioner Mulcahy asked how people sign up for the tournaments at Rich Valley.

Recreation Superintendent Dorshak said that Recreation Coordinators work with the Parks Department on space reservations. City programming typically takes first priority, and then regular users (Inver Grove Heights Baseball Association, e.g.) are contacted, before spaces are opened for first-come, first-serve reservations (depending on the number of staff available).

Chair Cook asked about the disc golf tournament.

Parks Superintendent Swoboda said it was for ages 50+.

Recreation Superintendent Dorshak added that it runs from June 30 to July 6. Permits are required to host tournaments using City facilities.

3. Recreation Update

Recreation Superintendent Dorshak updated the commission on the following:

- Replacement fitness equipment (cardio and strength) will arrive June 23
- Aquatics Center Supervisor position should be filled by July
- The Veterans Memorial Community Center has been busy with summer programming starting

- 1600 registrations for summer so far
- Upcoming events
 - Inver Groove Music in the Park – July 1
 - Fall Fest
 - Swing Bridge opening
- The Fall brochure will be released in August
- 2026 Budget has been completed and sent to the Finance Department
 - Some staffing increases and pay raises for current staff to ensure safety, quality of programming as well as staff retention
- Research underway for indoor playground operation
- New registration software has been very beneficial
 - Currently considering adding automated kiosks for faster check-in/registration in building foyers

Chair Cook said that he was very impressed with the management of the Veterans Memorial Community Center’s many uses. He thanked Recreation Superintendent Dorshak and Recreation staff for their work.

11. COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Commissioner Barker welcomed the two new members of the Commission and mentioned the Strawberry Moon.

Commissioners Heidenreich, Skar, and Mulcahy, as well as Chair Cook, also welcomed the new members.

Commissioner Stangler said he was looking forward to the lighting of the Swing Bridge.

Commissioner Johnson said he was looking forward to working with the Commission.

Commissioner Torres said she was excited about everything happening in the City and finding ways to contribute.

12. ADJOURN:

Motion by Commissioner Barker, second by Commissioner Torres, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Ayes: 8

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by Recording Secretary Wilfred Cl Ashe



Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission Staff Report

SUBJECT: **Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission 2025 Subcommittee Assignments - *continued***

MEETING DATE: August 13, 2025

ITEM TYPE: Regular Agenda

CONTACT: Adam Lares, Parks & Recreation Director, 651.450.2587

PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED

Parks and Recreation Advisory Commissioners are asked to volunteer for the open subcommittee vacancies.

BACKGROUND

With the departure of two commissioners and the appointment of two new members to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC), there are now opportunities to fill vacancies on several subcommittees. New commissioners will be invited to volunteer for these openings.

In addition, current commissioners who wish to step down from a subcommittee or join a vacant one may make those requests during the meeting.

As a reminder, the Parks and Recreation Department undertakes several projects and initiatives each year, many of which are outlined in PRAC's annual work plan. PRAC members either volunteer or are assigned to subcommittees to help guide and support these efforts.

Current PRAC Subcommittees:

- Heritage Village Park Development
- Northwest Area Park Development
- Parks & Recreation Systems Plan RFP Development
- Rich Valley Park Master Plan – Southwest Area
- **Newly added* - Recreation Programs & Community Engagement

Attached is a list of current subcommittee assignments, including both current and past PRAC members. As previously discussed, each subcommittee will have no more than four members.

Please come prepared to volunteer for a subcommittee.

FISCAL IMPACT

none

RECOMMENDATION

ATTACHMENTS

1. PRAC SubCommittee 2025 - August 13, 2025

City of Inver Grove Heights
Park and Recreation Commission 2025
Subcommittee Assignments

	Heritage Village Park Development	Northwest Area Park Development	Parks & Recreation Systems Plan RFP Development	Rich Valley Park Master Plan Southwest Area	Recreation Programs & Community Engagement
Barker	X		X	X	
Christensen		X		X	
Cook	X		X		X
Heidenreich		X		X	
Johnson					
Mulcahy	X			X	X
Skar	X				X
Stangler		X	X		
Torres					
	Full			Full	

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