

LONGWOOD PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Longwood City Commission Chambers
175 West Warren Avenue
Longwood, Florida

AGENDA
April 7, 2026
6:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PUBLIC INPUT
 - A. Public Participation.
3. ACTIONS ITEMS
 - A. Approve Minutes from March 3, 2026, Meeting.
 - B. Strawberry Festival Recap.
 - C. Chili Cook-Off Recap.
4. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS
5. STAFF REPORT
 - A. Staff Report for April 7, 2026.
6. ADJOURN

Chris Capizzi
Director of Leisure Services

Notice: All persons are advised that if they decide to appeal any decision made at these meetings/hearings, they will need a record of the proceedings and for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record to include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based (per Sec. 286.0105, Florida Statutes). Persons with disabilities needing assistance to participate in any of these meetings should contact the A.D.A. Coordinator at (407) 260-3466 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

This is a public meeting, and the public is invited to attend. The agenda is subject to change. Persons can obtain an electronic copy of the agenda packet for this meeting by making a public records request to the City Clerk's Office by calling (407) 260-3441 or emailing clerk@longwoodfl.org.

Future Meetings:	May 5, 2026	6:30 PM	Regular Meeting
	June 2, 2026	6:30 PM	Regular Meeting

**PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
LONGWOOD CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
175 WEST WARREN AVENUE
LONGWOOD, FLORIDA**

**MINUTES
March 3, 2026
6:30 P.M.**

Present:

**Ardel Cheffer, Chair
Judi Coad, Member
Jennifer Barr, Member
Jason Jose, Member**

**Amanda Sackett, Member (6:31 p.m.)
Chris Capizzi, Leisure Services Director
Ryan Rinaldo, Recreation Manager
Donna Alt-Bowes, Recording Secretary**

Absent:

**Larissa Morgan, Vice-Chair
Aryn Nichols, Member**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER.** Chair Cheffer called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- 2. PUBLIC INPUT.** None.
- 3. ACTION ITEMS**

A. Approve Minutes from February 3, 2026 Meeting

Member Sackett moved to approve the February 3, 2026 Minutes. Seconded by Member Jose and carried by a unanimous voice vote with Member Nichols and Vice-Chair Morgan absent.

B. Alternate November Meeting Dates

Chair Cheffer reviewed the available alternate November meeting dates provided by the City Clerk.

Discussion ensued regarding the available dates.

Member Coad moved to have the November 3, 2026 Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting changed to November 17, 2026. Seconded by Member Sackett and carried by a unanimous voice vote with Member Nichols and Vice-Chair Morgan absent.

4. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Member Barr did not have a report.

Member Coad asked Mr. Rinaldo if he had an inventory list for Celebrate the Season.

Mr. Rinaldo advised that Mrs. Nieves is working on it and is about 80% done.

Member Coad advised the Board that she regularly listens to Commission meetings and recently listened to a four-hour Strategic Planning Workshop. She noted that the meeting is recorded and available for the public to review. She stated that the workshop provided additional insight into several topics and changed her perspective on certain matters. She further commented on the City's events and the increased use of parks for special event rentals. She suggested it may be an appropriate time to review the rental fee structure, noting that costs such as salaries continue to increase annually. She also referenced attending the Slavic Festival. She stated that the event was successful and that she met several visitors from outside the area. She, however, observed that the food lines were extremely long, at times taking 45 minutes to an hour, and that the line configuration caused some attendees to step off the sidewalk, creating potential safety concerns. She also noted that parking areas did not appear to have staff directing traffic.

Discussion ensued regarding the review of rental fees for park events and facilities.

Member Coad asked whether large events are charged for police services.

Mr. Capizzi explained that Police, Fire, and Public Works personnel are charged for the race events, but those costs are not currently passed along for events such as festivals. He advised that staff may evaluate this practice in the future and noted that the City typically hosts two to three events of this size per year.

Discussion continued regarding possible adjustments to Police and Fire charges and pavilion or amphitheater rental rates.

Member Sackett reported that she is looking forward to the Strawberry Festival and Chili Cook-Off. She asked staff to include an update in the staff report regarding outreach to local high schools to participate in the Chili Cook-Off. She also stated that her experience as a vendor at the Slavic Festival was somewhat disappointing, as the lengthy food line resulted in many attendees purchasing food and leaving without visiting vendor booths.

Discussion ensued regarding the Slavic Festival operations and ways event logistics could potentially be improved.

Member Sackett also inquired about the strawberry supply for the upcoming festival.

Mr. Capizzi advised that the strawberry crop weathered the freeze well and that supply will not be an issue.

Member Jose reported that he will be participating in the Chili Cook-Off representing Orlando Health and looks forward to the event. He asked about parking logistics for the Strawberry Festival, noting that parking had been an issue the previous year.

Mr. Capizzi advised that parking conditions should improve this year due to the hospital closure, which has opened additional parking areas.

Chair Cheffer reported that she recently attended the Farmer's Market and observed several vacant vendor spaces. She asked whether vendor participation fluctuates or if vendors operate under contractual agreements.

Mr. Rinaldo advised that it was weather-related.

Chair Cheffer stated that she did purchase strawberries at the Farmers Market and looks forward to the Strawberry Festival. She also provided an update on the Chili Cook-Off, advising that her Rotary Club will again be participating. She stated that ten (10) teams have confirmed participation with two additional teams pending, and recruitment efforts will continue until the registration deadline the following Wednesday. She encouraged Board members to continue promoting the event.

5. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Capizzi advised that the City Commission approved the patriotic banners for Ronald Reagan Boulevard and Reiter Park during the previous evening's Commission meeting. He distributed copies of the approved design to the Board and explained the selection. He further advised that the banners will be installed in April and removed in November when the holiday banners are installed. He noted that the flag banners without the 250th design may be reused in the future. He also advised that the banners will include a fade-resistant coating and that the City's vendor, Platinum Designs, applies a protective coating designed to allow the banners to last several years under normal conditions.

Member Barr asked whether the strawberry crop survived the freeze.

Mr. Capizzi advised that the crop is in good condition and yield remains strong.

Member Barr also commented on Chili Cook-Off ticketing and encouraged transitioning to e-tickets to eliminate the need for printing tickets.

Mr. Rinaldo advised that staff will maintain an Excel spreadsheet of ticket purchasers, allowing attendees to check in by name without presenting a printed ticket.

Member Coad asked whether the disposal of vegetables at the festival had been addressed.

Mr. Capizzi advised that the issue has been resolved.

Member Sackett asked whether Chili Cook-Off ticket sales would remain open while tickets are available.

Mr. Capizzi confirmed that ticket sales will remain open.

Mr. Rinaldo advised that 300 tickets are available, with approximately 50 sold to date.

Mr. Capizzi reviewed volunteer assignments for the Chili Cook-Off and advised that additional volunteers would be helpful for the Strawberry Festival.

Discussion ensued regarding volunteers, entertainment, and weather considerations for the Strawberry Festival.

Mr. Capizzi advised that University of Florida IFAS staff will present a Sun Safety Program for City employees on April 22, noting that approximately 25 employees have already expressed interest. He thanked Chair Cheffer for bringing the program forward. He also provided several park updates, including improvements at Reiter Park, where wood behind the amphitheater was removed and replaced with concrete for safety and durability. He advised that two drinking water fountains at Reiter Park were damaged during the freeze and required repair or replacement. He noted staff is currently de-winterizing the splash pad, which will be operational for the Strawberry Festival. He further advised that skate park upgrades are currently underway, including a new concrete addition designed to reduce maintenance requirements.

Discussion ensued regarding the skate park improvements, project funding, and comparable facilities in neighboring cities.

Mr. Capizzi advised that renovations to the Sandalwood Park basketball court will begin soon. The project had been delayed due to extremely cold temperatures, as asphalt work is not ideal during freezing conditions. He also summarized the City's Strategic Planning Workshop, explaining that each department developed its own strategic goals which were compiled by the City Manager into a comprehensive citywide strategic plan. He reviewed several priorities included in the Parks and Recreation strategic plan, including long-term development goals for the downtown area and park system.

Chair Cheffer asked whether the City conducts a State of the City forum to inform residents about ongoing initiatives.

Mr. Capizzi advised that while there is not currently a formal forum, the Strategic Planning Workshop was open to the public. He noted that additional opportunities for public input will likely occur as the strategic plan continues to develop.

Mr. Capizzi then reviewed upcoming events, including the Strawberry Festival, Chili Cook-Off, Autism Walk, Luau, Mother/Son and Father/Daughter Dances, and Rock, Freedom, and Fireworks scheduled for June 28. He advised that the Autism event currently has 40 confirmed vendors, strong sponsorship support, and expanded sensory accommodations, including additional headphones painted by One School.

Member Coad asked about the installation timeline for the large monitor at Reiter Park.

Mr. Capizzi advised that the matter is currently being reviewed by the City's IT Department, which is exploring more compatible equipment options.

Member Coad suggested that the City explore the possibility of implementing a tourism tax, noting that even small amounts could generate additional funding to support the department.

Discussion ensued regarding potential funding opportunities for Parks and Recreation programs and facilities.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Member Coad moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Member Sackett and motion carried by a unanimous voice vote with Member Nichols and Vice-Chair Morgan absent.

Chair Cheffer adjourned the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Minutes approved by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: 04-07-2026

Ardel Cheffer, Chair

ATTEST:

Donna Alt-Bowes, Recording Secretary

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Staff Report – Tuesday, April 7, 2026

Senior Matinee (April 15, 2026, Community Building, 1:30 p.m.–4:00 p.m. *Wicked for Good*)

Please refer to the Special Event list for all upcoming events

131 Fund



2026 Special Events

Every Saturday - 9:00am-1:30pm – City of Longwood Farmers Market – Reiter Park

Every 2nd Saturday of the Month – 5:00pm-8:00pm- Car Show- Historic Longwood

Every 3rd Wednesday of the Month – 1:30 – 3:30pm – Senior Matinee, Community Bldg.

April 11th – 4:00pm – 9:00pm – Concert in the Park & Food Truck Battle – Reiter Park

April 11th – 10:30am – 1:30pm – Community Health Fair - Longwood Community Building

April 25th – 4th Annual Autism Awareness & Inclusion – 11:00am – 2:00pm – Reiter Park

May 2nd – 4:00pm – 8:00pm - Longwood Luau – Reiter Park

May 7th – 7:00pm – 9:00pm – Mother & Son Dance – Longwood Community Building

June 18th – 7:00pm – 9:00pm – Father & Daughter Dance – Longwood Community Building

June 27th – 5:00pm – 9:00pm – Rock, Freedom & Fireworks – Reiter Park

Contact: Ryan Rinaldo (407)260-3497 rrinaldo@longwoodfl.org

ADDITIONAL DETAILS ABOUT THE ABOVE EVENTS TO BE ANNOUNCED. DATES/TIMES SUBJECT TO CHANGE.