

LONGWOOD PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Longwood City Commission Chambers
175 West Warren Avenue
Longwood, Florida

AGENDA May 5, 2026 6:30 PM

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **PUBLIC INPUT**
 - A. **Public Participation.**
3. **ACTIONS ITEMS**
 - A. **Approve Minutes from April 7, 2026, Meeting.**
4. **BOARD MEMBER REPORTS**
5. **STAFF REPORT**
 - A. **Staff Report for May 5, 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:	June 2, 2026	6:30 PM	Regular Meeting
	July 7, 2026	6:30 PM	Regular Meeting

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

**MINUTES
April 7, 2026
6:30 P.M.**

Present:

**Ardel Cheffer, Chair
Larissa Morgan, Vice-Chair
Judi Coad, Member
Jennifer Barr, Member
Jason Jose, Member**

**Amanda Sackett, Member
Aryn Nichols, Member
Chris Capizzi, Leisure Services Director
Ryan Rinaldo, Recreation Manager
Donna Alt-Bowes, Recording Secretary**

- 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.

B. Strawberry Festival Recap.

Mr. Rinaldo reviewed the final figures for the Strawberry Festival. He advised that total expenses were approximately \$11,000.00, exceeding the initial budget of \$9,000.00. However, the event generated approximately \$4,000.00 in revenue, resulting in the event coming in under the total allocated funding. It was noted that the budget sheet provided had not yet been fully updated by Finance.

Discussion ensued regarding event finances, layout, and overall operations.

C. Chili Cook-Off Recap.

Mr. Rinaldo reported that the Chili Cook-Off was a successful event. Ticket sales totaled approximately 216 tickets, compared to 290 tickets sold the previous year, with a maximum capacity of 300 tickets. The event generated approximately \$1,500.00 after expenses.

Discussion ensued regarding ticket sales, water distribution, event timing, and logistics.

It was also noted that there was confusion regarding the process for providing sample cups for judges. Staff advised that rules will be updated to clarify that all judging samples must be served in uniform cups provided by staff to ensure consistency.

Additional feedback was received that some chili samples were not at appropriate serving temperatures when presented to judges. Staff will review procedures to ensure proper temperature control in future events.

4. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Member Barr reported feedback from attendees at the Strawberry Festival and indicating a desire for increased involvement from Police and Fire Departments in children's activities, improved spacing of vendors to reduce crowding, and clearer announcements during the event. She also inquired about the process for becoming a judge for the Chili Cook-Off. Staff explained that judges are typically volunteers, with preference given to individuals who have reliably participated in prior years.

Member Barr noted difficulty identifying vendor booth numbers during the Chili Cook-Off and suggested using larger, more visible numbering. She also reiterated concerns that some online ticket purchasers did not receive their complimentary water.

Member Coad reported the Strawberry Festival was well attended and asked for attendance estimates. Mr. Rinaldo advised attendance was estimated between 8,000 and 10,000 people. She also noted issues with vendor signage obstructing booth numbers and emphasized the importance of maintaining visibility for judging purposes.

Member Nichols reported the Strawberry Festival was well attended and positively received. For the Chili Cook-Off, she noted confusion at the ticket booth regarding free water distribution and online ticket processing but stated that overall operations ran smoothly.

Member Sackett reported the event was successful and noted that announcements for the costume contest at the Strawberry Festival were made multiple times; however, participation was limited. She stated that volunteers distributed water upon request during the Chili Cook-Off.

Vice-Chair Morgan reported both events were successful and provided updates on the upcoming Autism event, noting approximately 50 vendors are currently confirmed. She referenced ongoing discussions regarding safety considerations for children on the autism spectrum, including the potential use of door alarms and the exploration of swim instruction resources. She noted these topics are being discussed internally as part of planning efforts for the upcoming Autism event and related initiatives. She advised efforts are being made to expand offerings for older participants and to increase overall event

promotion. She also requested staff confirm coordination with Horsepower Ranch for the upcoming Luau.

Discussion ensued about vendors and performers for the Longwood Luau.

Member Jose reported feedback from attendees requesting an increase in strawberry-themed food offerings and improved vendor spacing for future festivals.

Chair Cheffer reported that the Tanghulu vendor was highly popular and suggested securing their participation at future events. She also proposed consideration of a “Little Miss Longwood Strawberry Festival” pageant to increase community engagement.

Discussion ensued about having a Little Miss Longwood Strawberry Festival pageant contest.

Chair Cheffer noted operational challenges during the Chili Cook-Off, including running low on small denomination currency, lower water sales, partially due to free water distribution by another vendor, and the lack of clear signage indicating water sales. She also suggested developing a standardized checklist to improve event coordination.

Further discussion ensued regarding event operations, including the need for improved signage for water sales, clarification of sponsor recognition on event tickets, and the development of a standardized checklist to enhance organization. Additional concerns were raised regarding chili sample temperatures, with staff advised to monitor and maintain proper serving conditions during judging.

5. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Capizzi reported on upcoming events, including the Concert in the Park, Food Truck Battle, Community Health Fair, Car Show, Autism event, and the Longwood Luau. He advised that staff is currently engaged in seasonal landscape maintenance, including improvements to the streambed at Reiter Park to enhance stormwater runoff, as well as general beautification efforts within the historic district through a tree planting initiative funded by the tree fund.

Discussion ensued about plant maintenance on Warren Avenue.

Mr. Capizzi provided updates on ongoing capital and maintenance projects, including progress on FRDAP grant-funded improvements at Sandalwood Park and enhancements at Candyland Park, noting the recent skate park upgrades have significantly improved the facility and increased usage. He further advised that additional grant funding may be applied toward ballfield improvements and fencing.

Mr. Capizzi reported that patriotic banners are expected to be installed by the end of April and that staff is coordinating with the IT Department on the installation of a digital display at Reiter Park for event promotion and public messaging. He advised that Summer Camp registration has begun and is progressing well, with enrollment expected to reach capacity within several weeks. He also reported that recruitment efforts are ongoing for a Park Service Specialist position and that the skate park lighting project has been completed, pending final activation by Duke Energy.

Additional discussion included updates on the mowing contract, budget preparation, and maintenance needs at the Community Building, including anticipated gutter replacement.

Mr. Capizzi also reported that improvements at the dog park have been completed, including fencing and tree removal, with future enhancements to be considered through the tree fund.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Member Coad moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Member Sackett and carried by a unanimous voice.

Chair Cheffer adjourned the meeting at 7:23 p.m.

Minutes approved by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: 05-03-2026

Ardel Cheffer, Chair

ATTEST:

Donna Alt-Bowes, Recording Secretary

Staff Report – Tuesday, May 5, 2026

Senior Matinee (May 20, 2026, Community Building, 1:30 p.m.–4:00 p.m.)

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.

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.