

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

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

Present:

**Ardel Cheffer, Chair
Larissa Morgan, Vice-Chair
Judi Coad, Member
Jennifer Barr, Member
Amanda Sackett, Member**

**Aryn Nichols, Member
Jason Jose, 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.**
 - A. Public Participation.** None.
- 3. ACTION ITEMS**
 - A. Approve Minutes from June 2, 2026 Meeting.**

Member Sackett moved to approve the June 2, 2026, Minutes. Seconded by Member Jose and carried by a unanimous voice vote.

4. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Member Jose congratulated staff on another successful Rock, Freedom and Fireworks event. He advised that the only negative comments he observed on social media concerned reports of a fire during the fireworks display.

Mr. Capizzi explained that a small fire involving the fireworks cakes is not uncommon and remained contained throughout the event. He advised that this year's display utilized two barges rather than a barge and boardwalk configuration, making the fire more visible to attendees. He noted that the situation was quickly controlled and posed no safety concern. He further advised that local news stations had contacted the city after seeing social media posts, but the incident was quickly resolved after speaking to the Fire Marshal.

Vice-Chair Morgan reported that although the Longwood Luau was cancelled due to weather, she is optimistic about the rescheduled event on November 7, 2026, noting that the cooler weather should provide a better experience. She thanked Member Barr for hosting her family during the Fourth of July festivities.

Member Sackett did not have a report but requested updates during the Staff Report regarding sponsorships, park improvements, and potential upcoming events.

Member Nichols reported that she will update her marketing for the Luau with the new date.

Member Coad reported she did not have anything on the Christmas events and that she will discuss other items when Mr. Rinaldo is back from his conference which he attends in August.

Member Barr said that she attended the Liberty Tree Dedication and complimented staff on another successful Rock, Freedom and Fireworks event. She noted that attendance appeared to increase throughout the evening.

Chair Cheffer confirmed with staff that Dogtoberfest and the Luau will occur on the same day in November. She and Mr. Capizzi discussed opportunities to partner with the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation by showing educational videos before Movies in the Park and incorporating conservation awareness into future Parks and Recreation events. She also complimented staff on the Fourth of July event and the Liberty Tree Dedication.

5. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Capizzi reported that Rock, Freedom and Fireworks was another successful event despite a last-minute change to the entertainment schedule. He thanked staff and event partners for their flexibility and noted positive community feedback. He also advised that the Longwood Luau has been rescheduled for November 7, 2026, following two weather-related cancellations.

Mr. Capizzi provided updates on several capital improvement and maintenance projects, including lighting, the planned sealing of the Candyland pump track, restroom flooring improvements, repairs to the pickleball courts, continued ballfield renovations, and planned resurfacing of the pickleball and basketball courts. He reported that Summer Camp remains at full capacity and that staff quickly filled a vacant counselor position to ensure uninterrupted operations. He also advised that staff has begun preparations for National Night Out and continues pursuing sponsorship opportunities for upcoming events.

Mr. Rinaldo reported that sponsorship efforts began earlier this year for our Fall events and that Rock, Freedom and Fireworks generated approximately \$16,000 in sponsorship revenue, covering nearly half of the event's cost.

Discussion ensued regarding expanding sponsorship opportunities through local businesses, healthcare providers, utility companies, developers, and other corporate partners to help support future Parks and Recreation events.

Mr. Rinaldo advised that the City continues its successful partnership with iHeart Media, which provides a substantial media package, promotional support, and sponsorship opportunities for the event.

Mr. Capizzi advised that FDOT permits had been secured, multiple public safety agencies were involved in the event, and additional parking was available this year due to changes at the former hospital property. He also provided updates on ongoing improvements at Reiter Park and Candyland Sports Complex, the demolition of 451 West Warren Avenue, and the City's continued evaluation of relocation options for the Lewis House.

Discussion ensued regarding the future of the Lewis House, placement of recycled wind turbine benches throughout the city, the Historic Society agreement for the Arts and Crafts Festival, vendor recruitment, and additional opportunities to increase sponsorships and funding for Parks and Recreation programs.

Member Coad specifically referenced Duke Energy when it came to large sponsorship donations.

Member Jose inquired about event sponsorships, the City's partnership with iHeart Media, and parking accommodations.

6. ADJOURN

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

Chair Cheffer adjourned the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

Minutes approved by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: 08-04-2026


Ardel Cheffer, Chair

ATTEST:


Donna Alt-Bowes, Recording Secretary

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