



**Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission
Meeting Minutes – May 18, 2026
Kids Castle-Purcell Park**

A meeting of the Harrisonburg Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) was held on Monday, May 18, at Kids Castle at Purcell Park. Kevin Gibson called the meeting to order with the following commission members present: Leonard Van Wyk, Rachel Smallwood, MuAwia DaMes, Aaron Hewitt, Matt Snyder, and Kevin Gibson. Present from Parks and Recreation were Scott Erickson, AJ Morris, Matt Muterspaugh and Connie Lawson. Linda Ruch, a member of the public was also present.

1. Welcome – Kevin Gibson welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Approval of the November 2025 Minutes. Leonard Van Wyk motioned to approve the November Minutes and Rachel Smallwood seconded the motion. The November 2025 Minutes were unanimously approved. January 2026 and March 2026 meetings were cancelled-
3. Annual Review of the Bylaws and Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman
 - a. Rachel Smallwood made a motion to amend the Bylaws to add “prior to submission” to the Capital Improvement line. The line would now read: Annually, the PRAC will review and recommend a list of capital improvements prior to submission, that may include acquisition of land or buildings for park and recreation purposes. Aaron Hewitt seconded the motion. Amended Bylaws were unanimously approved.
 - b. Matt Snyder motioned to elect Leonard Van Wyk as Chairman and Kevin Gibson as Vice Chairman, Rachel Smallwood seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved.
4. Director’s Report & Project Updates- Scott Erickson
 - a. Westover Pool- Westover Pool opens this weekend and there was a huge turnout at the impromptu opening of the Spraygrounds today.
 - b. Thomas Harrison Soccer Field Renovation-All utilities have been run. Project will start June 8, 2026. Field will open in the Spring of 2027.
 - c. Ramblewood Soccer Field Rehab- Staff are working to repair damage to the fields caused by the winter storms. Fencing has been installed to help protect the City’s latest Field of the Year award won by our staff. Field is heavily used by SVU travel programs and our city adult leagues. New season starts in about one week.

- d. Westover Park Restroom-New restroom will be set this Thursday. Restroom will open about the second week of June after utility work, grading, and sidewalk work are completed.
 - e. Kiwanis Playground Replacement-After removal of current playground, new playground will take about two weeks to install. Target opening in late June to July 2026.
 - f. Pool Dome Replacement-New Pool Dome has been ordered and will hopefully be installed by November 2026.
 - g. Master Plan-Kickoff of the New Master Plan was Monday, PRAC members will be invited to participate in future focus groups.
 - h. Swim for Sadie-The kickoff party for the program will be on May 29, 2026, free program swim lessons will start on June 15, 2026. The emphasis this year will be for current 2nd graders.
 - i. Lucy F. Simms Center HVAC and Window Treatment-Engineering firm has been contracted to develop specs for a Request for Quote Qualifications and a project info meeting for potential contractors will be held on June 3, 2026. Unknown completion date.
 - j. Purcell Park-Kids Castle- Project has been delayed due to General Contractor finding irregularities in elevation. Retaining walls and sidewalks need to be completed, then grading and landscaping work. Estimated completion date is Summer of 2026.
5. Action Items – Deputy Director Scott Erickson welcomed the PRAC members to attend the Grand Opening of Kids Castle and to be a part of the Master Plan focus groups.
6. PRAC Member Questions and Comments–
- a. Will there be a cost to remediate the irregularities of elevation at the Kids Castle playground? Response: No, the contractor is covering the cost.
 - b. Is there any concern regarding the drops on retaining walls at Kids Castle? Response: Railing will be installed on the retaining walls where the height is not compliant with safety requirements.
 - c. Will there be seating for parents at the new Kids Castle playground? Response: Yes, six benches will be installed.
 - d. Will there still be green spaces near Kids Castle playground where people can play soccer? Response: No additional green spaces are being added at this time.
 - e. Will new course map and benches be installed for Disc Golf? Response: Course map is in progress. Looking to install new park benches in the future.
 - f. What is the status of the exercise equipment recommendation completed by high school students? Response: The exercise equipment recommendation is on the CIP but has not made the funding list yet.
 - g. Can you bike at Purcell Park? Response: Yes, but no motorized bikes are allowed.
 - h. PRAC members congratulated Scott Erickson on being selected as the new Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation.

7. General Public Comments- Linda Ruch thanked the Parks and Recreation staff for having such wonderful parks.
8. Next PRAC Meeting – Monday July 20, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at Kiwanis Park.
9. Adjourn – The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectively submitted,
Connie Lawson
Parks and Recreation
Administrative Specialist