



**Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission
Meeting Minutes – November 17, 2025
Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center**

A meeting of the Harrisonburg Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) was held on Monday, November 17, 2025, at the Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center. Kevin Gibson called the meeting to order with the following commission members present: Deanna Reed, Leonard Van Wyk, Rachel Smallwood, MuAwia DaMes, Aaron Hewitt, and Kevin Gibson. Present from Parks and Recreation were Brian Mancini, Vic Garber, Scott Erickson, AJ Morris, and Connie Lawson. Several members of public were in attendance including two JMU students.

1. Welcome – Kevin Gibson welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Approval of the September 2025 Minutes- Rachel Smallwood motioned to approve the Minutes and Deanna Reed seconded the motion. The September 2025 Minutes were unanimously approved.
3. Annual Review of the Bylaws- Rachel Smallwood made a motion to add a January budget overview to the Bylaws. Kevin Gibson seconded this motion. The Amended Bylaws will be presented at the January 2026 meeting for review.
4. Director's Report & Project Updates- Scott Erickson and Vic Garber
 - a. Kids Castle Construction at Purcell Park-Scott Erickson.

After a delay due to engineering issues the Kids Castle Construction is in progress. Majority of play structures have been built, and installation has begun. Hoping to have the main castle structure installed by December. Retaining walls, concrete work and surfacing should be completed by April.
 - b. Comprehensive Master Plan-Vic Garber.

The RFP request went out on October 28, 2025 to secure a consulting firm to update the Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan. Deadline for proposals is December 5, 2025. Panel will select the top 2-4 consulting firms to interview in January 2026. Hoping to have a consulting firm chosen by February 2026. The selected consulting firm will be responsible for collaborating with the City to establish a clear vision for Parks & Recreation over the next ten years. Key items the consulting firms were asked to address include:

1. Evaluating the City's recreation facilities and park amenities.
2. Addressing service gaps in all recreation programs.
3. Evaluating current and new partnerships.

4. Recommending land acquisitions for new facilities and enhancing and expanding existing green spaces.
5. Analyzing Parks & Recreation related policies, ordinances and operational resources.
6. Promoting ADA-compliant, inclusive designs.
7. Creating Park Design Standards.

A key component of the plan includes developing and implementing a robust community outreach and engagement program to reach all sectors of the city for public input.

5. Action Items – Director Mancini welcomed the commission members to help and participate in the December 6, 2025 Holiday Parade.
6. PRAC Member Questions and Comments–
 - a. How safe will the new Kids Castle Playground be? Response: The new Kids Castle playground is being installed by one of the top 5 playground installers, with all playground safety regulations needed.
 - b. How will community engagement work be done with the new Comprehensive Master Plan? Response: Every part of the city will be contacted about specific needs.
 - c. Why were the trees at the entrance to Westover Park removed and is there a plan to replace them? Response: The trees had to be removed due to safety concerns about their stability/health. They will be replaced with new flowering trees.
 - d. How is Heritage Oaks Golf Course doing? Response: Great, hoping to put out a bid for the restaurant and looking into bridge work.
7. General Public Comments- There were no public comments.
8. Next PRAC Meeting – Monday January 26, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center.
9. Adjourn – The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectively submitted,
Connie Lawson
Parks and Recreation
Administrative Specialist