

**MINUTES OF THE  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE  
MEETING DESTIN CITY HALL ANNEX CHAMBERS  
FEBRUARY 25, 2025, MEETING - 4:00 PM**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairwoman Johnson called the Parks & Recreation meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, in the Destin City Hall Annex Chambers.

Chairwoman Johnson announced her resignation from the Parks and Recreation Committee and proposed adding an agenda item to elect a new chair. Discussion between Ms. Johnson and Councilwoman Trammell ensued about where to place the election on the agenda and it was ultimately agreed to hold the election at the end of the meeting to allow the outgoing chair to run this session.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

Members Present

Nikki Johnson  
Allison Stephens  
Bryan Otto  
Autumn Weidenhamer

Staff Present

Lisa Firth Parks & Recreation Director  
Ryan Reed P&R Deputy Director  
Bryan Kellar Recreation Supervisor  
Sharon Gardner Records Mgmt. Specialist

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**A.) January 28, 2025, Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes.**  
Motion made by Bryan Otto and seconded by Autumn Weidenhamer to approve the minutes from January 28, 2025. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

**4. OLD BUSINESS**

**A.) Park Inspection Assignments**

With three members absent, the committee debated whether to proceed with inspections. Nikki Johnson agreed that it made sense to wait until more members were available before assigning parks. The committee agreed to delay the assignments until a full committee could participate

**B.) Dog Park Adopt-A-Park-Schedule**

Autumn Weidenhamer took the lead in discussing the schedule. Since she was already covering March, she proposed making April assignments but holding off until May when more members were present. Allison Stephens noted that it was important to be flexible with scheduling and to adjust as new members joined.

**C.) Annual Report/Work Plan**

Chairwoman Johnson announced that due to her resignation she would not be able to present the annual report, but the new chairperson would take that over, she stated that

Former Chairwoman now Council Member Trammell has completed the majority of that report from last year and the only thing that needs to be completed is the current work plan. The Chairwoman asked if anyone had brought in a work plan or had any changes to the current work plan. The committee reviewed an updated work plan draft by Autumn Weidenhamer regarding the upcoming Pooch Palooza. Councilwoman Trammell approached the microphone and suggested to make minor changes including clarifying responsibility for advertising, event organization, and the financial processes.

Chairwoman Johnson stated, “the one thing that we have to make sure is covered is our goals, which are Quality of Life and Safety for families”.

**Motion made by Autumn Weidenhamer to approve the work plan for Pooch Palooza and have Councilwoman Trammell walk it on at the next City Council meeting to be held March 3, 2025. The motion was seconded by Allison Stephens and was passed unanimously 4-0.**

Allison Stephens discussed her work plan focused on replacing outdated and unsafe playground equipment. The proposal included the following:

- Park inspections to identify outdated equipment (target completion by May).
- Research grants for new equipment (target completion by August).
- Determining costs and feasibility (target completion by September).

Lisa Firth-Parks Director suggested that before seeking grants, the committee should first research costs, saying “you can’t apply unless you know what the cost is.”

Allison Stephens also introduced a work plan to implement living shorelines at bayfront parks. She explained this effort, inspired by her husband’s work with the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA), would help filter water and attract marine life. Potential safety hazards, particularly barnacle growth on oyster structures, could create a hazard for swimmers. It was decided to conduct more research and involve experts before making this an official work plan.

## **5. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A.) Color Selection for Norriego Point**

Parks Director Lisa Firth gave an update on Norriego Point stating that construction was expected to be completed by June 2025. Harbor-side access will be restricted during construction for safety reasons.

**Motion by Committee member Otto, seconded by Allison Stephens to recommend to the City Council closing the harbor-side access during construction. Motion passed unanimously 4.0**

Parks Director Lisa Firth presented a recommended color scheme, Coastal Colors, for the new restroom facilities, proposing a light tan with white trim and a natural metal roof. Bryan Otto asked, “What color lasts the longest?” to ensure the selection would be low

maintenance and durable. Director Firth confirmed that lighter colors tend to last longer in coastal environments.

**Committee member Otto made the motion to accept Coastal Colors and Committee member Weidenhamer provided the second. Motion passed unanimously 4-0.**

#### **6. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/QUESTIONS**

**A) Nikki Johnson** – Concern was raised over potential state budget cuts affecting local park grants and asked if funding could possibly be in danger. Parks Director Lisa Firth confirmed that current grants were secure but stated she would ask the Department of Environmental Protection for confirmation.

**B) Autumn Weidenhamer-Pooch Palooza update.** Spoke of how she was still working on raffle prizes, and that more volunteers were needed to help with a few things. Suggestions were made to contact the Rotary Club; the Destin Middle School Interact club or the city's Public Information Officer Tamara Young to get more volunteers to help with the event. She also raised concerns about the dog park's condition, noting that it had become a sandpit and needed resurfacing. Director Firth reassured the committee that a maintenance plan was in place and that the park would temporarily close in March for repairs.

**7. C) Brian Otto-Increasing ages of participants for programs.** A request was made to increase youth sports age limits to 17 years of age to accommodate older teenagers. Allison Stephens responded that the last attempt to offer older age groups had low participation but agreed to advertise expanded age offerings for the fall and reassess interest.

**8. D) Allison Stephens-Destin Sports Complex.** Conversation ensued about bicycles damaging the track and issues with gate access and enforcement at the complex. Bryan Otto stated that people were jumping the fence when it was locked. Director Firth clarified that the school was responsible for unlocking the gates and that the city would need to follow up on enforcement. There were discussions between staff and committee members regarding resurfacing the track, and it was confirmed that resurfacing was planned but they noted this hasn't been funded yet

#### **9. ELECTION OF NEW CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR- Due to resignation of Nikki Johnson.**

##### **CHAIRMAN NOMINATION**

Autumn Weidenhamer-nominated by Nikki Johnson

Seconded by Bryan Otto

Vote passed unanimously 4-0.

##### **VICE CHAIRMAN NOMINATION**

Bryan Otto-nominated by Allison Stephens

Seconded by Nikki Johnson

Vote passed unanimously 4-0.

**10. PUBLIC COMMENTS -None**

**11. CLOSING REMARKS & ADJOURNMENT**

Former Chairwoman Nikki Johnson announced the resignation of committee member Isaac Birch and encouraged the members to recruit applicants for the open vacancies. She thanked the staff and the committee members for their hard work and reminded the members that the next meeting will be March 25<sup>th</sup>, and the new applicants will need to be Destin residents and confirmed by the council in a timely manner in order to have a quorum for that meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Having no further discussions, the meeting adjourned at 5:10 PM

Adopted and approved this 25<sup>th</sup> day of March 2025.

Autumn Weidenhamer  
Autumn Weidenhamer, Chairwoman

Sharon Gardner  
Sharon Gardner Records Mgmt. Specialist