

**MINUTES OF THE
PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE
DESTIN CITY HALL BOARDROOM
APRIL 28, 2026 - 4:00 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chairwoman Jullian called the Parks & Recreation Meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, in the Destin City Hall Boardroom immediately followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ROLL CALL AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>Members Absent</u>	<u>Staff Present</u>
Jessica Jullian	Autumn Weidenhamer	Lisa Firth Parks & Recreation Director
Aubrey Santucci		Ryan Reed P&R Deputy Director
Andrea Ansley		Bryan Kellar Recreation Supervisor
Alison Stephens		Bentley Estell Asst. Recreation Supervisor
Jan McGraw		Kim Montgomery Deputy City Clerk

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Vice-Chairwoman Jullian asked for approval or for any changes to the minutes.

Motion made by committee member Ansley to approve as written. Committee member Santucci provided the second. Motion passed 5-0. Chairwoman Weidenhamer was absent from the meeting.

4. OLD BUSINESS: NONE

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A) FOUNDER’S DAY MAY 2, 2026: Destin Community Center 11am-1pm.

Discussion among staff and committee members regarding the hours, location, and dessert contest to be held. It was agreed that the committee members could join and help in the kitchen and at the registration table during the event.

B) MEMORIAL DAY AND 4th OF JULY EVENTS: Parks & Recreation Director Lisa Firth:

Director Firth gave a brief description of the Memorial Day Ceremony to be held in conjunction with the American Legion Post 296 at the Destin Cemetery on Stahlman Avenue May 25, 2026, at 11am. The Parks & Recreation team has already placed the flags on the graves of veterans, and Director Firth welcomed all committee members to attend and show their support to the veterans in attendance.

Director Firth also discussed the 4th of July Fireworks event to be held at the Harborwalk. She stated there will be a \$40,000 show for the fireworks, and she is asking for donations from various businesses for this. She is also asking City Council to approve another \$10,000 specifically for red, white, and blue shells, as the grand finale of the fireworks show.

Other events in July will be the bike parade on July 1st and the Friday Night Bites to be held the first Friday of the month for the next three months at Destin Elementary School.

6. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:

A. Committee member Stephens- Recreation Calendar Work Plan

Committee member Stephens introduced the idea of developing a work plan related to creating a year-round calendar for recreation programs, sports, and other activities. She stated she wasn't fully sure how work plans work but had started drafting a calendar with estimated dates. She stated the purpose of the proposed calendar would be to allow residents, staff, and families to see the full year of recreation offerings in advance so they could better plan around registration periods, seasons, vacations, and other commitments. Staff comments emphasized that the work plan didn't need to be overcomplicated and stated that, once the committee approved the work plan, the group could begin working on the proposal and bring it back for review. Staff would then provide recommendations and work with the committee to align staff needs with what the committee wanted to see. Discussion then turned to creating a magnet with a QR code for registration and possibly getting the Parks Foundation involved in payment for the magnet.

Committee member Stephens complimented the ribbon-cutting ceremony at Norriego Point and inquired as to getting a tube or container for used fishing line along with additional trash cans for the harbor side of the park.

B.) Vice Chairwoman Jullian-Pickleball Court Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Discussion between staff and committee members regarding having a ribbon cutting ceremony possibly in June for the new pickleball courts at the Annex and also including inviting the Parks Foundation to attend. The idea of having a tip jar for donations to the Parks Foundation at different events was also discussed, as was the Foundation's Facebook page and how to generate more followers in order to draw more attention to their special events.

C.) Committee member McGraw- Nothing tonight. It was already covered during the meeting.

D.) Committee member Santucci- Commented on how amazing the Arbor Day Celebration was and thanked everyone for putting that together.

E.) Committee member Ansley-Echoed the sentiments regarding the great job that the Parks and Recreation team did for the ribbon cutting ceremony, the Arbor Day Celebration, and the Pooch-Palooza. She inquired as to whether there was going to be a spring season for soccer. Staff explained that there will not be a spring soccer season, but they are looking to do new stuff with some new ideas for spring.

Discussion turned to the upcoming budget season and whether the department needed anything specific from the committee in terms of advocacy or support for budget-related

needs. Deputy Director Reed responded that the committee's support for the storage buildings at the prior meeting was likely already very helpful. He stated that having that support reflected in the minutes and forwarded to Council would go a long way for the department. He continued on stating that there are many facility-related needs, including fencing replacement and general facility updates, however, the storage building remained one of the department's largest priorities. Committee member Ansley offered to assist with additional advocacy, including potentially calling Council, if appropriate.

Director Firth discussed the possibility of installing an ice machine at Joe's Bayou Boat Launch. It was explained that the idea had been under consideration for several years, but there were several factors involved. The matter has recently been raised with the City Manager, who asked staff to gather input from the committee. Staff noted that the department had not yet been fully prepared to move forward with the proposal because they had been waiting for the new Joe's Bayou facility or improvements to be completed. One concern raised was whether placing an ice machine at Joe's Bayou Boat Launch could be viewed as competing with existing ice machine businesses within the city. Staff stated that they didn't view the issue in that manner, emphasizing that the City's role is to provide quality-of-life services for residents. Staff noted that residents who pay to use City facilities and access Joe's Bayou may need ice, particularly boaters and park users. The committee discussed whether the City should purchase and operate the ice machine itself or whether it should enter into an agreement with a private vendor. Staff explained that one proposal had already been received, but if the City chose to have an outside party provide and operate the machine, the City would likely need to go through a procurement process, such as a Request for Proposals. The City could not simply select a preferred individual or company without allowing others the opportunity to submit proposals.

Staff agreed they would continue to gather information including possible ownership, maintenance, procurement, and revenue-sharing options. Staff also suggested that the concept could be brought to the Parks Foundation at a future meeting to discuss, particularly regarding whether the foundation could receive revenue or be involved in branding and park-support messaging associated with the machine.

7. STAFF REPORTS: Parks and Recreation Deputy Director Ryan Reed

Deputy Director Reed reported that Nancy Weidenhamer Dog Park has been re-seeded again. The possibility of getting a turf bid has been discussed, but due to costs, they are still re-seeding instead of purchasing turf. Deputy Director Reed also noted that the nautical fencing at Norriego Point was recently put up, and that all of the sports fields have been fertilized and airfied. Other areas discussed included the fencing being installed at Buck Destin Park for the basketball court, the new infield conditioner for the baseball and softball fields, and mulch and pine straw being placed at various park locations.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE

9. NEXT MEETING DATE: MAY 26, 2026

10. ADJOURNMENT: Having no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:32 PM.

Adopted this 26th day of May, 2026.

Autumn Weidenhamer
Autumn Weidenhamer, Chairwoman

Sharon L. Gardner
Sharon L. Gardner Records Mgmt. Specialist