

**CITY OF PHOENIX
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD SUMMARY
MINUTES
May 28, 2026**

Virtual meeting hosted on Webex.

Parks Board meetings are recorded, and the recordings are accessible to the public via the following link. [Parks and Recreation Board Meeting – May 28, 2026](#)

<u>Board Members Present</u>	<u>Staff Present</u>	<u>Community Members</u>
Tony Moya, Chair Aubrey Barnwell (virtual) Rick Naimark Sarah Porter Emma Viera	Dustin Cammack Martin Whitfield Todd Shackelford Greg Leicht Tony Salinas Theresa Faull Tannia Ruiz Cindy Peiz Jana Krcek Dalia Adams	Jerry Van Gasse Jeremy Thacker (virtual)
<u>Board Members Absent</u>		
Leon Thomas Jessica Fotinos		

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Moya called the meeting to order at 5 p.m. with Board members Barnwell, Naimark, Porter, and Viera in attendance.

2. INFORMATION ONLY

No formal presentation on these items. Information only.

2a. Phoenix Medical Treatment and Food Distribution in Parks Ordinance Update

2b. Fireworks Ordinance

3. CONSENT ITEMS

No formal presentation on these items. Consent and request for approval only.

3a. Parks and Recreation Board Summary Minutes – April 23, 2026

3b. Request to Vend

3c. Request Authorization to Issue a Request for Proposals for Central Park Recreation Center

Board member Porter moved to approve consent items 3a through 3c, with Board member Viera seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

4. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Information and discussion items will be presented verbally to the Parks Board and are for discussion only. No action will take place on these items at this meeting.

4a. Parks and Recreation Youth Sports Programs

Deputy Director Tony Salinas presented an overview of the citywide youth sports programs, highlighting their long history, current activities and participation levels. He noted that more than 8,000 youth took part in 200 leagues in 2025 and that offerings range from traditional sports to newer activities such as cricket, disc golf and Esports. He also emphasized strong community partnerships and ongoing efforts to gather input, including a survey planned for fall 2026, to ensure programs remain accessible and high quality for Phoenix youth.

Deputy Director Greg Leicht presented how the Department's major sports complexes support youth sports throughout the year, noting that Rose Mofford, Desert West, Papago and Reach 11 provide essential fields, courts and recreation spaces for leagues and tournaments. He highlighted that each site plays a distinct role, from hosting major softball, baseball and multisport events to offering a wide range of community amenities. He concluded by emphasizing the city's ongoing commitment to maintaining these facilities and ensuring accessible, high-quality sports opportunities for youth across Phoenix.

Board Member Porter asked how youth sports information would be incorporated into the master plan and whether the survey results expected later this year could be included.

Director Whitfield explained that the parks master plan will include a review of programs and services for youth, including sports, and that survey results expected later this fall will be shared with the Parks Board.

Deputy Director Salinas added that the survey is intended to gather feedback to improve programs and that the results are shared with divisions to help guide adjustments for upcoming seasons and sessions.

Board Member Naimark asked which youth programs experience the highest demand and fill up quickly. He also requested information on growth trends, including emerging interests such as girls flag football, and other developing program and facility needs.

Deputy Director Salinas explained that when one facility fills up, nearby sites and added teams or weekend practices help accommodate participants, with staff trying to keep families at the same location when possible. He noted that early registration is important. He also said the Department tracks trends through national data and community feedback, which has highlighted growing interests such as girls flag football and pickleball.

Chairman Moya asked for clarification on the baseball participation numbers and whether those figures represent leagues operated directly by the City.

Deputy Director Salinas clarified that the data presented reflects only City-operated recreational leagues.

Chairman Moya asked whether the City tracks participation numbers for outside leagues that use City parks, especially during large soccer and baseball events, and how that information is recorded.

Deputy Director Leicht confirmed that these figures are tracked through the ActiveNet system.

4b. Parks Volunteer Update

Volunteer Coordinator Jana Krcek presented an overview of the VolunteerPHX program, highlighting its partnerships and the many ways volunteers support parks, preserves and community events across the city. She noted strong participation in programs such as Adopt-a-Park and the Park Steward program, and shared that April is the busiest volunteer month, with more than 1,700 volunteers contributing nearly 7,000 hours during Earth Month events in 2026. Krcek reported that in 2025 volunteers donated over 60,000 hours, valued at approximately 2.1 million dollars, and that more than 460 Park Stewards continue to play a major role in trail maintenance and education. She concluded by emphasizing the essential contributions volunteers make to maintaining parks and preserves and encouraged continued community involvement.

Board member Porter asked whether there is unmet demand for volunteer opportunities and how the City assesses interest from potential volunteers.

Volunteer Coordinator Krcek explained that although volunteer interest remains strong, the summer heat limits outdoor opportunities at a time when many residents have more availability. To accommodate this interest, the Department and VolunteerPHX work to place volunteers in indoor roles during the hottest months.

Board member Viera asked what type of training volunteers receive.

Volunteer Coordinator Krcek explained that training varies by role, noting that sports coaches complete National Alliance for Youth Sports training, Park Stewards receive 40 hours of one-on-one instruction with a park ranger, and Adopt-a-Park groups receive on-site guidance during their first cleanup. She added that volunteers in specialized activities, such as tree planting, are also trained on proper techniques before beginning work.

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Discussion and possible action items are for information, discussion, and possible action.

5a. South Mountain Land Donation and Acceptance into the South Mountain Park/Preserve

Deputy Director Theresa Faull presented an overview of a potential 10-acre land donation that would expand the City's mountain preserve system near the southwest side of South Mountain. She explained that the parcel, originally intended for residential development, faces significant infrastructure challenges, and donation emerged as the preferred option after discussions with the property owner's representative. The land is located near existing trails and wildlife corridors and could support future connectivity to South Mountain Park or serve as

preserved open space on its own. She noted that the Phoenix Sonoran Preserve and Mountain Parks/Preserve Committee supported the proposal on May 18, and pending Parks Board approval, the item will advance to City Council before the summer recess.

Board Member Porter raised concerns about whether the donated parcel could become an isolated piece of preserve land surrounded by future development and asked for clarification on the development challenges affecting the neighboring parcels.

Deputy Director Faull said that nearby parcels are difficult to develop due to steep terrain, wash areas and infrastructure challenges. She explained that acquiring the parcel to the north in the future would create a direct connection to the preserve and noted that many surrounding parcels have remained undeveloped for years. She added that accepting this donation could help support future land donations or acquisitions.

Board Member Naimark noted that leaving the parcel undesignated could create future pressure to sell it. Given its close proximity to the existing preserve, he recommended designating it as preserve land now.

Board member Naimark moved to approve consent items 3a through 3c, with Board member Viera seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

6. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Jerry Van Gasse expressed disappointment that Jesse Owens was not included in the survey to rename Cesar Chavez Park and Community Center, noting that Jesse Owens continues to receive strong national recognition, including a recent USA Today feature.

Jeremy Thacker voiced support for renaming the park after Jesse Owens and expressed surprise that Jesse Owens was not included as an option on the survey. He emphasized Jesse Owen's status as one of the greatest athletes in U.S. history, his significant contributions to the Phoenix community.

7. BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairman Moya reported on upcoming community events, including the FITPHX Morning Yoga session at Encanto Park on June 14. He highlighted the Phoenix Father's Day Walk taking place on June 6 with family activities at Encanto Park. He also announced that registration for the 2026 summer season of sports and activities is now open.

8. BOARD COMMENTS/REQUEST

Board Member Naimark asked for an update on the council-approved ordinance and whether changes to park rules would be needed to align with it.

Director Whitfield confirmed that allocations for the new ordinance were open from May 7 to May 22, 2026, and staff are reviewing the permit requests. He stated that staff will return in June with proposed updates to the code of conduct to bring it into alignment with the ordinance.

9. DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING

Assistant Director Shackelford reported on Camp Colley's summer programming and provided an aquatics update, noting that nearly 10,000 people visited the pools during opening weekend.

Director Whitfield highlighted the Diamondbacks' aquatic check donation and introduced the new Management Services Division Deputy Director, Stacy Hettmansperger.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Moya adjourned the meeting at 6:02 p.m.