

## AMES PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

City Hall Council Chambers – 515 Clark Avenue

Thursday, December 18, 2025

**NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC:** The Parks and Recreation Commission welcomes comments from the public during discussion. The Standards of Decorum, posted at the door and available on the City website, define respectful conduct for public participation. If you wish to speak, please complete a green card and hand it to City staff prior to the meeting. When your name is called, please step to the microphone, state your name and address for the record, and limit the time used to present your remarks to three minutes so others have the opportunity to speak. The normal process on an agenda item is staff may first give a report on the item, Commissioners may ask questions for clarification, public input is received, a motion is placed on the floor, the Commission discusses the issue or responds to the audience concerns, and the vote is taken. In consideration of all, if you have a cell phone, please turn it off or put it on silent.

1. Call to Order: 4:00 PM
2. Approval of Minutes from November 20 and December 4, 2025
3. Public Forum (For items not on the agenda)
4. Crawdaddy Request to Provide Kayak, Canoe, and Paddleboard Rentals at Ada Hayden Heritage Park
5. ISU Healthapalooza Community Fitness Ideas Discussion
6. Park Rules and Policies Update
7. Broadcasting Parks and Recreation Commission Meetings
8. Ames Fitness Center Tennis Agreement
9. Project Updates
  - a. Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center
  - b. Steven L. Schainker Plaza
10. Monthly Report
11. Commission Member Comments
12. Next Meeting:
  - a. January 15, 2026, at 4:00 PM (Regular Meeting)
13. Adjournment

**CITY OF AMES  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE** November 20, 2025

**COMMISSION PRESENT** Jeff Iles, Janet Rathe, Nathan Shimanek, Debra Tapp, Jeff White

**ABSENT** Duane Reeves, Hannah Sappenfield

**STAFF** Keith Abraham, Ami Brekke, Devin Hatch, LeAnn Hawk, Courtney Kort, Nate Pietz, Joshua Thompson

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** 4:00 PM

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOTION: (Iles/White) to approve the September 18, 2025, meeting minutes.

*MOTION PASSED: (5-0)*

**3. PUBLIC FORUM**

None

**4. INTRODUCTION OF AMI BREKKE, PRINCIPAL CLERK & DEVIN HATCH, RECREATION MANAGER**

Hatch moved to Ames from Willmar, Minnesota, where he worked as a Recreation Coordinator. On October 27, Hatch joined staff as Recreation Manager-Youth and Adult Activities. Brekke worked as a Utility Customer Services Clerk in the City's Finance Department before joining staff as Principal Clerk on November 17. Brekke will work at Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center.

**5. ISU CLASS PRESENTATION**

Mayor Haila provided an overview of Iowa State University's second annual Healthapalooza, a week-long competition focused on community fitness including ten teams from ISU colleges. Haila participated in a panel discussion and served as a judge. He shared with participants a need for a solution that gets people out and is easy to implement, low cost, and sustainable. A creative, innovative solution would be recognized with a Mayor's Commendation. The top two groups were invited to give the Commission five-minute presentations followed by five minutes of Q&A. If the Commission found value in looking into the presented concepts, Haila asked staff to meet with the teams with a goal of implementing something by April 2026.

Team Passport members Emma Rios and Katherine Watkins [Zuzanna Ratajczak was absent] spoke about their project to create a passport and map of Ames parks and trails to promote awareness, engagement, physical activity, accessibility, education, and connections to the outdoors and community. They addressed commissioner questions regarding use of their tools by people with disabilities, where passport and map information may be found, and how they may partner with organizations such as the Ames Public Library and Parks and Recreation.

Team Active Ames members Leah Ylonen and Injir Batmunkh presented survey results showing people wish to be active but have difficulty knowing how. They developed the Active Ames app and the Active Ames calendar to help solve this problem by enabling activity planning and

scheduling. If users prefer, they may receive in the mail a printed personalized calendar instead of using the app. Challenges such as low technology adoption among seniors, maintaining data, and privacy were noted along with proposed solutions. The intended benefits of the app and calendar are tied to broader goals of promoting healthy lifestyles and stronger community ties. An implementation plan includes prototype development, local partnering, pilot program, and full launch by Spring 2026. The team addressed questions regarding measuring success, overlap with existing Parks and Recreation information resources, and how the app and calendar would be supported if current team members were no longer involved.

Haila complimented participants' work and spoke about a commitment to continue building the relationship between ISU and the City of Ames with a focus on community and accessibility.

Shimanek reviewed options for Commission action on this item.

**MOTION:** (Rathe/lles) to table the item to allow for more research and future exploration.

**MOTION PASSED:** (5-0)

Abraham asked if any additional information is needed to have meaningful conversation at the next Regular Meeting on December 18. Shimanek requested both groups provide realistic staff time analysis, both for start-up and ongoing support. Rathe suggested coordinating a visit with Library staff and to explore how to incorporate existing Parks and Recreation information resources with the student projects. Abraham offered to serve as liaison.

## **6. 60 FORWARD YEAR END REVIEW**

Deb Schildroth, Heartland of Story County Executive Director, provided an overview of the Sixty Forward facility and its purpose. Sixty Forward is a partnership between City of Ames Parks and Recreation, Heartland of Story County, and Mary Greeley Medical Center. Its mission is to connect people 60+ to activities, social networking, and health and nutrition. Information about facility operations and services provided from October 1, 2024 through August 2025 was presented at a stakeholders meeting held on September 11, 2025. Schildroth highlighted the following:

- Strength and Cardio Room on-boarded 500 users from 10 of 15 Story County communities.
- Wellness Room offered 15 weekly fitness classes, with 360 participants representing 8 of 15 Story County communities.
- Duckpin Bowling League with 8 participants.
- Twenty-one (21) Prime Time Alive educational programs exploring diverse topics.
- Story County Public Health classes, e.g., brain fitness, footcare, Bingosize.
- Adult Day Center participation increased 25 percent to 45 participants.
- Ames High School tech support partnership sessions connected with 60 participants.
- Promotional efforts, e.g., website, social media, monthly e-newsletter.
- Between October and August, Sixty Forward welcomed a total of 27,040 visitors.
- The Bistro serves an average of over 1,225 customer tickets monthly.

Rathe asked for comment on the facility's north entrance. Schildroth said the north vestibule addition was completed in mid-October and is now in use. This addition allows for convenient entrance for Sixty Forward visitors who park in the lot to the north, which is leased from the

adjacent business group. The north vestibule was not part of the original building plan because access to the north lot was not made available until only months before Sixty Forward opened.

Iles asked about Sixty Forward funding and whether the facility is solvent and secure. Schildroth replied that Sixty Forward is sustainable and in a good financial position. As a non-profit, she noted, the organization always looks at fundraising and ongoing and long-term funding avenues.

Shimanek asked if the visitor numbers were expected and sustainable. Schildroth indicated the visitor numbers are sustainable. Sixty Forward hopes to see more visitors as awareness of the facility continues to expand. Service offerings will grow based on feedback about expectations and desired programming. It is hoped that The Bistro will become a revenue source for the rest of the building and its programs and services. Shimanek also commented positively on the tech support program, calling it a neat inter-generational partnership.

Abraham stated the partnership between Heartland of Story County, Mary Greeley Medical Center, and Parks and Recreation is going very well. He observed that many people suggest a wide variety of ideas, and Sixty Forward leadership has already discussed the importance of staying true to the vision of Sixty Forward. Abraham also noted Sixty Forward goes beyond the walls of the facility, with programming at Homewood Golf Course Clubhouse, aquatics, pickleball, and more. He spoke about contributions from several Parks and Recreation staff members, notably Wellness Supervisor Nancy Shaw. Schildroth agreed and spoke about growing community awareness and understanding of the Sixty Forward partnership. She agreed with Abraham's observations about being conscious of mission drift. Sixty Forward leadership intends to be accountable, yet flexible, while staying true to what people expect.

## **7. FURMAN AQUATIC CENTER 2025 SEASON REVIEW**

Hawk reported the Furman Aquatic Center (FAC) season spanned 101 days, with 20 partial day closures, mainly due to inclement weather. Increased staff and allowing staff to select shifts have been positive. Pietz noted having more staff and a greater willingness to work meant more amenities could be open. Hawk noted amenities were closed due to staff shortages only twice. Recruitment for 2026 for FAC and Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center (FFIAC) is underway.

Total attendance of 86,900 was an increase from 2024, Pietz reported, and above the five-year average figure. Daily Admission payments increased 8 percent over 2024, Season Pass admissions declined 7 percent, and Punch Card sales were stable. End of Season Pass sales declined from 2024, but the promotion continued to be well-received.

Pietz reported above average daily concession sales totaling \$90,398 for the 2025 season.

Facility rental hours totaled 29 hours, an increase from 2024 but below the five-year average.

Swimming lessons spanned June 10 to August 4, with 956 registered participants. Hawk stated moving swimming lessons indoors to FFIAC will likely improve participation.

Special events were varied and successful, Hawk noted. Pietz said 444 ducks were sold for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Scholarship Duck Derby, with \$3,520 contributed to the scholarship fund.

Hawk reviewed FAC safety data, including rescues and medical emergencies.

End-of-season survey data show notable positive responses about quality and performance improvements in every category in 2025, Hawk reported.

Rathe spoke about the popularity of water walking at FAC. Hawk noted water walking will be possible year-round once FFIAC opens.

Iles noted flat concessions revenues and suspected expenses have increased. Pietz agreed and spoke about researching other offerings and diversifying items available for purchase.

## **8. HOMewood 2025 SEASON REVIEW**

Abraham noted a great year and many positive comments about Homewood Golf Course and staff, highlighting contributions from Recreation Manager Pietz, who oversees the clubhouse, and Turf Maintenance Supervisor Wynja, who is responsible for course maintenance.

Pietz presented a recap of the Homewood Golf Course and Clubhouse season, which spanned 225 days from March 28 to November 7. Only two full days and nine partial days were affected by inclement weather. Rounds played in 2025 totaled 25,881, well above the five-year average and nearly as many as 2024 despite being open 18 fewer days. Season pass sales increased to 212. Fourteen staff members worked at the Clubhouse, most returning from previous year(s). Golf specials (Discount Days, Free Days, Youth Rate) were successful. Golf Leagues (Men's, Couples, City, ISU Ladies, Homewood Ladies, Youth) expanded in 2025 with the addition of the Sixty Forward Golf League. Golf instructor Nichole Hollinger hosted 31 youth lesson participants at Veenker Driving Range--lessons will move to Homewood in 2026. Clubhouse rentals are doing well and include a wide variety of events. Winter programs include card games, painting classes, and Homewood for the Holidays.

Course maintenance was challenging in 2025 due to high rainfall totals and the amount of play on the course. Turf maintenance work was performed by Wynja and three seasonal staff, with additional contributions from full-time maintenance staff. Established maintenance practices, including annual root aerification, leave the course in good condition going into winter. The irrigation system delivered 2.5 million gallons of water, well below the annual average and one million gallons less than 2024. Following installation of trail cameras in 2025 (including notice of cameras on the course posted inside the clubhouse), incidents of theft and vandalism declined.

Thompson added City Council recently awarded a contract to Con-Struct, Inc. to remove the walking bridge across the ravine that connects the ninth hole tee to the green and replace it with a land bridge. The project will occur over the winter.

## **9. DEER HUNTING UPDATE**

Abraham gave an update on City Council discussion and action on October 14 to approve deer hunting only in the recommended 5-acre area in Munn Woods, and its referral to convene the Special Urban Deer Task Force to provide recommendations. Abraham noted the Commission recommended against allowing hunting. He encouraged commissioners to do what they believe is right and to avoid making decisions based on anticipated Council action.

Thompson summarized staff activities following the City Council approval, including: (1) work with Public Works GIS staff to develop a map for hunters, (2) signs posted at all entrances to Emma McCarthy Lee Park and Munn Woods, (3) work with Derek Grooters in the Police Department, who coordinates urban deer hunting, and (4) letters sent to residents surrounding the new hunting area. Hunting began November 15, with minimal feedback so far.

Tapp asked if hunters are interested in the new area. Thompson indicated he did not have information available yet.

## **10. PARK POLICIES UPDATE**

Abraham summarized City Council's November 18 review of proposed changes to *Municipal Code* Chapter 19. Main discussion points: (1) Council was not interested in a 10 MPH speed limit ordinance, (2) Enforcement questions/challenges, (3) E-bike questions but no action taken, (4) Positive response to foraging, and (5) firearms allowed, other projectiles except for bow hunting not allowed. Council instructed staff to develop ordinance changes for review on December 9. Staff will bring the Commission a final draft of park rules as early as December 18.

## **11. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Abraham indicated staff is working to finalize a couple of items in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The Commission will see the five-year CIP in detail at a workshop meeting with the City Manager scheduled for December 4. Abraham noted several items for Years 1 and 5.

## **12. AMES CYCLONE AQUATICS CLUB 2026 FURMAN AQUATIC CENTER PRACTICE AGREEMENT**

Kort reviewed the annual agreement with Ames Cyclone Aquatics Club (ACAC) to use the 50-meter basin at Furman Aquatic Center for summer practices. Kort reviewed the flat fee rental rate established in 2024 and the rental fee of \$82 per hour for 2026. The ACAC board reviewed and signed the 2026 agreement.

*MOTION:* (Iles/Rathe) to recommend Alternative 1, which states:

Approve the agreement with the Ames Cyclone Aquatics Club to use the 50-meter basin at the Furman Aquatic Center from May 27, 2026, until August 7, 2026, for practices for a minimum amount of \$6,560.00.

*MOTION PASSED:* (5-0)

## **13. BLUESTEM BOULDER AGREEMENT**

A new partnership with Bluestem Boulders will offer indoor boulder classes to youth and adults, Kort reported. For a 70/30 split of registration fees, Bluestem will provide the class facility and instructors, and the City will manage class registration and marketing materials, with Bluestem assisting with marketing efforts. Bluestem reviewed and signed the agreement.

Tapp asked what type of classes will be offered – youth and adult free climbing, Kort said.

*MOTION:* (White/Tapp) to recommend Alternative 1, which states:

Approve the Bluestem Boulder agreement through December 31, 2026.

*MOTION PASSED:* (5-0)

## **14. HARVEST PICKLEBALL & TENNIS AGREEMENT**

Kort reviewed an agreement between Parks and Recreation and Harvest Pickleball & Tennis to offer indoor pickleball opportunities for those ages 60 and over. This new agreement would build on the City's partnership with Sixty Forward by creating a 60+ Pickleball League starting in January 2026. Harvest will provide courts and supervision; the City will conduct registrations, collect fees, create marketing materials, and create schedules. Revenues will be split 50/50.

*MOTION:* (Tapp/Iles) to recommend Alternative 1, which states:

Approve the Pickleball agreement with Harvest Pickleball & Tennis through December 31, 2026.

**MOTION PASSED: (5-0)**

Shimanek expressed enthusiasm for community-strengthening public-private agreements.

**15. ISU LAND ADJACENT MOORE MEMORIAL PARK**

Abraham reviewed conversations with ISU regarding repurposing university farmland adjacent Moore Memorial Park. Farming equipment accesses the property via a gravel road extending north from Scholl Road. Utilizing funding from Water and Pollution Control's Nutrient Reduction Program, adjacent City land was converted to prairie now managed by Parks and Recreation. ISU's Agriculture Department wishes to cease farming the ISU land. Conversations to date point toward converting the ISU farmland to prairie and then leasing it to the City at no cost. The City would mow trails through the prairie and perhaps install educational or interpretive signage. Staff view this conversion opportunity as another good use of nutrient reduction funds and an effective way for City departments to collaborate to achieve broader City sustainability goals.

White said he is wildly enthusiastic, this is a great idea. The area is fairly flat and could support good trails, which would address a need for prairie trails in town. He thought it would take real work to create good prairie, but it would be worthwhile. Shimanek agreed, citing Skunk River Flats as an appealing area with mowed prairie trails and diverse flora and fauna. Iles also thought the prairie conversion idea sounded good.

**MOTION:** (Iles/Rathe) to direct staff to pursue a lease agreement for ISU land adjacent to Moore Memorial Park, with the ISU property to be converted to prairie via funding from the WPC Nutrient Reduction program and a partnership with ISU.

**MOTION PASSED: (5-0)**

**16. COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE SPECIAL URBAN DEER TASK FORCE**

Police Chief Huff is assembling the Special Urban Deer Task Force. Per ordinance, Abraham said, the task force includes a Parks and Recreation Commission representative. The task force will provide City Council with a report and make recommendations on urban deer bow hunting policy.

Shimanek stated he and Reeves would not be eligible because their Commission terms would end before the task force work concludes. Rathe volunteered to serve on the task force.

**MOTION:** (Iles/White) to appoint Rathe as Parks and Recreation Commission representative on the Special Urban Deer Task Force.

**MOTION PASSED: (5-0)**

**17. PROJECT UPDATES**

**a. Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center**

A facility tour for Commissioners, City Council, and Story County Board of Supervisors is scheduled for December 4. Abraham noted substantial construction progress since the June tour. Project change orders total just under \$400,000, and use of remediation funds is minimal. Staff is working on furniture, fixtures, and equipment purchases. Overall, staff is very pleased with project progress. The substantial completion date is January 20,

2026, with opening in March. Staff will provide a budget and fees update to City Council on December 16. A Commission update will follow at the December 18 meeting.

**b. Steven L. Schainker Plaza**

Abraham indicated discussions related to the Plaza between the City and the Contractor are ongoing.

**18. MONTHLY REPORT**

Thompson reported staff submitted two grant applications in August to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program. Staff was notified in late October that the City is being awarded both grants, one for \$200,000 to be used toward installation of a pedestrian bridge over Ioway Creek in Moore Memorial Park, and the other for \$200,000 to be used toward funding a pedestrian bridge in Ontario Park. Thompson noted REAP grants are generally very competitive and staff are pleased with these awards.

**19. COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS**

None

**20. NEXT MEETINGS:**

- a. Thursday, December 4, 2025, 4:00 PM at Homewood Golf Course (CIP Workshop)
- b. Thursday, December 18, 2025, 4:00 PM (Regular Meeting)

**21. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION (Iles) to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 5:49 PM.

**CITY OF AMES  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE** December 4, 2025 – Homewood Clubhouse, 401 East 20<sup>th</sup> Street

**COMMISSION** Jeff Iles, Janet Rathe, Duane Reeves, Hannah Sappenfield,

**PRESENT** Nathan Shimanek, Debra Tapp

**ABSENT** Jeff White

**STAFF** Keith Abraham, Courtney Kort, Steve Schainker, Joshua Thompson

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** 4:01 PM

**2. PUBLIC FORUM**

None

**3. DISCUSS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN WITH CITY MANAGER STEVE SCHAINKER**

Abraham reviewed criteria used by staff and the Commission to evaluate projects to include in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). He spoke about balancing priorities and the challenges of funding new amenities while also maintaining existing facilities and services. The overall mission is to provide life enrichment opportunities and improve quality of life for all Ames residents.

Schainker reviewed Parks and Recreation CIP funding, which comes primarily from local option sales tax funds and property taxes. Seven percent sales tax in Ames is split among the State (5 percent), schools (1 percent), and the City (1 percent). Local option sales tax is collected on both purchases made in Ames and goods delivered to Ames. Sixty percent of local option sales tax proceeds are used to reduce property tax. The remaining 40 percent goes toward community betterment, including human service agencies, Parks and Recreation, shared use paths, the arts, accessibility, and the Ames Public Library. Local option sales tax funds are used to pay for smaller capital improvements, e.g., playgrounds.

Large projects require borrowing by issuing General Obligation bonds. Schainker discussed bond referendum vote requirements and reverse referendum voting. State law also allows for projects under \$1 million to be financed via G.O. bonds without a referendum vote.

Other sources of CIP funds are grants and donations.

City property taxes include four levies: general, trusted agency, transit, and debt service. The general levy helps fund operations for Police, Fire, Library, and Parks and Recreation, as well as several smaller City departments. Ames residents' property taxes are split among Ames schools (45 percent), City services (33 percent), County levies, medical facilities, and community colleges.

Schainker discussed implications of State legislators' efforts to restrict local decisions on property tax increases. With costs increasing in all areas, this limitation could present challenges to adding new amenities and providing services. Schainker said the City has never cut programs or people during his tenure, but it is getting harder to maintain services and fund improvements in the CIP.

The Ames/ISU Ice Arena and Homewood Golf Course are enterprise funds operations supported predominantly by user fees. Sometimes these facilities need local option sales tax subsidy for larger capital improvements. This is a policy decision typically made to keep user fees reasonable, Schainker explained.

Iles inquired about Iowa State University's funding contribution. Schainker noted ISU funds 25 percent of the Fire budget, pays water and sewer fees, provides favorable land leases for parks and other facilities, and more. He spoke about a strong town and gown relationship and said Ames is fortunate because this does not happen in all university communities.

Schainer spoke about the annual Resident Satisfaction Survey and how its data contributes to operations and CIP budget development. Abraham noted 98 percent of respondents in the latest survey perceive Parks and Recreation as 'good' or 'very good.' Schainker said those results are unusually high and reflect staff's hard work to provide excellent customer service.

Abraham reviewed upcoming projects scheduled in the five-year CIP and provided updates. The first year of the CIP is funded in the annual budget. The other four years are future plans. He noted park development funds are sometimes used to help fund larger projects, such as Ontario Park. Each year, the City Council allocates \$100,000 to the park development fund. Naming rights is another source of funding for certain projects or project components.

Pickleball courts do not appear in the five-year CIP. Abraham noted considerable feedback related to pickleball and said the amenity may come up for Ontario Park. Also, additional pickleball courts beyond those at Inis Grove Park and Emma McCarthy Lee Park may become available by converting tennis courts at Brookside Park (funded via operations budget). The new partnership with Harvest Pickleball & Tennis presents a further expansion of pickleball opportunities.

Schainer asked commissioners to comment on their vision for the parks, what is missing from the CIP, and what is needed in the community.

- Reeves: Major recreation center with full upstairs walking track
- Rathe: Gymnasium space
- Iles: Expanded, better ice arena
- Tapp: Family activity opportunities, especially in winter
- Rathe: Additional cross country skiing grooming

Discussion topics included:

- Philosophical difference in recreation center purpose – tournaments vs. local residents.
- Taking on additional operating costs if property taxing ability is capped by the State.
- Feasibility of expanding ice arena given difficulties covering expenses.
- Beyond providing the basics, what can Ames be that no one else is?
- Expanding ISU and Ames Schools partnerships to open facilities to the public.
- Keeping Ontario Park "primitive" – do not ruin it with pickleball or another fad.
- Feedback on Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center tour and construction progress.

Abraham noted several agenda items for the December 18 meeting, including:

- Broadcasting of Parks and Recreation Commission meetings.
- Crawdaddy request to rent kayaks, canoes, and paddle boards at Ada Hayden.
- Park rules and policies and Chapter 19 ordinance changes.

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION (Rathe) to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 5:39 PM.

ITEM # 4  
DATE 12/18/2025

## COMMISSION ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FROM CRAWDADDY OUTDOORS TO RENT KAYAKS, PADDLE BOARDS, AND CANOES AT ADA HAYDEN HERITAGE PARK**

**BACKGROUND:**

Due to the popularity of Ada Hayden Heritage Park (AHHP), Crawdaddy Outdoors in Ames is requesting to rent kayaks, stand up paddle boards (SUP), and canoes to the public in 2026. Crawdaddy Outdoors is an outdoor retail and guide service company based in Waverly Iowa and has been in business for 20 years. Crawdaddy recently opened a store on Main Street in Ames and desires to work with Parks and Recreation to provide rentals and possibly programs.

Staff has met with Crawdaddy ownership regarding this rental opportunity. As a reminder, JAX Outdoor Gear provided rentals at AHHP for 20 years with 2024 being the last year this service was offered. Attached is Crawdaddy's request and below is a summary of what is requested:

- Offer rentals on Saturdays and Sundays (11:00 AM – 5:00 PM) from Memorial Day to Labor Day, weather permitting.
- Possibly offering rentals on some weeknights such as Wednesday's when Skunk River Paddlers do a weekly paddle.
- Rental rates are
  - \$20/hour – single kayaks and SUP's
  - \$30/hour – tandem kayaks, canoes, and pedal drive kayaks
- Provide 10% of gross sales to Parks and Recreation
- Ability to park a Crawdaddy 23-foot enclosed trailer at AHHP throughout the summer
- Provide a Certificate of Insurance with City of Ames listed as additional insured

Because stand up paddle boards (SUPS) have the greater potential of users going into the water, it is important to educate users that safety is a priority and swimming is prohibited. To this end, the following conditions will be enforced:

- All paddle board renters will be required to wear a personal floatation device (pfd)
- Crawdaddy rental staff will educate and inform renters that the paddle boards are not to be used as a diving platform and that swimming is not allowed at AHHP
- SUPS will be equipped with an ankle leash to keep the board close to the paddler if they were to fall off

At the end of the season staff will meet with Crawdaddy employees and evaluate the success of this venture. Our assessment of the City's past partnership with JAX is the public appreciates rental equipment being made available at the site. Additionally, the City does not have to invest in the capital cost of purchasing equipment nor the ongoing operating expenses of staffing the operation.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve the request from Crawdaddy Outdoors to rent kayaks, stand up paddle boards, and canoes at Ada Hayden Heritage Park from May 23 to September 7, 2026.
2. Deny the request from Crawdaddy Outdoors to rent equipment at Ada Hayden Heritage Park during 2026.
3. Refer back to staff

**STAFF'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

This is a win-win proposition between Crawdaddy and the City. Park users have the opportunity to rent a variety of equipment at the site, yet no tax dollars are required to purchase the necessary capital equipment or to staff the operation. It is also evident by looking at the number of rentals in the past that people enjoy this service.

Therefore, staff recommends Alternative 1; to approve the request from Crawdaddy Outdoors to rent kayaks, stand up paddle boards, and canoes at Ada Hayden Heritage Park from May 23 to September 7, 2026.

CrawDaddy Outdoors is an outdoor retail and guide service company based in Waverly Iowa and now Ames Iowa. CrawDaddy Outdoors has been in business for 20 years. We offer a wide selection of outdoor experiences from multi-day trips to Isle Royale National Park, Boundary Waters Canoe Area, single day trips down local rivers and marshes, to Demo's and rentals of kayaks, camping, ski and snowshoes.

- CrawDaddy Outdoors would like to offer rentals at Ada Hayden Park on Saturdays, Sundays and possibly other evenings as we move forward during the summer. We want to offer a service to the community to help get people outside and utilize a great resource. This fleet of kayaks, paddle boards and canoes will also serve as a demo fleet for our store in Ames. This gives customers an opportunity to try on water before they buy. Many people do not have access to good equipment for many different reasons. By providing rental equipment this will give access outdoors to a larger group of members of the community. By CrawDaddy offering this the city doesn't need to make the investment in purchasing and maintaining a fleet of boats.
- We would like to offer rentals from 11-5pm on Saturdays and Sundays from Memorial Day to Labor Day weather permitting. We have also investigated the possibility of offering rentals on some weeknights such as Wednesday when a local paddling club has their paddles, to help newer paddlers meet with more experienced paddlers.
- We would charge \$20 / hour for single kayaks and SUPs and \$30/hour for tandem, canoes and pedal drive kayaks. We would pay back 10% of gross sales to the Parks and Recreation department of Ames.
- CrawDaddy staff will be trained in basic water safety and first-aid skills. These staff members will provide instruction to paddle board users about the no swimming regulations as well as assure rules are followed. All paddle boards will be equipped with ankle leashes to keep the board close in the event that the user falls off so they can get back to the board as soon as possible. All renters will be required to wear PFD's at all times on the water.

- CrawDaddy Outdoors would like to have permission to park our branded 23ft enclosed trailer at the park for the duration of the summer. This will make logistics much easier for staff without moving a trailer each day. This will also provide information about rentals to park users during the week when we are not present, hopefully increasing the overall number of users. If there are times when we need to move the trailer for special events we are happy to do that with advance notice.
- CrawDaddy Outdoors will provide a COI with City of Ames listed and additionally insured.

Please let us know if there are any questions.

Jamie Borglum

Owner CrawDaddy Outdoors

Staff Report

**BROADCASTING PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETINGS**

December 18, 2025

**BACKGROUND:**

Several of the City's Boards and Commissions have had its meetings broadcast live for many years. This has been the case for the Parks and Recreation Commission meetings. Beginning in April 2026, live broadcasts need to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This means that the broadcasts must be close captioned. This will take additional resources including staff time. City staff is recommending reducing the number of meetings that will be broadcast live.

For the Parks and Recreation Commission, the recommendation is to limit live broadcast and video recording to scheduled times as recommended by the commission. The Commission would need to develop a schedule for the year so media staff can plan accordingly. As of right now, the January and February meetings will be recorded unless the Commission does not feel the need. Additionally, staff can record the meetings for minute-taking purposes only. If we choose this option, these recordings will not be retained/archived and would be for staff use only.

Below is data received from the City's media production team.

**Parks and Recreation Commission Jan 1-Dec.8, 2025 (9 total meetings)**

**Granicus Live**

- 0 viewers

**Granicus Archive –**

- 90 views
  - Highest – 14 (July 17)
  - Lowest – 9
  - Average – 10

**YouTube Live –**

- 0 viewers

**YouTube Views –**

- 922 views
  - Highest – 548 (July 17)
  - Lowest – 32
  - Average – 102.4
- Only 2 meetings above 43 views
  - July 17 at 548
  - November 20 at 109

## **Facebook**

- Harder to track as Facebook Lives are deleted at 30 days
- The last meeting on 11/20/2025
  - 107 views (the number of times the content was displayed)
  - 309 three second views (video played for 3 seconds or more)
  - 18 one-minute views (video played for 1 minute or more)
  - Average watch time was 14 seconds.

## **STAFF COMMENTS:**

With the limited number of viewers for meetings, the increased strain on City resources, and the ability to broadcast a meeting if warranted, staff agrees with the City's recommendation to reduce the Commission's live broadcasts.

ITEM # 8  
DATE: 12/18/2025

## COMMISSION ACTION FORM

### **SUBJECT: TENNIS AGREEMENT WITH AMES FITNESS CLUB (AFC)**

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Parks and Recreation has had a long-standing relationship with the Ames Fitness Center (AFC) to offer a quality tennis program. Youth tennis lessons and camps are available for ages 3-16 and adult tennis lesson began in the Fall of 2021 for ages 17 and older. All instruction is coordinated by the Ames Fitness Center Tennis Professionals. Lessons are offered throughout the year.

In the past, lessons have been offered at the AFC South Tennis Bubble in colder weather months and local parks in warm weather months. With outdoor lessons, weather is always a factor resulting in cancellations, rescheduling, or location changes. To eliminate this variable in 2026, all lessons are planned to be offered at the AFC South Tennis Bubble, with the option to utilize their outdoor courts if suitable.

In 2025, a total of 61 sessions for youth and 2 youth camps were offered with 399 registrations. A total of 9 adult sessions were offered with 27 registrations.

The presented agreement for 2026 has no significant changes outside the use of the tennis bubble year-round. AFC has agreed to the terms and signed the agreement.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE AGREEMENT WITH AMES FITNESS CETNER (Attachment A):**

- AFC provides Tennis Professionals to instruct lessons.
- City conducts registration and collects all fees.
- City retains 20% of all program fees paid, with 80% paid to AFC.
- All lessons held at AFC South Tennis Bubble, with AFC outdoor court options.
- City does not administer private lessons, and forwards inquiries to AFC.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve the Tennis Agreement with Ames Fitness Center through December 31, 2026.
2. Do not approve the Tennis Agreement with Ames Fitness Center.
3. Refer back to staff.

**STAFF'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The partnership between AFC and Park and Recreation provides the opportunity to offer a year-round quality tennis program. Combining resources in facilities, instructors, and customer bases has contributed to providing a higher level of service than one agency could provide on their own.

Therefore, staff recommends Alternative #1; to approve the Tennis Agreement with Ames Fitness Center through December 31, 2026.

**Ames Parks & Recreation Department**  
**Tennis Agreement**  
**2026**

**Purpose:** The City of Ames (“City”) will provide a quality tennis program by contracting with Ames Fitness Center (“AFC”) to provide tennis instruction.

**Leadership:** AFC will provide professional staff member(s) to supervise and provide instruction. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, supervision of tennis instruction, the daily evaluation of lessons, and visiting with parents at the site to assess their level of satisfaction with the program. The City’s Recreation Manager will also visit the program site periodically to offer feedback to the AFC staff.

**Registration:** City will accept all program registrations and fees.

**Registration Fees:** City will retain 20% of all program fees paid, with the balance of 80% being paid to AFC. Payments will be made to AFC after completion of each session.

**Refunds:** If refunds are awarded, partially or in full, City or AFC will not retain or receive a balance percentage of the refunded amount. Refunds will be approved by City and follow City refund practices.

**Fee Determination:** The City and AFC will discuss tennis program fees annually. Fees must be approved by the Parks & Recreation Commission prior to implementation.

**Lesson Plan:** AFC will be responsible for creating and implementing all lesson plans.

**Participant Ratios:** A ratio of one instructor to six participants. A minimum of four (4) participants will be required for a class to proceed, unless agreed upon by both City and AFC.

**Equipment:** AFC will supply tennis racquets, hoppers, spots, tennis balls, play buckets, and all other necessary equipment. City will provide AFC with a \$200 equipment stipend for program use each fiscal year (July 1 – June 30), as requested by AFC.

**Location:** All lessons will be held at the AFC Tennis Bubble and/or outdoor courts located at 3600 University Blvd. AFC is responsible to have life safety equipment available onsite (AEDs, first aid kits, etc.).

**Inclement Weather:** If lessons need to be moved indoors or cancelled due to inclement weather, AFC will make that call onsite. If Ames Community School District cancels school due to inclement weather, City and AFC will also cancel scheduled lessons on that day. Any cancellations occurring for Saturday programming will be made City and AFC by Friday at 5:00 PM. The City will contact participants with any changes to classes and/or cancelations. In the event the weather becomes inclement during class, outdoor lessons will be stopped, and participants moved to shelter. The remaining lessons may be cancelled. If classes are moved indoors due to inclement weather, they will stay indoors regardless of the weather for later classes. If any classes are cancelled due to inclement weather, City and AFC will discuss date and time options to

reschedule or provide participants with the options to attend classes on other days. City and AFC will coordinate make up class dates within the session schedule in advance, pending staff and facility availability.

**Staff Training/  
Contracted  
Employees:**

AFC will hire and train all staff members. All staff will be employed by AFC.

**Insurance:**

The City and AFC will both carry liability insurance. AFC covenants and agrees to hold the City of Ames, its officers, and employees harmless and to indemnify them against each and every claim and demand of whatever nature made by or on behalf of any person or persons resulting from or arising out of any activities or omission arising out of the use of the AFC or City facilities and parks on the part of the AFC, its agents, servants, invitees, and employees, and for such purpose AFC agrees to carry liability insurance naming the City of Ames, its officers and employees as Additional Named Insured, such insurance to have limits of not less than \$500,000 combined single limit per occurrence.

AFC further agrees to file a Certificate of Insurance with the City Manager's Office, City of Ames, evidencing that such insurance has been furnished, and that the same will not be cancelled without ten (10) days' notice to the City of Ames. This Certificate of Insurance must be filed prior to the execution of this agreement.

AFC staff is responsible for personal medical expenses.

**Private Lessons:** City will not administer private tennis lessons. Rather, all inquiries will be forwarded to AFC.

**Program Evaluations:** City and AFC will conduct a joint program evaluation following each season.

**Agreement Terms:** City will conduct a program evaluation with participants after every session. This Agreement shall become effective on the date this Agreement is signed by both parties or until terminated by either party upon (60) day prior written notice. Terms of the agreement will expire December 31, 2026.

**Contacts:**

City of Ames  
Devin Hatch  
Recreation Manager  
1500 Gateway Hills Park Dr.  
Ames, IA 50014  
[devin.hatch@cityofames.org](mailto:devin.hatch@cityofames.org)  
515-239-5367

Ames Fitness Center

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

DATED AND EXECUTED AT AMES, IOWA, THIS \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

The City of Ames, Iowa  
Parks and Recreation Commission

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Commission

Grantee: Ames Fitness Center

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ames Fitness Center

Its: \_\_\_\_\_



Caring People • Quality Programs • Exceptional Service

**TO:                   Keith Abraham, Director of Parks and Recreation**

**FROM:               Staff**

**RE:                   Monthly Report December 2025**

## **PARKS AND FACILITIES:**

1. Staff completed park pruning at Lloyd Kurtz Park in early December and is scheduled to prune Emma McCarthy Lee, Franklin, Gateway, and O'Neil Parks this winter. Every park tree in the maintained areas of the parks is on a five-year tree pruning schedule.
2. Staff erected two outdoor ice rinks in South River Valley Park for the winter season. The two rinks have not been filled yet as the weather has not been conducive for maintaining ice. Staff will notify the public through social media and the weekly newsletter when the rinks are ready for skating.
3. Staff removed snow on park paths and parking lots in early December. Residents are reminded that limited maintenance is performed on trails and should use caution when using trails throughout the year.
4. Staff removed the accessible canoe launch and fishing docks at Ada Hayden Heritage Park in late November. Staff will reinstall in late March or early April, weather dependent.
5. With the early December snow events, staff were able to groom the trails for cross country skiing at East River Valley Park. Staff will continue to groom the trails when snow conditions are acceptable for cross-country skiing.

## **RECREATION PROGRAMS:**

1. In November, 17 public skating sessions were held at the Ames/ISU Ice Arena with a total attendance of 899 skaters. A total of 35 skaters attended 8 figure freestyle sessions, and 50 skaters attended 7 stick and helmet sessions. A total of 3 birthday parties were held, and 58 pairs of skates were sharpened.
2. A six-week session of Fitness classes began Monday, November 17 at the Community Center and Sixty Forward Center with 425 registrations and 193 registrations respectively. Virtual classes continue to be offered and had a total of 35 registrations.
3. A total of 33 individuals attended the EGYM onboarding at the Sixty Forward Center in November.

4. A Babysitters Training Course was offered with 5 registrations and Community CPR/AED/First Aid Class was offered with 8 people registered.
5. Applications for temporary positions opened for Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center and Furman Aquatic Center.
6. Homewood had 16 participants register for morning Cribbage, and 18 participants register for evening Cribbage. A total of 24 registrants or 12 teams are participating in Euchre.
7. November Auditorium Events
  - a. Hope Lutheran Church held four worship services.
  - b. Central Iowa Symphony held five rehearsals for its December concert.
  - c. The Ames Patriotic Council held its annual Veteran's Day event at the Auditorium. The event was open to the public and livestreamed.
  - d. Indian Student Association hosted a Diwali event on November 15.
  - e. Story Theater hosted 8 rehearsals and 6 performances for their fall show.

## **PROJECT UPDATE:**

1. King Construction, Iowa Falls, Iowa, is continuing to make progress on the Park Maintenance Facility Expansion Project. The bulk water station was relocated to the southern part of the site and was recently opened to the public. The break room renovation in the main park shop is almost complete as the epoxy floors and painting were recently completed. Yet to be installed and commissioned is the HVAC system. Construction of the walls of the new cold storage building have started and will continue through the middle of January. The goal is to have the project completed by the end of January 2026.
2. Staff completed the concrete sidewalk and grading around the new playground at Chrisfofferson Park, 2130 Oakwood Road. The playground features a post and deck structure with multiple slides and fun play features. Also included is a new two bay swing set with two belt swings and two tot swings.
3. Staff completed a pre-construction meeting with representatives of Con-Struct, Ames Iowa, for the Homewood Golf Course Hole Nine Improvements Project. The project includes the removal of the pedestrian bridge on hole nine and installing a new crossing that will include a culvert and a concrete path for golf carts and golfers that are walking. Also, included as part of the project is the stabilization along the banks of the ravine that bisects hole nine. ConStruct has not identified a start date for the project, but completion will be in mid-March, in time for the 2026 season.
4. TK Concrete, Pella, Iowa, mobilized a crew to start digging and pouring the footings for the mechanical building for the Daley Park Splash Pad. Staff will be constructing the structure this winter that will house the filters, disinfection equipment, pumps, and pipe manifold for the splash pad. TK Concrete will begin grading the site for the splash pad in April, with completion of the splash pad by June 1, 2026.