

AMES PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
City Hall Council Chambers – 515 Clark Avenue
Thursday, May 15, 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 can 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's 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 April 17, 2025
3. Public Forum (For items not on the agenda)
4. Park Policies – Sample Survey Discussion
5. Project Updates
 - a. Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center
 - b. Steven L. Schainker Plaza
 - c. Agility Course at Carr Park
 - d. Mini-Pitch
6. Monthly Report
7. Commission Member Comments
8. Next Meeting:
 - a. June 19, 2025, at 4:00 PM (Parks and Facilities Tour)
9. Adjournment

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

DATE April 17, 2025

COMMISSION PRESENT Jeff Iles, Janet Rathe, Duane Reeves, Hannah Sappenfield, Nathan Shimanek, Jeff White

ABSENT Debra Tapp

STAFF Keith Abraham, Joshua Thompson

1. CALL TO ORDER: 4:00 PM

2. INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS

Abraham welcomed Hannah Sappenfield to the Commission. Sappenfield, who will serve a one-year term, spoke about her family's use of City parks and recreation offerings and her interest in public service. Tapp and Iles were reappointed to three-year terms.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

a. CHAIRPERSON

MOTION: (Iles/White) to nominate Shimanek as Chairperson

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

b. VICE-CHAIRPERSON

MOTION: (Shimanek/Iles) to nominate Reeves as Vice-Chairperson.

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: (Reeves/Iles) to approve the March 27, 2025, meeting minutes.

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

5. PUBLIC FORUM

None

6. ADA HAYDEN TRAIL REPLACEMENT PROJECT UPDATE (INCLUDING FEEDBACK FROM PUBLIC INPUT MEETING AND CORRESPONDENCE)

Thompson gave an overview of plans for replacing the current ten-foot-wide asphalt trail at Ada Hayden Heritage Park with a twelve-foot-wide concrete path to create a long-lasting, safe trail for users. Project funds totaling \$1.4 million are programmed across two fiscal years. In January 2025, City Council approved hiring WHKS as project consultant.

On April 1, 25 attendees provided project feedback at a public meeting. Comments and ideas included installation of barriers to separate bikers and pedestrians, painted lines, and signage.

Thompson indicated a key project consideration was if keeping a portion of the trail open during the project is feasible and practical. WHKS and staff determined this would increase costs significantly by requiring multiple contractor deployments. On April 15, City Council considered two options: (1) Close the entire trail for a five- to six-week project with a base bid price of \$1.1 million, or (2) Close the trail in phases for a project spanning as much as nine weeks with a base bid price of \$1.3 to \$1.4 million. City Council recommended Option 1. Adequate funds are available to complete the entire project under budget.

Abraham indicated pre-bid and preconstruction meetings will emphasize the impact of full path closure on park users. Staff will encourage having a portion of the new concrete path open sooner than five to six weeks. He noted Option 1 allows both base and alternate bids and leaves money for contingency as well. Option 2 would require locating additional funds for the base bid only. Also, the project could extend beyond nine weeks if contractors move to other jobs between deployments. Given these factors, City Council directed staff to pursue Option 1.

Abraham encouraged the Commission to provide comments about the project.

Iles asked when the project will start. Thompson said the schedule is not set. One contractor staff spoke with would do the work this fall. Iles asked if prices would remain stable – Thompson said yes. Abraham said plans and specifications go before City Council on May 13, with bids due in early June. Rathe thought summer would be the worst time for a trail closure, that later in the year is a plus. Thompson agreed fall would be the best time for the project.

Reeves noted a question from Tim Rasmussen, a running club member, regarding lengthening the trail to get a full 5k. Thompson indicated the trail had been officially marked in the past with different starting points to make it a 5k. Abraham recalled overlapping start and finish lines for some events and/or starting points in the parking lot. During the trail replacement walkthrough, he stated, staff noted locations where the trail will shift. Staff will work with WHKS to evaluate the feasibility of trail lengthening and associated impact on project costs. Thompson noted staff would evaluate cost/benefit given declining numbers of official 5k races in recent years.

White inquired about water coming across the existing trail, noting it may be ankle deep in some areas but does not tend to last too long. Thompson indicated the new concrete trail will be about five inches higher and should reduce standing water. Staff will continue to examine ways to alleviate this problem with the trail replacement project or future projects.

Shimanek offered that everyone has an opinion about the “crown jewel of the park system” and how to best serve everyone, or most everyone. He stated it should be possible to find a way to share the trail and getting the trail replacement project completed quickly is the best thing.

Abraham indicated concrete, while not favored by runners, offers superior longevity and lower maintenance costs. The consultant indicated concrete could last 30-40 years with very similar material costs between concrete and asphalt. In contrast, in 20 years the current asphalt trail required overlays in two areas along with numerous patches.

Staff recently learned from its consultant that a line on the path could be problematic, potentially exposing the City to liability if bicycles moving in opposite directions crashed into one another. Abraham explained that Statewide Urban Design and Specifications (SUDAS) requirements prescribe minimum four-foot width for one way bicycle traffic, and minimum eight-foot width for two-way traffic. Signage may be a better way to promote safe shared trail usage.

Shimanek would prefer no markings. He asked if bicycle/pedestrian accidents are common. Thompson indicated staff does not hear about everything; public feedback indicates perceived problems. Rathe asked about installing reminder signs. White said the trail needs agreed upon etiquette, perhaps a speed limit, and posted rules. Abraham cited other issues that play into problems on shared trails, such as dogs with retractable leashes, and pedestrians with ear buds unable to hear their surroundings or approaching bicycle (or other personal transport) traffic.

Shimanek asked if lake and fishing access will be maintained throughout the trail reconstruction project. Thompson replied the goal is to keep the parking lot on the north side open. Extensive signage and blocking off the project area will be crucial for public safety. Other portions of the park and lake access points will remain open. Abraham added that while the trail replacement project will limit use of Ada Hayden Heritage Park, the project offers opportunities to try other trails, e.g, Moore Memorial Park, East River Valley, Munn Woods, Inis Grove, Carr Park, etc.

Reeves asked if it would be beneficial to entirely close Ada Hayden Heritage Park to do other restoration work in addition to the trail reconstruction. Thompson indicated that has not been discussed, and closing the entire park would likely generate criticism since some areas of the park will remain usable even during the trail replacement project.

7. PARK POLICIES UPDATE (INCLUDING FEEDBACK FROM PUBLIC INPUT MEETING AND CORRESPONDENCE)

Abraham summarized feedback on park policies received at a public input meeting held on April 2 and via correspondence. Most issues and concerns fall into the following categories: personal transportation devices, park hours, homelessness, damaging plants and foraging, safety, and trash. Abraham also summarized staff responses to numerous issues. He observed how varied and sometimes competing priorities reveal how difficult it is to make everyone happy. Overall, staff wishes to promote safety and accessibility.

A survey to gather additional public feedback will be developed, with results shared with the Commission and City Council. Abraham asked if commissioners had specific questions related to park rules and ordinances to include in the survey.

Iles suggested asking about a speed limit on trails for E-bikes and other personal transportation devices. Rathe and Sappenfield observed all devices may not have speedometers.

Abraham noted suggestions for dynamic speed signs and added there are concerns such signs may not be a good fit with Ada Hayden Heritage Park and other parks.

Iles stated people who go too fast probably have a speedometer. In his view, riders should ride to the level of the conditions – it is about respectful use of the trails.

Sappenfield suggested increasing awareness would help. She wondered if people know they are going relatively fast. Correspondence and other comments make it sound like a big problem.

Rathe remarked on the importance of being aware of how many other people are on the trail, that overall congestion may vary greatly depending on the time of day.

Iles said bicycle/pedestrian problems are not unique to Ada Hayden Heritage Park and cited similar concerns with the High Trestle Trail.

Shimanek observed the two big issues in Ames – electronic devices and homelessness – are the same nationally. He cautioned against responding with overcomplicated policies. Simple speed limits seem like a practical response to problems on shared paths, in his view.

Reeves asked how to become aware of park rules, noting published rules seem limited and are not always easy to find. Abraham said staff is developing a Park Policies format combining rules and ordinances that can be made available once decisions are made regarding policy updates and changes are adopted. Reeves suggested posting policies online along with park orientation information and statements about good user practices. Rathe cited the benefit of posted rules in parks and other facilities, such as Furman Aquatic Center. Thompson pointed out a challenge with signs with parks or facilities with multiple entrances.

Sappenfield thought more information about dogs on leashes and dog training would be helpful.

8. PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING TIMES FOR 2025/2026

Abraham reviewed upcoming Commission meeting dates and locations. Most meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month. Two exceptions are a special meeting on December 4 to discuss the Capital Improvement Plan, and a meeting on the fourth Thursday in March to avoid conflict with spring break. Abraham indicated the park tour scheduled for June 19 may focus exclusively on a visit to the Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center job site. The City Council will likely also be present for that tour.

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

Approve the Parks and Recreation Commission 2025-26 meeting dates as shown in Attachment A.

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

9. PROJECT UPDATES

a. Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center

Abraham presented a construction time lapse video. Recent accomplishments include conduit and ductwork up in the natatorium space, a second coat of ceiling paint, and roof work completed. The wellness pool is dug. Lap pool digging begins in May. Work on non-natatorium areas continues. Construction is going well, with no change orders taken to City Council in the last two months and minimal use of contingency funds overall.

Reeves asked if aerials and images of the full site, including parking and the bus stop, are available, noting this could address parking concerns. Abraham indicated a facility website is not up to date; staff will post more, better information. Reeves said showing the plan should cut through some complaints. Abraham noted plans for 120 parking spaces, an amount based on code requirements and peak time calculations.

b. Steven L. Schainker Plaza

Abraham reported plant material installation and hydroseeding will occur soon. Fountain Tech conducted spray pad tests. Staff and Henkel Construction met to discuss the ice-skating ribbon and results from surface elevation and ground penetrating radar reports. Staff requested additional detail regarding Henkel's proposed use of a product to correct the ribbon concrete surface. Abraham acknowledged all parties are frustrated by project progress. The City wants to get what it paid for and has a legal right to be made whole. Rathe asked if any portion of the plaza will be opened. Abraham indicated City Council will make a final decision. No part of the plaza would open before the turf and plants are

established. If the ice ribbon situation remains unresolved, that portion of the plaza may be fenced in and off limits.

c. Agility Course at Carr Park

Thompson reported Caliber Concrete installed underground drainage and forming where agility equipment will be installed. Weather permitting, concrete will be poured the week of April 21. The agility equipment installer is expected to be on site mid-May. City staff will erect the shelter. The project could be completed in June.

d. Daley Park Splash Pad

Staff is working on a request for proposals for equipment and installation. Abraham stated plans and specifications will go to the City's Development Review Committee on April 23 and to City Council on May 13. Staff anticipate project savings based on the existing budget and the latest project cost opinion.

e. Park Maintenance Facility Expansion

Base plus alternate project costs, now estimated at \$1.2 million, exceed existing funding. Staff wish to include the bid alternate to house all maintenance equipment and staff in one location, provide room for growth, and allow for demolition of buildings at the end of useful life located in the flood plain. On May 13, staff will seek City Council approval of using cost savings from the Ada Hayden trail expansion and Daley Park Splash Pad projects to cover the Parks Maintenance Facility Expansion project funding shortfall.

f. Mini-Pitch

City Council approved "Friedrich Pitch" naming rights, Abraham reported. Concrete is poured, fencing will be delivered May 1, then acrylic surfacing installation. Staff anticipate mid-May project completion.

10. MONTHLY REPORT

Thompson reported park bathrooms are open, and all water fountains will be available soon.

Abraham provided a staffing update.

- Recreation Superintendent Kort will return full-time the week of April 21.
- Recruitments for a Recreation Manager and two Maintenance Workers are underway.
- Furman Aquatic Center needs additional Lifeguards and Water Slide Attendants. A hiring event is scheduled for Friday, May 2, at the Ames High School pool.

11. COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

White expressed hope for good weather to help keep current projects on schedule.

12. NEXT MEETING: Thursday, May 15, 2025, 4:00 PM (Regular Meeting)

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION (Reeves) to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 5:28 PM.



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TO: Keith Abraham, Director of Parks and Recreation

FROM: Staff

RE: Monthly Report May 2025

PARKS AND FACILITIES:

1. Staff started filling and circulating the basins at the Furman Aquatic Center for the summer. The facility opens to the public on May 24.
2. Staff prepared softball fields and volleyball courts for adult softball and volleyball leagues at North and South River Valley and Inis Grove Park.
3. Staff started mowing the parks in mid-April. All parks are mowed every seven to ten days throughout the season, weather dependent.
4. Staff completed tilling the flower beds for the Adopt A Flower Program and volunteers will start planting the week of May 12. There are over 40 flower beds that are adopted by community volunteers. All flowers for the beds are donated by Holub's Garden and Greenhouse. They have been supplying flowers for the program for over 25 years.

RECREATION PROGRAMS:

1. In April, the Ames/ISU Ice Arena held 13 public skating sessions, with a total of 379 skaters. Additionally, 96 skaters participated in 15 figure freestyle sessions, and 252 skaters attended 20 stick and helmet sessions.
2. The Ames/ISU Ice Arena also hosted 4 birthday parties and sharpened 25 pairs of skates.
3. The Ames Figure Skating Club hosted their annual spring show on April 26 and 27 at the Ames/ISU Ice Arena.
4. Homewood Golf Course had a total of 3,092 rounds played in April.
5. Men's League at Homewood Golf Course started April 21. The league has 20 teams or 40 participants.

6. The new Sixty Forward Golf League started May 6 at Homewood. The league has 8 teams or 16 participants.
7. Couples/Pairs Golf League started April 29 at Homewood. The league has 18 teams or 36 participants.
8. A six-week session of virtual and in-person fitness classes began at the Community Center and Sixty Forward on April 7 with 26 virtual registrations and 475 in-person participants at the Community Center and 157 registrations at Sixty Forward.
9. Twenty-two people were onboarded at the Sixty Forward Center in April to use the EGYM equipment.
10. A new session of Adult Ballet began April 17 with eight registrations.
11. A new session of Indoor Tennis Lessons at Ames Fitness Center began, with 15 participants registered.
12. Indoor Volleyball Camp, in partnership with the Ames High School Volleyball Team, began April 27 with 44 participants from grades 3-6.
13. The 2025 Adult Softball season has begun at North/South River Valley Park and team participation numbers are shown below:

Adult Softball Team Registration Numbers						
League	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Men's Softball	15	17	20	22	24	23
Coed Softball	17	14	18	21	19	13
Total Softball Teams	32	31	38	43	36	54

14. Auditorium Events for the month of April:
 - a. Hope Lutheran Church held 6 worship services and 3 rehearsals for Easter.
 - b. Parks and Recreation Youth Dance/Gymnastics held its rehearsal and recital.
 - c. India Cultural Association held their yearly Talent Nite
 - d. Parks and Recreation held the two final concerts as part of its Fifth and Clark Friday series.
 - e. ISU Music held their last campus and concert band concert of the season.
 - f. Central Iowa Symphony held four rehearsals for their May concert.
 - g. Diana Helmer hosted a one woman show based on the life of Betty Ford.
 - h. Cameron Gray hosted a film showing as part of his "We Glow in the Dark" film series.

PROJECT UPDATE:

1. Staff completed the installation of the concrete border and engineered wood fibers at the new playground in Stuart Smith Park, 1501 S. 4th St. The playground is now open to the public.

2. Caliber Construction, Adair, Iowa, continues to make progress in completing the Carr Park Agility Course Project. The subsurface concrete below the agility equipment has been poured. The agility equipment installer has started installing the equipment and hopes to finish installation by late May. Next steps include finishing the equipment installation and starting the rubber surfacing installation. Also, the shelter is scheduled to be delivered the week of May 19, and will be erected soon thereafter. The project is expected to be completed by the end of June.
3. Caliber Construction, Adair, Iowa continues construction on the Mini-Pitch Project in Lloyd Kurtz Park. The fencing and lighting have been installed with the acrylic surfacing and lines being painted the week of May 12. Staff have submitted a grant application to Delta Dental to fund the installation of a drinking fountain adjacent the mini-pitch.
4. Converse Conditioned Air, Ames, Iowa, started the Ames/ISU Ice Arena Radiant Heating Project. The project consists of removing the current radiant heating system above the spectator and lobby areas and replacing it with a new radiant heating system and controller. The project is expected to be completed by the end of May.
5. Staff started construction on a new park in the Baker Subdivision, located in west Ames, off Tripp St. The project includes playground equipment, shelter, water fountain, greenspace, and a park sign. The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of June.