

Meeting Minutes
Parks and Recreation Board
March 3, 2026, at 9:00 AM

Reed Community Center | 4233 S. Yukon Avenue | Tulsa, Oklahoma 74107

Attendees:

MEMBERS		
NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT
SAVAGE	X	
MEINDERS BURKETT	X	
MILLER	X	
REESE-TIPTON	X	
FERNANDEZ		X

TOTALS	4	1
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- I. Chairperson Savage called the meeting to order at 9:17AM.
- II. Savage asked for the review and approval of February 3, 2026, PRB minutes. No corrections or revisions were requested.

Aaron Griffith stated he did not believe the Greater Tulsa Indian Affairs Commission agreed to the renaming of Midland Valley Trail and he would like the previous minutes to reflect this. Griffith noted that Brenda Nails Alford asked a few months back to correct her meeting minutes where she stated she was misquoted and he would appreciate the same courtesy.

Caroline Guerra Wolf stated that the Board can agree to amend the minutes prior to approving and hold a vote. Meinders Burkett noted that Brenda Nails Alford had submitted a request to the Board months before her request was considered.

Meinders Burkett noted she does not recall if the Greater Tulsa Indian Affairs Commission being discussed at the last meeting.

NAME	IN FAVOR	OPPOSED	ABSTAINING	NOT PRESENT
SAVAGE	X			
MEINDERS-BURKETT	X			
MILLER	X			
REESE-TIPTON	X			
FERNANDEZ				X

TOTALS	4			1
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Motion carried. Approved minutes as submitted.

III. REPORTS

a. Parks, Culture and Recreation Department Report – Anna America

Anna America noted that the department will be celebrating Arbor Day with Councilor Gilbert. America noted that PSO will co-sponsor Arbor Day and provide the trees that will be planted.

America noted that, on March 27, 2026, at 3PM, there will be a celebration at Bales Park and Bike Club Headquarters. America noted they are working with the Tulsa Housing Authority for this event. America noted that this park was essentially abandoned a few years ago and has had a great turnaround with the new additions.

New Artist in Residence at Oxley had 41 applicants. America noted that Taylor Painter-Wolfe, fabric artist, has been selected for the new residency.

America noted seasonal hiring is underway. America noted two new reports for Grants/Donations and the Crime and Intelligence Analysis Unit 2025 Calls for Service in Tulsa Parks were included in this month's Board Packet.

America noted that at the next meeting, there will be a new communications employee in the Parks Department.

America noted that a flock camera was placed at Bales Park by TPD which has greatly reduced vandalism. Meinders Burkett and Savage noted how beautiful the playground and Bike Club Headquarters are.

Questions were welcomed.

Aaron Griffith -Public Comment: Regarding the routine maintenance, Griffith noted that he would like to see the transition to mini clover in areas that are not a natural prairie type. Griffith noted that this would potentially save the department money. Griffith noted having higher trees with native trees and trees that offer food should be prioritized over non-native trees.

Griffith noted that Midland Valley Trail should be prairie grass and wildflowers. Griffith noted that the Midland Valley Trail renaming request was held off by Council and requested that the Board reevaluate the renaming.

b. Capital Project Update – Mary Womble/Steve Lassman

Steve Lassman noted the construction at Woodward Park. Lassman noted a meeting last week to discuss planting and the layout. Lassman noted that the terrace walls are in progress, pond bottoms are being worked on, and that this should bring the Park back to life.

Lassman noted that the Sports Court Improvements RFP should go out this Friday for 2026 Sports Courts resurfacing. All other courts that have not been refinished and are not part of a larger project should be started this year.

Lassman noted the playgrounds at Terrace and Zeigler, and a Route 66 themed playground at Tracy Park.

Lassman noted that Fred Johnson final plans will be going out for bid next week. Improvements should begin once bid has been awarded.

Lassman noted that the Dream Keepers Park community engagement event with Council Oak Elementary is coming up. After March, the early stakeholder interviews will be completed, and a preliminary design can be completed.

Lassman noted that Berry and Chamberlain Park improvements should begin soon. Lassman noted that he is waiting on the agreement from the City to be signed in order to start this project. Projected start date will be early March.

Lassman noted that Berry Park will begin in late April, early May. Miller asked for a groundbreaking event date for Chamberlain. Lassman noted he would provide one once it has been decided.

Lassman noted that Ben Hill Park is in early design with the architects to survey the site. End of March should have site plans for review, April will begin community engagement. Savage asked what is envisioned for Ben Hill. Lassman noted new amenities, new sports courts, playground, walking path, and lighting.

America noted that the community engagement with Ben Hill at the start of the project showed that they want markers throughout that tell some of the story of that area. America noted that because of the hill, accessibility will be difficult, so they are assessing options to make the amenities more accessible.

Lassman noted that the Hicks Parking Lot bids have come in and the Reed roof will be replaced soon. Both estimates came in within a couple percentages of our engineers estimate.

Meinders Burkett asked for an update on the Howard Park Dinosaur. Lassman noted that the dinosaur is in St. Louis being cast and painted.

America noted the accessibility advisory group and stated they are going through growing pains right now. America noted that she would like to see this group turn into a Title 5, comparable to the Indian Affairs Commission. Savage noted that there used to be a commission. America noted it was disbanded in 2012. America noted that there is a meeting later this week to talk about the future of this group.

Questions were welcomed.

IV. ITEMS FOR ACTION AND/OR DISCUSSION

- a. *Discussion and possible action regarding the Park and Recreation Board's Public Comment Policy – Caroline Guerra Wolf and Anna America

Guerra Wolf noted that there is already a public comment policy that the Board adopted in 2021.

Questions were welcomed.

Aaron Griffith – Public Comment: Aaron Griffith pointed out that he was notified that he cannot comment on item six and would like the Board to reconsider this decision as he feels that if the item is on the agenda, he should be able to comment on it.

Griffith noted that he would like clarification on the policy around Public Hearings within the Park Board.

Griffith noted that he would like clarification on the 180 day policy – is that topic related or is it individual specific? Specifically, if one person comments about an item can another person comment about the same item within the 180 day period?

Griffith noted that he would like Public Comments to stay open and for it to continue to allow people to sign up on any agenda item. Griffith noted that he would like to see some way for the public to address items that the Board does not want to address.

Griffith noted that he does not know if the Public Comment Policy/Parks Policies and Procedures document has been updated as the most updated version he can find is from 2017. Griffith noted that he would like those policies to be updated with the new policy. Griffith requested that the Board not take action today and consider holding a public hearing on this matter.

Savage stated that the Board will review and come back with proposed recommendations and changes. Meinders Burkett asked for additional clarification on the 180-day policy.

V. NEW BUSINESS

[NOTE: "New business" is restricted to any matter not known about or which could not have been reasonably foreseen prior to the time of posting. *Oklahoma Open Meeting Act*, 25 O.S.2001, §311(9)]

No new business.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Development of a framework to deal with controversial names and monuments in parks – James Taylor

Hello, my name is James, and I'm speaking today as a concerned resident in support of a clear, citywide framework for addressing historically contested names, monuments, and markers in our public parks.

I want to focus on the monument in Owen Park, because it illustrates exactly why such a framework is necessary.

This monument is often described as a neutral historical marker. It is not. It functions as what historian Kristi Williams has described as a "Klan trophy"-an object placed in public space not simply to record history, but to signal power, dominance, and belonging to some, while warning or excluding others.

The details tell that story clearly. The date engraved on the monument, September 21, 1921, corresponds with the night of the Southern Ball at Convention Hall during a statewide Confederate reunion. The organization commemorated by this monument began in the home of Tate Brady, a known Klansman and participant in the 1921 race massacre.

These facts are well documented. And yet, they are often omitted from official descriptions-including by institutions like the Tulsa Historical Society. That omission matters. History is not made neutral by leaving out inconvenient facts. Selective storytelling is not objectivity-it is a choice.

This intentional opacity is not unique to this monument. It is part of a broader pattern in Tulsa: difficult histories are softened, fragmented, or quietly avoided, leaving residents to encounter these symbols without full context in the very public spaces meant to serve everyone.

If this monument represented something our city genuinely values today, we would still be celebrating Old Timers Day. We do not. The tradition has faded, yet the monument remains. What is being preserved is not a living civic celebration, but symbolism rooted in a moment of racial intimidation.

Monuments are not passive objects. They shape public memory, normalize certain values, and legitimize power structures. When they remain unexamined-especially when key context is withheld-they continue to reinforce harm, even when no one is willing to openly defend their original purpose.

That is why this monument's placement in a public park is so concerning. Parks are shared, welcoming spaces. When monuments rooted in exclusion occupy them, we must ask whose history is centered, and whose experience is marginalized.

This is not an isolated issue. Our city and parks system contains multiple contested monuments and names, and for years, the absence of a clear framework has allowed delay, inconsistency, and avoidance to persist.

What is needed is a transparent, citywide process with clear criteria and meaningful public input-so decisions are informed, consistent, and accountable, rather than shaped by omission or institutional inertia.

I urge the Board to move forward with creating this framework. Doing so would not erase history. It would finally tell it honestly.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

VII. Next Meeting – April 14, 2026, at the Helmerich Center for America Research – 1400 N Gilcrease Museum Road.

VIII. Adjournment at 10:01AM