City of Alexandria, Virginia
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting

Patrick Henry Recreation Center

Thursday, September 17, 2026
7 p.m.

Commission Members
Present: Dana Colarulli, Chair (District II); Katy Matthews, Vice Chair (District III); Joseph Fray (District II); Asa Orrin-Brown (District III); David Brennan, (District III); Geoffrey Goode (District II); Paul Komelasky (District I); Cooper Hughes (Student Member); Jeffrey Miller, Secretary (District I); Stuart Fox, (District I),

Absent: Eli Hurley-Fathelbab (Student Member);

RPCA Staff: Hashim Taylor, Director; Beth Znidersic, Deputy Director, Park Services (acting); Tamika Coleman, Deputy Director, Recreation Services (acting); Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, Arts.; Judy Lo, Division Chief, Park Services (acting); Tiffany Marbury, Administrative Assistant; Jamie Aylor, Program Manager.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dana Colarulli called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Casey Canon – Mr. Canon, a West End Alexandria resident who primarily uses a bicycle for transportation, shared his concerns regarding trail maintenance and safety. In 2018, he participated in a volunteer initiative to assess paved trails, documenting trail widths and surface conditions. Over the past two years, he has reviewed Park & Recreation Commission meeting minutes and presentations and noted the limited discussion of trail maintenance. He encouraged the Commission to provide an annual update on Alexandria's trails, similar to updates provided by the Transportation Commission. Mr. Casey also expressed concerns about the process for addressing trail maintenance issues submitted through Alex311 and emphasized the need for a more effective system to ensure trail safety.

Nicole Radshaw – Ms. Radshaw, an Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) employee and avid cyclist, expressed concerns regarding trail maintenance throughout the City. She shared that she recently provided Mayor Gaskins and Vice Mayor Bagley with information on trail maintenance practices in Washington, D.C., and Maryland. She specifically highlighted the need for improved maintenance along the Eisenhower Trail. Ms. Radshaw also inquired about obtaining bicycle racks at Tucker and Mount Vernon Elementary Schools and suggested installing additional bike racks at the Ben Brenman Farmers Market. Additionally, she commended RPCA staff for their responsiveness in answering her questions regarding goats and sheep.

Mr. Harper – Mr. Harper, who regularly walks his dog along Alexandria's trails, expressed concerns regarding pedestrian safety due to cyclists traveling at high speeds. He noted that some cyclists travel at approximately 25 mph and that electric bicycles also frequently travel at excessive speeds, creating potential safety hazards for pedestrians and other trail users.

Elizabeth Wright – Ms. Wright, a resident living near Tarleton Park, expressed concerns regarding communication following a recent reported attempted attack in the park. She noted that a suspect was apprehended and arrested, but the civic association was not notified in a timely manner. Ms. Wright questioned whether the Alexandria Police Department (APD) notifies RPCA staff when arrests occur in City parks and sought clarification on which department is responsible for communicating such incidents to surrounding neighborhoods.

III. COMMISSIONER REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Commissioner Reports

The Commission received a list of RPCA program and initiative interest areas. Chair Colarulli encouraged Commissioners to identify and share their areas of interest during their reports and announcements so staff can better match them with relevant opportunities and updates.

District I

Commissioner Fox reported that Visit Alexandria held its annual meeting the previous evening, celebrating its 30th anniversary. She also shared that Charlotte Hall received the inaugural Tourism Champion Award.

Commissioner Miller expressed concerns regarding trail lighting, noting that many trails rely on nearby streetlights and that overgrown trees are obstructing illumination in some areas. He also expressed enthusiasm for the City's goat grazing project and commended RPCA for installing informational signage in surrounding neighborhoods.

Commissioner Komelasky reported visiting Witter Park and noted that the new turf field is receiving significant use and that the park looks great. He inquired about plans to install lighting at the Montgomery Park dog park. He also attended the Taste of Old Town North event and reported a strong turnout.

District II

Commission Chair Colarulli expressed appreciation for the public's continued attendance and participation in Commission meetings, particularly those who have shared concerns and feedback. He encouraged Commissioners to communicate their areas of interest so he can identify opportunities for subcommittee or task force representation. He also expressed enthusiasm for the goat grazing project and the progress made, thanking Commissioners who shared photographs from the site.

Commissioner Goode reported that the George Mason modernization project remains on schedule. He also shared that he met with the Chair of the Environmental Policy

Commission (EPC) last month to discuss opportunities for collaboration. Their discussion included potential Commission representation on the Flood Resilience Plan led by Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES), as well as updates on the Stay Cool ALX initiative.

Commissioner Fray reported attending a soccer match at Witter Field and expressed appreciation for the recent field improvements.

District III

Commissioner Matthews did not have an update.

Commissioner Orrin-Brown reported recently using the new outdoor fitness station at Ben Brenman Park and commended its user-friendly design. He also expressed concerns regarding trail maintenance, noting that he believes several trails have not been adequately maintained over the past year. He shared that he has submitted multiple ALEX311 requests regarding trees requiring maintenance along City trails.

Commissioner Brennan reported that although he did not attend the most recent Youth Sports Affiliate meeting, he was informed that a primary topic of discussion involved a grant opportunity presented to Alexandria Soccer Association (ASA) by Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). ASA subsequently submitted a $115,000 grant application to the Play Equity Fund.

Student Commissioner Cooper Hughes shared his family's enthusiasm for the City's goat grazing project. He also reported that his school held a club fair earlier that day and highlighted a student group dedicated to City trails. He expressed interest in exploring opportunities for the group to support trail maintenance and improvement efforts. **Student Commissioner Eli Hurley-Fathelbab** was not in attendance.

b. RPCA Staff Updates

Staff Transitions – RPCA Director Hashim Taylor provided the Commission with an update on recent departmental staffing changes. He reported that Jack Browand, Deputy Director of Park Services, retired at the end of June, while Laura Durham, Deputy Director of Recreation Services, and Lindsay Burneson, Division Chief of Recreation Services, departed the City in August. He also announced that Beth Znidersic is serving as Acting Deputy Director of Park Services, and Tamika Coleman is serving as Acting Deputy Director of Recreation Services.

OSTP/Power-Full Fun Days – Hashim also shared information on the new Power-Full Fun Day fee. The 1-pager can be found here: https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2026-10/Powerful%20fun%20days%2026.27.pdf

Colasanto Spray Park – Beth Znidersic reported that Colasanto Spray Park held a soft opening the previous week. An official grand opening celebration is being planned, with the date to be announced.

Kayak Launch – Judy Lo, Acting Division Chief, reported that the August 2 storm damaged an anchoring arm, causing the kayak launch to detach and become lodged beneath a nearby bridge. The contractor subsequently secured the launch, and staff are assessing the damage and developing a restoration plan. Project updates will be provided on the project website.

Eugene Simpson Park Project – Beth Znidersic reported that the project has exceeded its anticipated completion date, and staff are working with contractors to establish a revised timeline. All stakeholder groups have been notified and provided with alternative accommodation while construction continues.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approval of Meeting Minutes – July 16, 2026
ACTION: FY27.8.17.26A
Motion: Commissioner Matthews moved, and Commissioner Orrin-Brown seconded the motion to approve the meeting minutes. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Boards & Commissions Training – David Lanier, Assistant City Attorney
David Lanier, Assistant City Attorney, gave an update on the goat grazing pilot project. The presentation can be found here: https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2026-10/2026%20Boards%20and%20Commissions%20Training%20Park%20%20Recreation%20Commission%20%28002%29.pdf

b. Goat Grazing Pilot Project Update – Hashim Taylor
Hashim Taylor shared a short presentation on the goat pilot project. The presentation can be found here: https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2026-10/Goats_ParksRecCommission_UpdateSeptember.pdf

c. "Where you Belong" Campaign – Hashim Taylor
Hashim Taylor provided an overview of the "Where You Belong" campaign, an initiative focused on revitalizing five City recreation centers through facility renovations and enhancements. Participating locations include William Ramsay, Charles Houston (Chick Armstrong), Nannie J. Lee, Lee Center, and Chinquapin. He also announced an upcoming community celebration at William Ramsay Recreation Center to showcase the improvements and welcome residents to the refreshed facility.

VI. NEXT MEETING

October 15, 2026 – Charles Houston Recreation Center

VII. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: FY27.8.17.26B
Motion: Commissioner Hughes moved, and Commissioner Matthews seconded the motion to adjourn at 9:05p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

These minutes are intended to serve as a summary of the meeting and do not represent a verbatim transcript.