

**Recreation Commission
Board Meeting Minutes
Commission Chambers
January 26, 2026**

1/26/2026 - Minutes

1. Call To Order And Roll Call

Members Present: Andrew Motis- Chair, Robbie Shields, Courtney Windemaker, Brandon McWhorter, Burney Hayes

Staff Members: Deena Drumgo, Assistant City Manager; Jennifer Nanek, City Clerk

A quorum was not present.

2. Communications And Petitions

Robbie Shields said Brandon will now represent Soccer and he will represent Tennis.

There was a discussion about changing quorum requirements.

3. Minutes

3.1. Minutes - September 15, October 20, November 2025 & December 2025

The minutes of December 15, 2025 were reviewed. The minutes could not be approved due to a lack of a quorum.

4. Parks And Recreation Updates

Parks and Recreation Director Stephanie Lutton provided an update on several key city projects and upcoming infrastructure improvements:

- **Trail Developments:** An open house was recently held for the Ridge Scenic HWY trail. Construction documents for the Crystal Lake Park trail segment are expected within weeks, at which point the project will go out for bid. Additionally, environmental study feedback for the Tower Boulevard trail has been submitted to the state, with design work anticipated to begin in the coming months.
- **Kiwanis Park:** The Commission approved a construction management agreement with Colliers. This comprehensive project includes a new loop trail and the replacement of the bathrooms, playground, and pavilion. Director Lutton confirmed to Robbie Shields that the "Barney's Dream" playground feature will be replaced and relocated slightly further north.
- **Sports & Facilities:** The department is awaiting state approval to begin construction on the soccer complex (lighting and field renovations) and various amenities at Lake Wales Park. In the immediate term, the Northwest basketball courts will undergo resurfacing, including new nets and fencing, within the next month.
- **Upcoming Events:** Director Lutton noted that several special events are approaching and a detailed follow-up email will be distributed to the Commission.

Northwest Complex: Burney Hayes inquired about relocating the courts at the NW complex. Ms. Lutton explained that relocation costs were significantly higher than anticipated; consequently, the city will proceed with resurfacing the existing courts for now while planning for additional courts in the future.

Long-term Master Plan: Mr. Hayes raised concerns about the current lack of practice space and facilities for youth basketball as the population continues to "blossom." Ms. Lutton noted that the city's master plan includes a multi-million-dollar dedicated basketball facility projected to be built near the current soccer complex. While this facility is separate from other projects like the amphitheater, a specific construction timeline is not yet established. This was discussed.

Community Impact: Mr. Hayes emphasized the importance of accessible facilities in keeping local youth engaged and safe, noting that while the YMCA is a primary resource, the distance can be a barrier for some residents. The Board discussed the possibility of scaling back other master plan elements to prioritize immediate needs like basketball courts, though no formal changes were made to the plan during this session.

Brandon McWhorter commended the Parks and Rec Department—specifically highlighting staff member JC—for the exceptional work done on the soccer fields off Hunt Brothers Road, noting the facility is currently "cranking on all cylinders."

Mr. McWhorter announced that he, Robbie Shields, Tony, Ryan Nichols and Doug March will be in Auburndale this upcoming weekend to represent the Lake Wales Soccer Club in a tournament.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned. Next meeting is February 16, 2026

Chair/Vice-Chair

ATTEST:

Secretary