



POWHATAN COUNTY
PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES: THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2026

A MEETING OF THE POWHATAN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION WAS HELD ON JANUARY 8, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE TRAINING ROOM OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT, LOCATED AT THE POCAHONTAS LANDMARK CENTER, 4290 ANDERSON HIGHWAY IN POWHATAN, VIRGINIA.

Commission Members Present: Judy Cain-Oliver, Chair
Alex Higgins
Frank Flannagan
Austin Schwartz

Non-Voting Members Present: Megan Heatwole, Director of Parks & Recreation

1. J. Cain Oliver called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. *A quorum was established.*
2. **Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation** led by A. Higgins and Angelia Jones.
3. **Consent**
 - A. A motion to approve, November 6, 2025, meeting minutes were properly made by F. Flannagan and seconded by A. Higgins. *Motion passed 4-0*
4. **Agenda Amendment:** No amendments were made to the agenda.
5. **Agenda Approval:** A motion to approve January 8, 2026, meeting agenda was properly made by F. Flannagan and seconded by A. Higgins. *Motion passed 4-0*
6. **Commission Updates**
 - J. Cain Oliver recapped Commission engagement in December, noting a productive workshop to discuss the 501c3 mission and goals. She also attended the Holiday Market on December 12th.
 - F. Flannagan proposed combining the tree lighting celebration with the Christmas parade for better community engagement. M. Heatwole explained past issues with timing of the event and the logistical challenges and agreed to discuss the idea with the parade committee to see if it is feasible.
7. **Parks & Recreation Director Updates**
 - M. Heatwole presents the department's budget requests for fiscal year 27, emphasizing the need for more staff and resources. The department is requesting additional funding for CIP projects, maintenance contracts, and personnel. M. Heatwole explains the rationale behind the budget requests, including the need for more indoor recreation space and updated facilities. The department is also requesting additional staff positions to manage the growing demand for programs and events.
 - M. Heatwole provides updates on park projects and the monthly recreation reports from November and December.
 - Program highlights include the shift from fall sports to gym sports, the success of the indoor movie night, the virtual Tree Lighting Celebration, Holiday Market, and holiday open gym.
 - Village Concepts hosted a pickleball tournament fundraiser for the Christmas Mother.



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- The NAACP held their Men in Black event and PAACAM hosted the annual Veterans exhibit open house event.
- Dugout roofs were installed on Lisa's field in Turner Park.
- Traffic and trail counter numbers are pending while staff is on paternity leave.
- M. Heatwole introduced the Farmers Market Manager, Ellie Witherby, and discusses the progress in organizing sponsorship and vendor applications. The department is exploring alternative locations for the farmers market due to scheduling conflicts with Bienvenue.
- The department is working on improving safety in the park system and upgrading the disc golf course.

8. Public Comment

None.

9. New Business

A. 2026 PRAC Organizational Meeting

- A motion to nominate Judy Cain Olver as Chair of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission for calendar year 2026 was properly made by A. Higgins and seconded by F. Flannagan. *The motion passed 4-0.*
- A motion to nominate Alex Higgins as Vice Chair of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission for calendar year 2026 was properly made by F. Flannagan and seconded by A. Schwartz. *The motion passed 4-0.*
- PRAC members discussed the goals for the year, including developing a 501(c)(3), touring a community center, and building a sense of community. They emphasized the importance of community engagement and the need for more outreach and collaboration with other organizations. In addition, PRAC plans to attend various community events and presentations to promote the department's programs and services.

B. 2026 PRAC Meeting Schedule

- M. Heatwole shared the PRAC meeting calendar for the year that includes monthly closed workshop dates as needed. She is sending out a scheduling poll to schedule presenters throughout the year and will share a calendar invite for the annual Spring Sports Orientation with PRAC members.

10. Old Business

A. Parks & Recreation Foundation 501c3 Goals and Bylaws

- PRAC members discussed the development of the Parks and Recreation Foundation, including the need for bylaws and a timeline. M. Heatwole suggests that PRAC create a template for the bylaws and provide the foundation with a clear outline and objectives. PRAC members agree to review the bylaws at the next PRAC meeting and start recruiting board members in February. The foundation's primary goal is to raise funds, engage volunteers, and advocate for high-quality parks and programs. The Parks and Recreation Director and PRAC will work closely with the Foundation to advise the foundation on specific projects for fundraising goals.



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11. Director Comments

- M. Heatwole announces that the county will be doing a fireworks show on July 4th, partnering with economic development and the fire department. Sponsorship opportunities are available. The Sweetheart Market is cancelled in February, due to lack of a manager, but the department will be hosting a Shamrock Market in March.

12. Comments from the Board

- F. Flannagan requested to have the exercise equipment on the trails either fixed or removed and replaced. He inquired about cleaning the bleacher pads at Fighting Creek Park and filling in rock dust in the batting cages. He thanks Madam Chair for her leadership.
- A. Higgins wishes Commission members a happy new year.
- J. Cain Oliver mentions the Community Health Improvement Plan and the need for partnerships.

13. Upcoming Events

- Next PRAC Meeting: Thursday, February 5, 2026, 6:00pm, PLC
- Valentine's Dance: Friday, February 13, 2026,

14. Closed Session

The Advisory Commission entered a closed session from 7:40pm to 7:55pm.

15. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Signatures

Judy Cain-Oliver, Chair

Date: _____

Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

Megan Heatwole, Director & PRAC Liaison

Date: _____

Parks and Recreation Department