

City of Milton-Freewater

Parks & Recreation Committee Minutes

Members: George Gillette, John Mitchell, Danny Sanchez, Ryan Westman & Kate Winters.

Meeting Date/Time: January 20, 2026

Meeting Location: Police Department Meeting Room – 716 S Columbia St

1. OPENING

- a. Chair Ryan Westman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Committee member(s) present: George Gillette, John Mitchell, Danny Sanchez, Ryan Westman and Kate Winters

Committee member(s) absent: None

City staff present: Public Works Assistant/Project Aide Krista Gannon

Citizen(s) present: None

- b. Appointment of Committee Chair for 2026 – A motion was made to appoint George Gillette as the committee chair by Danny Sanchez. John Mitchell seconded the motion. All present voted to appoint Mr. Gillette as the 2026 Parks and Recreation Committee Chair.
- c. Appointment of Committee Co-chair for 2026 – Ryan Westman motioned to appoint Kate Winters as the 2026 Co-Chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee. Mr. Sanchez seconded the motion. All present voted to appoint Ms. Winters as the 2026 Parks and Recreation Committee Co-Chair.

At this time the meeting was turned over to Mr. Gillette as the 2026 chair.

- d. Adoption of Agenda – Mr. Gillette asked if the agenda was approved as provided. Public Works Assistant/Project Aide Krista Gannon asked if she could include the approval of minutes from June 2, 2025 meeting and gave an overview of those minutes to those present. She also asked to remove Tim Johnson from the agenda to address Public Meetings Requirements but shared she would be discussing this briefly with the committee when we got to that point on the agenda.

There were no objections to the agenda by all present.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Sanchez moved to approve the minutes from June 2, 2025 and December 3, 2025. Mr. Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 yes, 0 no.

3. PRESENTATIONS

N/A

4. STAFF REPORT/BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Public Meetings Requirements – Public Works Assistant/Project Aide Krista Gannon reminded the committee that agenda items need to be submitted no later than two Fridays before the meeting to allow enough time to get the notice in the Valley Herald, which is the City's paper of record. She shared that the January 6 meeting was cancelled because she had not received agenda items and did her best to get them done for

everyone upon her return from being out but because the agenda hadn't been published at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, it would have been a violation of public meetings law resulting in the cancellation of such meeting and re-scheduling to the 20th of January. She shared that it is important that members share what they want to discuss or if they have anything they need from staff prior to the meeting to allow for staff to be able to provide information and ensure proper staffing for such discussion would be there as well. She asked if anyone would like further information on public meetings requirements and nobody shared any interest.

2. Public Works Projects Updates

- a. Freewater Park Update – Public Works Assistant/Project Aide Krista Gannon shared that the improvements specific to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Grant at Freewater Park have been completed, with the exception of the striping of the multi-use court, which is planned for spring when weather cooperates as well as planting seed where the areas have been restored from the construction. She shared the grant closeout had been done and that the final reimbursement for the grant had just been received today. She stated that a ribbon cutting was tentatively planned for early May and that she would keep the committee advised to participate in the event. The committee was pleased to hear this, as they had previously asked for such event upon completion of the improvements at Yantis Park previously.
- b. Marie Dorian Park Update – Ms. Gannon shared that staff has begun discussions about Marie Dorian improvements as part of the next OPRD grant that are due to be complete no later than December 31, 2026. She shared the grant is another 60/40 match requirement and that it included security cameras, roof replacement of the restroom and shelter facilities, new play equipment with a sidewalk that is ADA compliant from the parking lot and that also fit in to the current frisbee golf course at the park. Discussion ensued about the concerns about vandalism at this location and efforts that have been made in the past and ideas for the future.
- c. Little League Field valve replacement/relocation – Ms. Gannon shared that staff has decided to install locating objects on the existing valves in the outfield of the field and bury them with dirt and plant grass over them as the solution to the sinking valve boxes that had Astro turf on them. Originally this was budgeted in the amount of \$6000 to relocate the valves to the sides of the field out of the play area and look toward establishing grass and irrigation in the infield to restore it back to a little league field. She shared that staff had determined at their meeting earlier in the day that this would be the best option on how to fix this previously outlined issue at this time.
- d. Tennis Courts – Ms. Gannon shared that the Interim CM had been having some discussion with the school superintendent as well as looking at funding options for the tennis courts. She shared there is a grant seeking consultant the city has on contract that he shared they are working with currently to look funding opportunities for such funding, but the courts would be in the same location replacing what is there as tennis only, at least initially. Mr. Sanchez was disappointed to hear about no pickleball being included and he emphasized that this is coming from him, a tennis player due to the demand of the sport and play in the area.

*Questions came about pertaining to the pool and how that was going to look this summer. Ms. Gannon shared that this has been shared with the interim and HR as far as hiring and the process behind that to get it started early to ensure adequate training opportunities are available for those needing certified or recertified to have ample guards available. She shared that she has no further update on what exactly the program will look like this year or hours and could not share whether the prior manager would be joining us again or not, as that is handled through the City Manager's office and Human Resources, but she knew they typically begin working on it at the beginning of the year.

*The question came up asking if the city was planning to replace the equipment that was removed some years back at Morello Park off NW 4th Avenue in the Seaquist Subdivision. Ms. Gannon shared that it had not been budgeted in the current budget, but she would be sure it was in the minutes and submit a budget request to look into purchasing a smaller budget friendly piece of equipment to restore the lot to a play area, as it was established to be from the initial subdivision development. She shared she will recommend a dog waste station be obtained and installed yet this current year due to the park having an issue with being a place for people to turn their dogs loose, especially since the removal of the old play equipment.

3. Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update – Overall a general discussion was had about the existing plan and everyone present drew attention to the priority outlined of additional walking and biking paths/trails. Some particular discussions ensued about trails outside city limits and not on city property and the challenges behind such. Many are quite proud of the beauty nature brings to our small community and shared their passion to make such a reality, even though there are some challenges in order for that to happen. Overall, those present agreed that they would be interested to know if the firm that put the initial plan together would be able to provide a cost to re-evaluate the plan to quantify the goals and successes of the plan and identify weaknesses or suggested emphasis for when it is time to update the plan, which is recommended every 10 years. Such overview would encompass the review and evaluation of the plan, assessment of successes and the focus on moving forward to look toward future funding of improvements as well as sustainability and provide a strategy. Ms. Gannon shared that she would provide this suggestion to staff to look into a cost and study.

Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Westman specifically shared their high interest in the addition of walking trails and would like to see those come to fruition and requested this be emphasized in the minutes sharing their general reason for joining the committee.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO APPROACH COMMITTEE

No citizens were present.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BUSINESS ITEMS

Concerns about minutes not making their way to the city council were brought forth with concern that if the minutes and motions aren't being forwarded and no feedback is being received, then the committee is essentially a waste of everyone's time. Ms. Gannon shared that this past month she sent the minutes directly to the council and also the City Recorder and Interim City Manager as per the committee's request since members were still concerned that their voices were not being heard. After sending the minutes she had been contacted via E-mail by the City Recorder, whom shared that the City Manager and City Recorder determine what is passed along to Council and that the process would remain that way moving forward from city committees and boards. Members discussed that they are advisory members appointed by the Mayor to the Mayor and City Council and would like to be on the February City Council agenda to share an update on what has been going since they last attended a meeting in May 2004 to provide an update. They would like to have the opportunity to establish clear communication with the City Council and Mayor.

Ms. Winters asked if the city was still interested in potentially purchasing the property Visual Eyes owns just south of their offices. Ms. Gannon shared that in the interim our current City Manager is working to recruit a City Manager and Public Works Superintendent as well as establishing policy and procedures and suggestions for a model business plan moving ahead after his short tenure here but that would be a discussion to be had with the Council and or Mayor and when we have a regular Manager on Staff. She shared that currently the city is working on some multi-million-dollar

infrastructure replacement and improvement projects for the city's critical water and electric infrastructure and that funding is not readily available to her knowledge, but she could not speak as to their interest in expansion of future property for additional parks and recreation and suggested the owner(s) of the land contact the Mayor and Interim Manager to set up a meeting to discuss further.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chair Gillette at 7:40 pm.

Approved as read this 3rd day of February, 2026.

By: 
George Gillette - Parks and Recreation Committee Chair