



City of Sanibel

800 Dunlop Road
Sanibel, FL 33957

Meeting Minutes - Draft Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

Thursday, June 18, 2026

9:00 AM

MacKenzie Hall - 800 Dunlop Road

1. Call To Order

Chair Denick called the meeting to order at 9:01 A.M.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Dennick led the pledge of allegiance.

3. Roll Call

Present: 6 - Chairperson Christopher Denick, Vice Chair Wendy Walker, Committee Member Angi Semler Welch, Committee Member Kyle Sweet, Committee Member Bernard Arroyo and Committee Member Ralph Quillen

Absent: 1 - Committee Member Dorothy Plumb

a. Motion to excuse absent member(s):

Vice Chair Walker moved, seconded by Committee Member Semler-Welch, to excuse absent Committee Member Plumb. The motion carried.

Excused: 1 - Committeemember Dorothy Plumb

4. Consent Agenda

a. Adoption of the May 21, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Committee Member Semler-Welch moved, seconded by Committee Member Sweet, to adopt the May 21, 2026, meeting minutes. The motion carried.

Excused: 1 - Committeemember Dorothy Plumb

5. Public Comment

No public comment at this time.

6. New Business

a. Presentation from Planning Director, Paula McMichael on Land Use and Sanibel Code. Followed by discussion on recreation amenities

Planning Director Paula McMichael presented an overview of land use designations, zoning districts, and permitted and conditional uses under the Sanibel Code as they

relate to outdoor recreation amenities. The presentation was organized around a list of uses that had been the subject of community conversations, and was intended to inform the Committee's forthcoming recommendations to City Council.

Director McMichael explained the distinction between a permitted use - requires no additional planning approval beyond standard building permits and a conditional use- which requires Planning Commission approval and may be subject to conditions designed to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses.

The following specific uses were reviewed:

- Band Shell/Outdoor Auditorium - Could be approved as a conditional institutional use and is permitted in commercial and most residential districts. Discussion ensued regarding institutional use definition, Ms. McMichael explained that it encompasses uses serving the broader community; such as churches or private schools, rather than private for profit enterprises.
- Bowling Alley - Currently prohibited under the code, not addressed as a permitted use in the current code and further reminded the group that uses not specifically permitted in the code would be prohibited.
- Community Green/ Event Space - Could be considered an institutional use and approved as a conditional use. Code Section 126.33 governs the Planning Commission consideration of such uses.
- Daycare - Permitted use in the commercial districts and a conditional use in the residential districts
- Dog Park - If operated as a civic, non-commercial use serving the community, could be classified as an institutional use and approved as a conditional use by the Planning Commission
- Food Truck Park - Subject to state of exemption limiting local regulation of food trucks. In commercial districts, food trucks are subject to floor area ratio (FAR) limitations. Food Trucks are also permitted as part of special events under a special event permit, but are prohibited as a year round conditional use.
- Indoor Game Arcade - Currently prohibited under the code. A committee member asked about a recently approved restaurant that incorporated gaming elements; Director McMichael clarified that the pinball machines at the Pina Pop establishment were permitted as an accessory use to the primary restaurant use, not as a standalone game arcade.
- Miniature Golf - Currently prohibited. City Council has directed staff to bring

forward a code amendment to allow miniature golf as a conditional use in the general commercial district. A Planning Commission presentation has already occurred, and staff is targeting the second meeting in July to bring forward specific amendment language. Discussion ensued regarding whether City Council could cap the number of permitted miniature golf sites. Director McMichael explained that a tiered approval structure could be employed, where the Planning Commission could approve uses up to a certain number, after which City Council approval would be required. Geographic separation requirements (e.g., a minimum distance between sites) were also noted as a possible tool.

- Movie Theater - Currently a conditional use in Commercial Districts

- Pickleball Courts - Permitted as an accessory use to resort housing. As a stand alone facility, pickleball courts would be classified as a recreation facility and are a conditional use in residential districts, excepting the D-1 lowland wetland district.

Director McMichael also walked the Committee through the City's GIS mapping resources, which allow the public to identify ecological zones and commercial zoning district boundaries by parcel. She noted several overlay districts, including the Interior Wetlands Conservation District, and the Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) District, which is reserved for conservation and preservation and would require a citywide referendum to remove any land from that designation. It was noted that adding land to the ESL district requires only Mayor and Council approval, while removal requires a referendum.

Discussion ensued regarding Amenity vs. Attraction. Director McMichael's presentation included distinguishing "amenities" from "attractions" per City Council's directive. The Sanibel Plan's vision hierarchy includes sanctuary, small town community, and attraction, emphasizing resisting visitor attractions that may compromise these values. An attraction is defined as a land use that significantly increases off-island trips, while amenities serve the local community and visitors. The Committee agreed amenities could include a dog park and recreation center, contrasting with attractions like tourist trolley tours. The upcoming tasks for the July meeting were outlined: (1) reviewing and adjusting the PRAC 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) priorities, including the dog park's placement; (2) identifying additional amenities not listed; and (3) forming language to distinguish amenities from attractions. Prioritization will consider expected budget cuts linked to a potential homestead exemption amendment, with the likelihood of extending the capital plan and increasing reliance on private or public-private funding.

i. Supplemental Information

Committee Member Semler-Welch shared her breakdown of the dog park survey,

which categorized responses by full-time residents, part-time residents, employees, and seasonal visitors. Key insights were: about 70% across these groups would use a dog park; the usage frequency exceeded expectations; and the top funding preference was a public-private partnership, supported by 41.2% of respondents.

Chair Denick reported on a conversation with representatives of Camp Kingfisher, an advocacy group supporting the establishment of a dog park on Sanibel. Key takeaways were that the group envisions a shared city-and-private funding model for establishment, with maintenance supported by both city and user funds, and that they are actively seeking to support the process in whatever capacity possible.

A committee member presented a GIS-based map analysis identifying potential placement areas for a dog park of approximately one-quarter acre — roughly double the size of the existing children's playground that would not encroach upon environmentally sensitive or wetland conservation lands. The potential location noted was adjacent to the Community House, though a concern was raised regarding drainage in that area.

Public Comment: Jason Haliburton - Sanibel Resident - recommended initiating a referendum for an ESL location while also exploring other city-owned or private properties. He disclosed that he and his wife own nearly four acres on Sandcastle Road, once considered for a dog park, and are supportive of any community-beneficial approach.

7. Reports

a. Recreation Reports

Recreation Director reported that membership, non-resident membership, and revenue figures for May 2026 continue to trend positively. Revenue year-to-date stood at approximately \$606,000. Summer camp enrollment for the first two weeks was in the mid-50s. The Committee was informed that the department has two new staff members: Jack, the new athletic and recreation coordinator, and Jacob, the new aquatic supervisor, both of whom recently began their roles. Planning for fall athletics programming is underway as the department assumes oversight of all athletic programming.

b. Chairperson's Report

Chair Denick extended advance thanks on behalf of the Committee to recreation staff and volunteers in preparation for the upcoming July 4th community event, noting the significant planning effort involved and the success of the prior year's event.

c. Committee Member Reports

Committee Member Sweet reported on a field condition update, noting that the recently established turf fields are now experiencing excessively dense and tall grass growth - an expected phase of establishment. He met with JSM, the maintenance contractor, and noted they are transitioning to a more aggressive robotic mower model. He indicated his intention to coordinate further with staff on turf management practices to ensure the fields remain suitable for soccer and other sports as the season approaches.

Committee Member Semler-Welch raised a question regarding a recent communication from the school district announcing the construction of a perimeter fence around the entire school campus. The Recreation Director confirmed that this is being implemented across all Lee County schools, and that it will affect access to and use of the school parking lot during school hours, which has implications for overflow parking at the recreation center. The Director noted that discussions with the City Manager are already underway to address this challenge, and that access to the ball fields and pavilion outside of school hours is expected to be maintained. Director Miller will continue to keep the Committee updated as the situation develops.

8. Next Meeting Date

- a. Thursday, July 16, 2026

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee was confirmed for Thursday, July 16, 2026.

9. Public Comment

No additional public comment was received.

10. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Denick adjourned the meeting at 10:28 a.m.