MEETING MINUTES OF THE HYBRID
JOINT ARLINGTON COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION AND SPORTS COMMISSION

March 26, 2026

The **Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) and the Sports Commission (SC)** convened their meeting at **6:30 p.m.** on **Thursday, March 26, 2026**.

PRESENT (IN-PERSON)	
PRC Members Only	PRC Chair, Jill Barker Commissioner Erika Allen Commissioner Andrew Damitio Commissioner Nelson Dimpter Commissioner David Earley Commissioner Sara Hwong Commissioner Adam Rasmussen Commissioner Melissa Riggio Commissioner Carly Rogers Commissioner Alex Sanders Commissioner Gary Shinners At-Large Commissioner Hamilton Humes, Sports Commission ***(participated as a member of the Sports Commission for this meeting)***
PRESENT (VIRTUALLY)	At-large Commissioner Gerald Brandt, Arlington Public Schools
ABSENT	Commissioner Daniel Garay Commissioner Jeff Loftus Commissioner William Way
STAFF	Mariah Leonard, DPR, SC Staff Liaison Marco Rivero, DPR, PRC Staff Liaison Benjamin Harris, DPR Kisha Holland, DPR Nakish Jordan, DPR Ignacio Rodriguez, DPR Jane Rudolph, DPR
PUBLIC COMMENTERS	Brandon Hemel

- *Link to Teams Recording*

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS

Introductory Remarks (PRC and SC Chairs) and Public Comment
** Park and Recreation Commission public comment is open to all with a 3-minute limit per person.*

- **Public Commenter #1: Brandon Hemel,** spoke about the construction at 601 S. Carlin Springs Rd., particularly at the scenic easement along the Long Branch Nature Center. Mr. Hemel is the Glencarlyn Civic Association president; the civic association area encompasses the nearby Glencarlyn Park and Long Branch Nature Center. Build a 146-bed facility next to the site and abuts the salamander creek area and park land/quasi-public space has been used for many decades. There may be encroachments on to the Resources Protection Area (RPA) along the area of development. Ways to downsize this facility as proposed to decrease the negative impacts to the community (light spillage, sound pollution, increasing traffic along South Carlin Spring Road, among others). Mr. Hemel is looking for access to the site which may avoid additional runoff, additional impervious surfaces and looking to downsize this facility as it has been proposed. There is concern that the proposed facility does not follow biophilic design principles.

Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Presentation, DPR Organizational Chart, and Discussion

Jane Rudolph, DPR, presented on the DPR organizational chart and the department's Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 budget. The discussion included DPR expenses, revenue, budget changes, reductions, additions, proposed capital projects, and next steps for consideration by the County Board in April 2026.

The SC and PRC discussion included but was not limited to:

- Community Center Use and Youth Programming
    - Ms. Rudolph described the various teen, after-school, and community center programming that were initiated in the previous year.

- Budget Development Challenges
    - Ms. Rudolph described the issues associated with balancing priorities with limited resources, rising operational costs, vacancies, maintaining level of service, and the ability to continue expansion of free and/or affordable programming.

- Repurposing of Barcroft Sports and Fitness Center and Other Budgetary Considerations
    - Ms. Rudolph detailed the methodology for cost recovery within DPR's recreational programs. For example, competitive teams and classes are at Level 4. Gymnastics classes cost recovery was detailed further including participation and staffing considerations. Adaptive gymnastics/movement classes for disabled groups/populations will continue to be provided by DPR under the proposed FY 2027 budget.
    - Staffing and other facility reductions/freezes were detailed further. This includes but is not limited to Madison Community Center programming reductions/staffing, Parks and Natural Resources (PNR) selective reduction of mowing, park restroom closures, contractual landscape maintenance reductions, freezing the woodshop program at Thomas Jefferson Community Center for 12 months, etc.
    - There are additions to the proposed budget as well (mainly, one-time funding), including but not limited to the congregate meal program, invasive management, deer management, and coordination with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT).
    - FY 2027 proposed fees were discussed further, including a 3% inflationary increase for most classes and programs, Long Bridge Aquatics & Fitness Center next tax support which moves away from Boeing taking on the operation contributions to mainly through the County.

  - Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) considerations were detailed for FY 2027 proposed capital costs.

- Invasive Plant Management
  - Ms. Rudolph shared that the $100K one-time and additional funding was detailed. As was considered in previous years, this is the same $100K proposal for FY 2027. Ms. Rudolph detailed that this funding assists in the ability to take down invasive plants at various County public spaces. This maintenance also include strategies and implementation efforts which prevent these species from emerging again in the long term.

- Gymnastics Program Considerations
  - Hiring has been an issue within recent years; however, there may be some considerations given to competitive hiring and the procedures for hiring moving forward. Space usage was discussed as well for gymnastics purposes, considerations for offering classes for seniors, and for populations who may be served during school hours. Also, scheduling may be difficult for staff to participate on weekdays during work hours, when the majority of classes occur after school hours. Overtime pay is being scaled back across the board through the County, so considerations are very few given these circumstances.
  - The use of non-profit organizations or similar organizations running gymnastics programs as opposed to County staff is difficult given the dynamics regarding different employment procedures and responsibilities.

- Cost Recovery at Long Bridge Aquatics & Fitness Center
  - Facility costs are now transitioning out of initial funding provided by Boeing into the County taking over that tax support and costs for future maintenance and operations.

- Overall Cost Recovery Models
  - The County/DPR does benchmark fees across various nearby jurisdictions and are very similar across the board. The DPR cost-recovery model analysis and review will continue this summer in partnership with the County's Department of Management Finance (DMF).

- Proposed Reductions
  - Temporary freeze hiring of four positions for 12 months within PNR, including two trades workers, one urban forester, and one trades manager affected by this. Closing bathrooms in the winter is a reduction that provides some relief at various park facilities.

- Deer Management
  - Sharpshooting contracts and working with the Arlington County Police Department on closing the parks for these activities is a major consideration for the $71K one-time funding.

- Presentation Link

Ice Breaker (What is your favorite park, facility, public space, or program? – Small Group Discussion) & FY 2027 Budget Letters (PRC and SC)

- The PRC and SC participated in an ice breaker where commissioners detailed their favorite park, facility, public space, or program.
- FY 2027 Budget Letters (PRC and SC): Staff acknowledged that each commission will be authoring their own letters associated with the FY 2027 Budget.

SC and PRC Discussion Only Topics (small group discussions followed by large group discussion)

1. *Discussion of the FY 2027 Budget (SC Chair, Lizzy Stell introduced the discussion)*
2. *Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) FY 2027-2036 Priorities (PRC Chair, Jill Barker introduced the discussion)*

Both discussion items were considered simultaneously during the report out by both commissions. The PRC and SC discussion focused on the following:

- One group discussed, about invasive plants, gymnastics program considerations (repurposing the Barcroft facility and what would the net be in terms of use, with gymnastics currently and what may be possible in the future), a non-profit idea for staffing of a gymnastics program, CIP budget was discussed including the Three Urban Parks project moving forward with planning (but there may be cost saving considerations for implementation). Invasive plants and natural capital maintenance was discussed as well.
- Gymnastics was discussed further, reduction of restroom facility operations, and further discussion of the Virginia Hospital Center (VHC) Health Wellness & Behavioral Health Facility development of 146 additional beds. There was also discussion on synthetic field maintenance and new technology.
- Sudden news of the gymnastics program cuts was discussed further, including logistical questions and details of how such programs would transition out if it were cut. The importance of lighting at athletic fields was discussed further as part of the on-going CIP discussions.
- Individual commission discussions have been difficult to have ahead of time with both the PRC and SC because of the short turn around for considering letters to the County Board (meetings between both commissions typically occur in March, and the County Board considers the budget considerations in April).
- Potentially have an early-March Microsoft Teams presentation with the various DPR commissions and then have separate meetings later in the month, with a joint meeting between the SC/PRC occurring at another time. A separate virtual meeting early in the month of March with opportunity for questions/answers would be important.

MOTIONS & ACTIONS/VOTES

No motions and actions (with documented votes) were taken on any items presented at this meeting.

Meeting adjourned at **8:36 p.m.**