

Bryant Parks Committee Meeting

Mar 10, 2026 6:00 PM

Bishop Park Administration Building - Conference Room
6401 Boone Rd

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Call to Order - Renee Curtis at 6:02 PM

Committee Members Present - Amanda Jolly, Renee Curtis, Jennifer Benning, Lynn Farmer and Tony Williams

Others Present - Parks Director Keith Cox, Parks Assistant Director Matt Martin, Community Outreach and Engagement Coordinator Cassie Henry-Saorrano, Aquatics Superintendent Kristin Robinson and Bryant Youth Association CEO Suzanne Passmore.

Approval of Minutes

1. January 13 Parks Committee Meeting

Motion to approve by Benning, seconded by Willaims. Motion carried.

Associations / Club Reports

2. Bryant Youth Association Annual Report

Suzanne Passmore presented the annual report for the Bryant Youth Association, outlining the number of youth served through complimentary meals, snacks, and swim lessons. She reported a re-enrollment rate of 94% and noted that 91 cents of every dollar is reinvested directly into program services. She also provided an overview of the organization's board and volunteer base, shared participant testimonials, and highlighted upcoming programs. She concluded by expressing appreciation to the City of Bryant and the Parks Department for their continued support and partnership.

Director's Report

3. Parks Department Monthly Summary

Cox presented the monthly summary and noted that the youth basketball season was extended by one week to accommodate the two weekends of games postponed due to January's inclement weather. He also provided updates on several capital projects, including the installation of parking lot lighting at Bishop Park, progress on the connector trail between Alcoa and Mills Parks, and the final projects of aquatics upgrades initiated in 2025. Cox further informed the Committee that the Parks Department has been officially selected as the provider of Senior Services for the City of Bryant beginning in July.

4. Update on Barracudas Swim Team

Cox informed the Committee that, due to an ongoing legal investigation involving the former leadership of the Barracudas Swim Team, the Central Arkansas Swim League (CASL) has suspended the team. This action would leave many local youth swimmers without a team for the upcoming summer season. Cox explained that, with the assistance of Aquatics Superintendent Kristin Robinson, the Parks Department is moving forward with assuming operational responsibility for the Barracudas in order to lift the suspension and ensure continued opportunities for participating swimmers. CASL has stated that the team will be reinstated only if it is operated by the Bryant Parks Department.

Robinson highlighted the potential benefits of integrating the Barracudas with the Department's existing year-round BASS swim program, noting that collaboration between the two teams could strengthen both programs and support long-term development.

Public Comments

There were no Public Comments

Old Business

5. Request to apply for ARDOT RTP Grant

Cox requested approval to apply for an 80/20 matching grant to overlay the existing paved trails at Mills Park. If awarded, the grant would require an estimated \$40,000 contribution from the City of Bryant toward the total project cost of approximately \$200,000.

Motion to recommend to Council by Jolly, seconded by Benning. Motion passes.

New Business

6. Request to add Aquatics Specialist Position

Cox stated that with the upcoming addition of the Barracudas swim along with the other responsibilities during Summer months, that it is necessary to add another full-time position to the Aquatics Division. He states that the Aquatics Specialist would be designed to act more as the assistant to the Aquatics Superintendent, especially in the months when the Aquatics Coordinator is pulled away with more swim team and other programming responsibilities; times that also fall during the same months as the additional operation of Mills Pool. This position will also be able to assist with programming and In the "offseason" offset some of the responsibilities currently incurred by part-time shift leaders.

Cox said that this will not be a budget neutral request; however the goal is to fundraise through the Barracudas swim team and be able to offset the additional cost of the position.

Motion to recommend to Council by Farmer, seconded by Curtis. Motion passes.

Committee Comments

Williams reminded the Committee of the Bryant Leap Forward Comprehensive Plan and the importance of continued participation in the community surveys. Farmer requested an update on how the Code of Conduct, implemented last year, was received during its first full season in the youth basketball program. Cox reported that while some issues persisted, the policy provided clearer guidance for departmental decision-making and appears to have reduced the number of repeat offenders.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Benning, seconded by Jolly. Motion carried.