City of Blair Regular Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Advisory Board Meeting
September 15, 2026

Agenda Item #1 – The Blair Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Advisory Board met in regular session in the City Council Chambers on Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at 5:30 PM with Chairman Anderson presiding.

The Chairman publicly stated to all in attendance that a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was available for review and indicated the location of such copy posted in the room where the meeting was being held. Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Washington County Enterprise as shown by the affidavit of publication filed in the City Clerk's office. Notice of the meeting was simultaneously given to the members of the Blair Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Advisory Board and the agenda is filed in the City Clerk's office. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the advance notice and in the notice to the Blair Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Advisory Board of this meeting. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Agenda Item #2 – Roll Call of members – The following were present: Betsy Anderson, Sarah Boeka, Corey Hafer, Kristi Rounds, Joe Burns, and Dean Thoene. Also present were Deputy City Administrator of Public Works Heaton, and Cemetery/Parks Director Bilslend.

Agenda Item #3 – Approval of minutes from the August 18, 2026, meeting – Motion by Kristi Rounds, second by Sarah Boeka to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2026, meeting as presented. Board members voted as follows: Betsy Anderson: Yea, Sarah Boeka: Yea, Joe Burns: Yea, Corey Hafer: Yea, Kristi Rounds: Yea, Dean Thoene: Yea. All Board members voted: Yea: 6, Nay: 0. Chairman Anderson declared the motion carried.

Agenda Item #4 – Budget Report for August 2026 –No questions were raised by board members, and no action was required, so the board moved forward without discussion.

Agenda Item #5 – Presentation from Strong Towns and possible recommendation to designate the Blair Mini Park at 19th and Washington Streets as the shortest trail in Nebraska – Jake Loftis, co-leader of Strong Towns Blair, 2129 Park Street, presented a proposal to designate the Blair Mini Park at 19th and Washington Streets as Nebraska's shortest trail. The trail measures 80 feet, equivalent to 0.015 miles. Research showed the next shortest trail found on AllTrails was approximately two-tenths of a mile, located in Lincoln, Nebraska. Loftis noted that the current shortest trail in America is 135 feet in Washington State, meaning Blair's trail could qualify as a national and potentially world record holder. Strong Towns proposed building a wooden sign (approximately 24"x16") using a router to carve letters, painted yellow and brown in the style of classic state park signs. The front would display the trail name and distance; the back would read "Congratulations, you completed Nebraska's Shortest Trail." Proposed trail names included "Nebraska's Shortest Trail," "Blair's Pocket Path," and others. The sign would be placed at the side of the path, visible from the adjacent lane but not oversized. The path itself is brick-textured, varies in width (approximately 4–5 feet, standard sidewalk width), and already has a bench near a round flower planter. Extension cord conflicts previously present during Christmas light season have been resolved through new outlet installations. Snow removal on the path is not typically performed during winter due to Christmas light displays. Staff confirmed no city code provisions

would prevent the designation. The city does not need to apply through state parks since the trail is not on state park land. The trail is already built, requiring no construction funding except the sign. Staff will work with Strong Towns on sign design approval before installation to avoid setting an undesirable precedent. The item was not planned as a formal council action item; the city administrator planned to mention it in next week's administrator report. Motion by Corey Hafer, second by Joe Burns authorizing Strong Towns to designate the Blair Mini Park at 19th and Washington Streets as the shortest trail in Nebraska. Board members voted as follows: Betsy Anderson: Yea, Sarah Boeka: Yea, Joe Burns: Yea, Corey Hafer: Yea, Kristi Rounds: Yea, Dean Thoene: Yea. All Board members voted: Yea: 6, Nay: 0. Chairman Anderson declared the motion carried.

Agenda Item #6 – Discussion and possible action regarding the design and layout of the future bike playground – James Bilslend, Park Supervisor, presented the initial design layout for a bike playground/pump track proposed for Steyer Park, north of the current shelter, restrooms, parking lot, and playground. The project was initiated by Brent Fulmer and his organization, Thor, working with a design company. The layout features three trail sections of increasing difficulty: Beginner — A wide outer loop with minimal sharp curves, designed for strider bikes (pedal-free bikes for young children), featuring small elevated crosswalk-style ramps and gentle angles; Intermediate — A more technical section with steeper grades, crossovers, corners, and smooth landscaping rocks to provide varied terrain texture; and Advanced — A more elevated section with significant banked corners for higher speeds, concrete banked sections, and features to teach bike handling skills. Trail surfaces would be asphalt for the main paths, eastern red cedar wood for ramps and banked corners, and smooth landscaping rocks in designated areas. Grass and natural terrain would be maintained between trail sections to preserve a natural mountain biking feel. A five-foot sidewalk would serve as the entry point. One tree on site is diseased and expected to be removed regardless. A magnolia tree in the layout area is to be preserved, and staff have already communicated this to the design company, and GIS mapping was used to superimpose tree locations onto the layout. The company agreed to adjust the trail to accommodate the magnolia tree. Estimated project cost is $350,000. The city has made clear it does not intend to contribute funds to the construction, though a future partial contribution (e.g., keynote funds) was not ruled out if needed. Brent Fulmer is responsible for all fundraising, grants, and financing. Volunteers from Brent's organization and the trail group will assist with ongoing maintenance. Regarding maintenance, the mowing contractor currently handles the area using a 60-inch zero-turn mower. The additional maintenance burden on city staff has not yet been fully estimated, as the 3D rendering will clarify how much grass is displaced by asphalt, mulch, and other surfaces. Lighting was discussed but the skate park and playground are not lit, and the bike playground would follow the same sunup-to-sundown park hours. If lighting were ever requested, power would need to be trenched from the shelter area, and cost estimates have not yet been developed. Motion by Corey Hafer, second by Dean Thoene to recommend to the council approving the location and the layout at Steyer Park. Board members voted as follows: Betsy Anderson: Yea, Sarah Boeka: Yea, Joe Burns: Yea, Corey Hafer: Yea, Kristi Rounds: Yea, Dean Thoene: Yea. All Board members voted: Yea: 6, Nay: 0. Chairman Anderson declared the motion carried.

Agenda Item #7 – Deputy City Administrator Report – Deputy City Administrator Heaton reported that the city budget was finalized at the most recent council meeting. The most significant change affecting the parks budget was the bathroom project that the council authorized $300,000 for the project which was reduced from the originally proposed $400,000. The city's match is

$150,000, with the remaining $150,000 expected to come from grants. Josh Nichols with the Parks Department is working to maximize value within the reduced budget by contacting two prefab building suppliers to explore options. He is also pursuing additional grant funding from several foundations Foundation. Any additional grant funds secured could either offset the city's match or fund additional park improvements beyond the bathroom structure. Heaton acknowledged the parks team's dedication, noting they consistently go above and beyond their day-to-day responsibilities.

Agenda Item #8 – Motion by Sarah Boeka, second by Kristi Rounds to adjourn the meeting 6:00 p.m. Board members voted as follows: Betsy Anderson: Yea, Sarah Boeka: Yea, Joe Burns: Yea, Corey Hafer: Yea, Kristi Rounds: Yea, Dean Thoene: Yea. All Board members voted: Yea: 6, Nay: 0. Chairman Anderson declared the motion carried.

Brenda Wheeler, Recording Secretary