

BOARD OF PARKS COMMISSIONERS  
April 7, 2026

A regular meeting of the Board of Parks Commissioners of the City of Columbus, Nebraska, was convened in open and public session on April 7, 2026, at 12 p.m. in the Columbus Community Building, Community Room, 2500 14 Street, Columbus, Nebraska. Notice of this meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Columbus Telegram on April 1, 2026, with a copy of the proof of publication being on file in the office of the city clerk. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the advance notice to the mayor, members of the city council, and members of the Board of Parks Commissioners. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the public.

1. **STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN MEETINGS ACT.** Chair Brezenski announced that a copy of the Open Meetings Act is posted in the meeting room. Present were members Jon Brezenski, Brad Hansen, Nick Larson, Bruce Schmidt, and Lynn Sjuts. Members Tina Pelan, Gary Puetz, and Stacey Smith were absent and excused. Member Araceli Esquivel was absent. City staff members included Assistant City Clerk Linda Nickeson, Director of General Services Betsy Eckhardt, Park Superintendent Tom Ek, and Park and Recreation Coordinators Alondra Castillo and Jake Novicki.
2. **MINUTES OF MARCH 3, 2026, MEETING.** The minutes were approved as presented with a motion by Larson and a second by Schmidt. Brezenski, Hansen, Larson, Schmidt, and Sjuts voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Esquivel, Pelan, Puetz, and Smith were absent.
3. **CANNED BEER ONLY PERMIT FOR 2026 ADULT SOFTBALL LEAGUE IN GERRARD PARK.** Eckhardt pointed out this permit is for the regular 2026 season which ends in August and that if a fall league is held a new request will be brought forward. A canned beer only permit for the 2026 adult softball league in Gerrard Park was approved with a motion by Sjuts and a second by Larson. Brezenski, Hansen, Larson, Schmidt, and Sjuts voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Esquivel, Pelan, Puetz, and Smith were absent.
4. **CANNED BEER ONLY PERMIT FOR "KNOCK OFF THE RUST" ADULT SOFTBALL TROUNAMENT IN GERRARD PARK, APRIL 11 AND 12, 2026.** Eckhardt confirmed this new tournament is being held by USSSA Softball. A canned beer only permit for the adult softball tournament in Gerrard Park April 11 and 12, 2026, was approved with a motion by Larson and a second by Hansen. Brezenski, Hansen, Larson, Schmidt, and Sjuts voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Esquivel, Pelan, Puetz, and Smith were absent.
5. **CANNED BEER ONLY PERMIT FOR 2026 BEATS & EATS IN FRANKFORT SQUARE.** Eckhardt explained this permit is only for the specific Beats & Eats events held on Thursdays and Saturdays beginning in June and ending the first weekend in August. Only sealed cans can be brought into Frankfort Square and no open cans can be taken off the premises. The area is policed well and there have been no past

violations. A canned beer only permit for the 2026 Beats & Eats in Frankfort Square was approved with a motion by Larson and a second by Sjuts. Brezenski, Hansen, Larson, Schmidt, and Sjuts voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Esquivel, Pelan, Puetz, and Smith were absent.

6. **FEES FOR COMMERCIAL USE OF ATHLETIC FIELDS.** Eckhardt explained that requests have been received for use of the athletic fields to provide private personal training and questioned whether there should be fees in place for commercial for-profit use. Discussion was held regarding the differences between commercial use, private organization clinics, and random individual practices with a coach or parent and consensus of the board was that a separate fee should be established for commercial usage of park facilities. Eckhardt noted that staff will create a new fee for such to be presented for approval at a future meeting.
7. **PARK AND RECREATION DIRECTOR REPORT.** Eckhardt reviewed the report. She confirmed that tree inventory data should be available in three to four weeks that will reveal the health of each individual tree as well as its species. The information will allow the city to diversify throughout the parks and golf courses and will serve as a tool for receiving additional federal funds. Two park maintenance employees will participate in fall courses to become certified arborists and provide upkeep of the tree inventory going forward. She indicated that tree identification will be provided through an internal GIS system and that a potential future goal is to map the memorial trees allowing individuals to locate their specific tree. Castillo stated that 28 organizations, including baseball, softball, taekwondo, a music studio, and Artzy Haven participated in the youth signup event. Eckhardt confirmed that the new irrigation specialist will be a full-time, year-round position handling the necessary regular irrigation maintenance at both Quail Run and Van Berg golf courses and will help with other routine maintenance issues as well.
8. **ADJOURNMENT.** The meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

: Linda Nickeson