

CITY OF CONNELL, WASHINGTON
PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MEETING
January 27, 2026

The first regular meeting of the Connell Parks and Recreation Board was called to order by Mayor Shelly Harper at 6:03 PM in Connell City Hall.

ROLL CALL

Board Members Present:

- Parker Dolezal
- Bill Cartwright
- Cyndee Brogran
- Liz Villanueba Bauer (arrived late)
- Gerardo Barragan (arrived late)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Last Parks and Recreation Board Meeting was in 2020 so no meeting minutes to approve.

BUSINESS

Reviewed Parks and Recreation Board Description from Connell Municipal Code which was established in 1991. Board Member terms should be staggered (1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 years assigned by drawing lots). Parker Dolezal drew 5 years, Liz Bauer drew 4 years, Cyndee Brogran drew 3 years, Bill Cartwright drew 2 years and Gerardo Barragan drew 1 year. Members can be reappointed when term expires if they wish, and can also resign if they have conflicting schedules in the future. Board is advisory: main duty is to advise City Council on city parks, recreational programs, facility construction or improvements, and sponsorship of activities. Compensation: None, except for potential mileage/meals when traveling. Board composition must include at least one member affiliated with the North Franklin School District, which we have two members meeting this criterion: Parker Dolezal and Cyndee Brogran.

Board meets “as needed.” The City of Connell website lists regular meeting as the last Tuesday of every month at 6:00pm. Date and time works for everyone so same schedule is retained.

Past documentation found was found from 2014 on classes and activities offered that year by the City of Connell. A wide variety of previous offerings: Zumba, baseball, 3-on-3

basketball, archery, gymnastics, ballet, hip hop, etc. Coordination previously led by a city employee (Amy Williams) with dedicated budget (supported by a now-expired levy). Parks and Recreation budget is \$0 for this year. A brief discussion ensued regarding the possibility of reinstating a Parks & Rec levy in the future. The general consensus was the desire to re-establish regular and meaningful programming for youth and families. Broad, open-minded approach encouraged. Emphasis on utilizing existing facilities (community center, local parks, bike trail). Increasing community awareness and participation. Considering both summer and year-round activity options. Possibly developing a dedicated social media presence. Community involvement in teaching classes (recruit based on skills/interests). Enhancing existing programs and adding new ones.

Park Facilities and Improvement Ideas Park Inventory (As Listed on Website): Bike Path, Clark Street Park, Heritage Park, Pioneer Park, Skate Park, Striker Park, Columbia Park, Dog Park. Discussed touring the parks together in the near future to make a list of needs for each park.

Bike Path: Proposal to add lighting (solar lights for safety at night). Install exercise stations (pull-up bars, benches, etc.). Clean up, address dog waste, replenish supplies (dog poop bags). Add signage (mile markers, garden markers). Potential for fitness challenges/fundraisers (walking 100 miles, etc.). Explore ownership (City vs. Department of Transportation/Right-of-way issues). Consider garden club involvement in trail beautification.

Old Esser Football Field by NFSD Bus Garage could be turned into an Amphitheater for a potential movie or concert venue. Explore school district cooperation for maintenance and liability arrangements. Possibility of using or taking over maintenance for outdoor amphitheater.

Unused/Underutilized Properties: Old tennis courts (decommission well; possible dog park or grassy area). City-owned lots (Heritage Park vicinity, lot out by Hatton). Railroad-bed trail expansion (connect Pioneer Park and other areas; need railroad/donation or permission for right-of-way). Other Potential Improvements: Splash pad for kids (noted as ambitious and costly, probably near the pool). Improved playground equipment and bathroom facilities. Parking lot expansion (for events). Return of "Movies in the Park," "Concerts in the Park"; previous survey found concerts most desired (2010 survey). Triathlon, bikeathon, softball tournaments, car shows, mud runs, amphitheater events, etc. CBHA Property: Lot originally donated for community/soccer use, currently underutilized. Recommended contacting Jennifer (donor) and CBHA leadership about its potential.

Clarified past confusion over land boundaries (specifically Clark Park and adjacent apartment owner's property). Need to protect and clarify lease terms and liability, particularly concerning shared maintenance space with school facilities (bathrooms, concessions, bus garage area). Liability considerations—city vs. school for injury or property damage.

Community Partnerships and Sheds/Storage Sports Equipment Exchange: Gerardo, with friends, proposed exchange program: collect, store, and redistribute used sports equipment (shoes, mitts, bats, etc.) to children at no cost. The North Franklin Heritage Museum committed to the use of a storage shed at the C Street Storages at 321 N. Columbia Avenue which the museum owns. Opportunity to integrate with Parks and Rec programming or use for on-site event support.

A new Community Development Manager will be hired soon to support and coordinate the Parks and Recreation efforts. This person will handle agenda, minutes and coordinate programs.

Upcoming Major Event - America's 250th Birthday Celebration (July 4, 2026): Multi-organization event (city, chamber, museum, community club). Planned for Pioneer Park: hamburgers, hot dogs, games, pool party, fireworks. Scheduled to start at noon (to avoid conflicts with Basin City parade and rodeo). Looking for sponsors and additional activities (e.g., softball tournament, mud run). Fireworks show planned for 10pm.

Tour of Park Properties: Plan to conduct in-person tour of all parks to assess condition and needs prior to spring. Proposed timing: After school or weekends, sunlight hours (~3:30-4:00pm). To be coordinated via group chat.

Homework: Board members to brainstorm possible activities and potential community instructors. Consider online vote to gauge community interest in prospective programs.

Recurring meetings will be set for the last Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm (next: February 24, 2026). Agreement to meet monthly and adjust if needed for member schedules.

Regular meeting in City Council Conference Room with overflow to larger space if required. Board minutes and agendas to be distributed by email.

Meeting adjourned at 7:12pm