

CITY OF VERGAS
Park Board Advisory Board Minutes
Vergas Event Center & Zoom Teleconference
3:00 P.M. on Thursday, October 9th, 2025

2025	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dean Haarstick, Council Appointment	P	P	P	N/A	P	N/A	A	P	N/A	A		
Sherri Hanson, Member	P	P	A	N/A	P	N/A	A	P	N/A	P		
Chuck Hanson, Member	P	P	A	N/A	A	N/A	P	P	N/A	P		
Steph Hogan, Member	P	P	P	N/A	P	N/A	P	P	N/A	A		
Maggie Puetz, Member	A	P	P	N/A	A	N/A	A	A	N/A	A		
Tony Sailer, Member	P	P	P	N/A	P	N/A	P	P	N/A	P		
Rachel Nustad, Secretary of the board						N/A	P	P		P		
Mike DuFrane, Utilities Superintendent	P	P	P	N/A	P	N/A	P	A	N/A	P		

P: Present A: Absent N/A: No meeting

Also present: Council Member James Stenger.

Call to order

The City of Vergas Park Advisory Board was called to order by Sherri Hanson on Thursday, October 9th, 2025 at 3:00 PM.

Additions or Deletions

Comprehensive Plan Update 2025

Minutes

Motion by S. Hanson, seconded by C. Hanson, to approve the minutes from August 28, 2025. Motion passed unanimously.

Status of Recommendations to City Council

None

Budget

Stenger provided an update on the budget, noting that they mostly maintained the previous year's budget with a few exceptions for major purchases. He mentioned that planned purchases include a replacement lawnmower after approximately seven years of use. Sailer inquired about how many years they typically get out of the lawnmowers, to which DuFrane responded about seven years on average.

Stenger explained that the budget had already been sent to the county and would be returned in November for final approval in December. He noted that the budget increase was minimal at about 3.1 percent, down from an initial 17 percent based on all department requests.

S. Hanson confirmed with DuFrane that most items he requested were included in the budget, though a skid steer was not approved. There was also confirmation that a chalk filed marker for the baseball field was included.

Story Walk

S. Hanson explained that the Community Club, through the arts group, is planning to install a "Story Walk" along Tin Can Alley on Long Lake Beach Trail. The Story Walk will feature pages from a children's book displayed on signs along the path for children to read as they walk. The book selected is "Little Loon Finds Its Voice" by a Minnesota author who will visit Vergas for a book signing when the Story Walk opens.

The signs will be made of waterproof corrugated plastic, similar to real estate signs, and will be displayed for the entire season. The plan is to feature a different book each year. The Community Club is considering purchasing copies of the book to sell or distribute.

S. Hanson noted that coordination with DuFrane would be needed to ensure the signs don't interfere with mowing. The timing for the Story Walk opening was initially planned to coincide with a spring event, but there was a scheduling conflict, so they are now considering Maplefest as an alternative.

Pickleball

An update was provided on the concrete work completed for the pickleball courts. S. Hanson mentioned that billing had come through from West Central Initiative for approximately \$12,000. The work in front of the restrooms was also completed.

It was clarified that the pickleball group fundraised for their portion of the improvements, while the city contributed \$2,500 for the area in front of the restrooms. DuFrane confirmed the work was completed the previous Tuesday and looked very nice.

Baseball Committee

Sailer reported that someone had completed reseeding on the infield, which has grown in well. DuFrane noted the only issue he's observed is erosion at the entrance gate by third base where vehicles drive through. He suggested possibly adding class 5 or crushed asphalt to prevent further erosion, though he mentioned it hasn't damaged the inside of the field yet.

S. Hanson mentioned there had been about 400 games played at the field. Sailer indicated the baseball committee hasn't met recently but would likely reconvene early next year. There was also discussion about potentially adding names to the recognition board.

New Park Property on Glenn Street

Nustad reported on her meeting with East Otter Tail Soil and Water regarding the property on Glenn Street. She explained that beautifying the area with wildflowers would be more work and expense than initially anticipated. The agency indicated no funding was available for enhancement projects since there's nothing wrong with the area. They warned that the aggressive weeds currently growing there would likely return even after clearing.

Nustad recommended possibly leaving the area as is, adding a walking path and seating area, noting it's a quiet, beautiful spot away from town. She reported the property is 4.8 acres with a steep hill. DuFrane confirmed they have been mowing what they can of the area.

After discussion, the board decided to keep the item on the agenda for future meetings and encouraged members to visit the site to generate ideas. They acknowledged that maintaining wildflowers or other enhancements would require significant commitment.

City Worker Update

DuFrane reported that the docks had been removed and the pier would be coming out on Wednesday. He also raised the issue of finding a location for two bike racks, noting challenges with potential locations. Someone had suggested not placing one in the new parking lot since it would take up valuable parking space. The board discussed various potential locations but decided to postpone the decision since they were out of bike season.

DuFrane also brought up the planter at the entrance to town, suggesting it could benefit from cultured stone around it to enhance its appearance. He felt the current gray concrete appearance was not aesthetically pleasing and remembered previous discussions about improving it. S. Hanson acknowledged this was a legitimate concern for enhancing the area.

DuFrane concluded by reporting that all water had been shut off in the parks for the season, and a portable toilet had been placed near the pickleball courts.

Other Business

S. Hanson added a discussion about the comprehensive plan update. Nustad provided copies and S Hanson suggested the board members review the documents at home before discussing at the next meeting. The board agreed to this approach.

Members

Member Terms

S. Hanson and Puetz's terms were noted as expiring. S. Hanson expressed interest in remaining on the board to focus on park upgrades over the next couple of years. The board discussed finding a replacement for Puetz position, who has missed several meetings due to her new job. DuFrane suggested approaching Jim Courneya as a potential candidate. Nustad offered to include a notice in the next newsletter and on Facebook about the open position. The board also discussed the policy regarding missed meetings, noting that Vergas' policy is three missed meetings within a year.

Next Meeting Date/Time

The next meeting was scheduled for November 13, 2025, at 3:00 PM. It was noted this falls during deer hunting season, which might affect attendance.

Adjournment

Motion by Sailer, seconded by C. Hanson to adjourn at 3:36 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Nustad, Deputy Clerk (assisted by ClerkMinutes)
Secretary of the Park Board

Follow Up Actions

- Members are to go look at the new park property on Glenn Street.
- Members are to review the comprehensive plan for 2025 and make notes of progress for the year to review at the next meeting.