

CITY OF VERGAS
 Park Board Advisory Board Minutes
 Vergas Event Center & Zoom Teleconference
 3:00 PM on Thursday, March 12th, 2026

2026	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dean Haarstick, Council Appointment	P	N/A	A									
Sherri Hanson, Member	P	N/A	P									
Chuck Hanson, Member	P	N/A	P									
Steph Hogan, Member	P	N/A	P									
Tiffany Prindle, Member	A	N/A	A									
Tony Sailer, Member	P	N/A	P									
Rachel Nustad, Secretary of the board	P	N/A	P									
Mike DuFrane, Utilities Superintendent	P	N/A	A									

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

Present via person: Council Appointment James Stenger

Present via zoom: Stephen

Call to order

The City of Vergas Park Advisory Board was called to order by Sailer on Thursday, March 12th, 2026 at 3:00 PM.

Additions and Deletions

None.

Minutes

Motion by Hogan, seconded by Sailer, to approve the minutes from November 13, 2025 and January 8, 2026. The motion passed unanimously.

Status of Recommendations to City Council

None.

Story Walk

Hanson provided an update on the Story Walk project, noting that everything appeared ready for the May 16th kickoff following discussions at the recent community club meeting. However, she raised concerns about signage visibility, explaining that the current Long Lake Trail sign is not very visible to people looking for the Story Walk. The board discussed placing a new sign underneath the existing wooden "Vergas Trail" sign near the parking area before the monument, suggesting a double-sided sign with arrows directing people to the Story Walk Trail. Hanson indicated the sign would specify operating dates, such as "open until October 31st." She planned to get specific verbiage from Julie Bruhn and bring the proposal to the community club, which would likely fund the signage. The board discussed installation options, including using chains to make the sign removable for seasonal changes or different books in the future. Hogan suggested the sign could be taken down when not in use. Lammers confirmed that city council approval would not be needed for this minimal signage addition, similar to the existing trail sign. Hanson expressed excitement about the upcoming publicity from the book publisher and noted that while she hadn't personally seen the story signs, she had been told they looked very good.

Pickleball

Hanson reported she had not heard from Shannon Charpentier regarding any pickleball activities and that things had been quiet in that area. Lammers noted that she could now see the pickleball area from her office through a stationary security camera, which previously required her to walk down to observe the area. Sailer asked if it was a stationary or adjustable camera, and Lammers confirmed it was stationary. She mentioned board members could visit her office to view the camera feed if interested.

Baseball Committee

Sailer reported that the baseball committee had met in February and developed a wish list of needed improvements. The top priority was a new chalker, with current options ranging from \$80 for a basic model to \$200-400 for nicer versions. Paint-based chalkers would cost approximately double and require ongoing paint purchases. The committee also discussed installing outfield fencing tubing across the top of the outfield fence, similar to what's seen at other fields. Sailer had researched pricing, finding 250 feet of tubing for \$330, estimating they would need approximately three times that amount for the entire outfield, bringing the cost close to \$1,000 plus shipping. Additionally, the committee considered a batter's eye for the same field due to the building behind the pitcher creating visibility issues. However, Sailer found this option "incredibly expensive." The board discussed prioritizing these improvements within their \$1,500 budget. Hanson asked if the committee had prioritized the items, and Sailer indicated the chalker was the top priority. The board discussed the safety and visibility benefits of the outfield fencing, noting that the current fence posts create safety hazards and make it difficult to determine home runs. Sailer confirmed that the local American Legion team would not be playing games at the facility this year and noted that Frazee's usage remained uncertain but would likely result in only 6-10 games maximum for the season. The board discussed potentially sourcing used equipment from schools, with Lammers noting that Pelican Rapids had started posting surplus equipment on their website. Sailer explained that chalkers typically last about 20 years with proper care, making used options less common. The discussion expanded to broader questions about the future use of the small baseball field, given the lack of local little league teams and the reality that most youth players were already committed to teams in other communities. The board acknowledged the startup costs and travel expenses that make local youth baseball challenging in smaller communities. Board members discussed potential alternative uses for the small field if baseball usage continued to decline, though they emphasized that any changes would require city council approval with specific proposals. The consensus was that the baseball committee wouldn't invest in major improvements without clear indication of future baseball usage.

Long Lake Park Master Plan

Sales Tax Update

Lammers provided a comprehensive update on the sales tax initiative. She had filed the required resolution with both the house and senate tax committees by the end of the previous year but had not yet received responses from either committee. She was in communication with Representatives Jordan Rassmussen and Tom Murphy, who have jacketed as a bill, but it was waiting for the tax committee to move forward. If approved by the tax committee, the process would continue until May 13th, after which Lammers would testify before both the house and senate. Following their votes, if the measure passes through both chambers, it will appear on the November ballot. Lammers reported that both the Minnesota Department of Revenue and the house tax committee had indicated that more cities have applied for sales tax authorization than ever before. This increase was partially attributed to the previous moratorium that prevented applications for several years, with larger communities continually seeking authorization for additional projects and smaller communities now attempting to access this funding mechanism. The board discussed the campaigning restrictions once the process advances beyond May. Lammers raised the question of whether to begin applying for grants to support the master plan, mentioning several available options including the Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Grant, LCCMR grants, Minnesota DNR grants, and League of Minnesota Cities funding. Many applications were due in March and April, making 2026 applications impossible but raising questions about 2027 timing. After discussion, the board consensus was to wait on grant applications until the sales tax outcome was determined, allowing time to build matching funds and refine the master plan. Hanson expressed that 2027 seemed premature given the current lack of preparation and the uncertainty around sales tax approval. The board agreed that the existing master plan was too ambitious for a city of Vergas's size and needed significant revision to identify top priorities. Lammers identified the bathhouse relocation as the highest priority, citing potential regulatory issues with the current facility's proximity to the water and ongoing complaints about its condition despite public reluctance to fund bathroom improvements. The discussion included comparisons with other communities' bathroom facilities and funding sources. Sailer noted that their current facility uses a holding tank system, which creates different regulatory requirements than communities with direct sewer connections. The board decided to hold a special meeting in April focused exclusively on reviewing and revising the master plan, potentially replacing their regular April meeting with this planning session.

Budget

Lammers noted that budget information was included in the meeting packets. No questions or discussion were raised regarding the budget.

Other Business

Hanson announced a volunteer appreciation membership event scheduled for that evening from 5:00 to 7:00 PM at Loonies, encouraging board members to attend as volunteers.

Adjournment

Motion by Hanson, seconded by Sailer, to adjourn the meeting at 3:35 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Recommendations to City Council

None.

Follow Up Actions

- Hanson: Get verbiage for Story Walk Trail sign and bring to community club for approval and potential funding of sign.
- Board: Hold a special meeting in April (replacing regular meeting) focused solely on reviewing and breaking down the Long Lake master plan.
- Board: Review the Long Lake master plan over the next year to prioritize elements (e.g., bathhouse, parking, access) and prepare for future grant applications, pending outcome of sales tax vote.
- Lammers: Wait for update from House and Senate Tax Committees regarding sales tax approval and testify as needed; continue to monitor progress and inform group.