

CITY OF VERGAS.  
 Park Board Advisory Board Minutes  
 Vergas Event Center & Zoom Teleconference  
 3:00 PM on Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026

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

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

Present via person: Julie Lammers, Lyle Krieg, Tim Gagner and Ann Richard.  
 Present via zoom: Citizen James Stenger

**Call to order**

The City of Vergas Park Advisory Board was called to order by S. Hanson on Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 3:00 PM

**Additions and Deletions**

Four additions were noted: Lion’s shelters, Veterans Memorial Park, sign in the park and wishing well.

**Minutes**

Motion by Hogan, seconded by S. Sailer to approve the minutes from May 14, 2026. The motion passed unanimously.

**Status of Recommendations to City Council**

The City Council approved the funds for painting the Loon at the Vergas City Public Beach.

**Story Walk**

The Board noted that the Story Walk installation was up and running and received positive feedback. Members reported frequently seeing visitors using it, and the City Office had received numerous calls inquiries about it.

**Pickleball**

Ann Richard, Treasurer of the Pickleball Club provided an update. The prior year's fundraiser for shade and concrete improvements was a success, and the shade structure has been installed, though it was temporarily taken down due to high winds and will be reinstalled with minor adjustments. The group is using the Pickleheads app to organize and schedule events, which now include morning open play, afternoon ladders, a men's night, a ladies' night, a Wednesday session, and a planned tournament on the 30th. Attendance continues to grow, having surpassed 3,000 visits last year based primarily on morning play alone. Upcoming projects include the installation of a plywood practice board inside one of the courts, planned for June. The group is also requesting optional \$20 contributions from regular players and is conducting ongoing court maintenance. The question of obtaining a defibrillator for the courts remains unresolved, with discussion noting its relevance to both pickleball and baseball areas given proximity to City emergency facilities. A concern was raised regarding fine cracking in the concrete pad. It was clarified that this was the City-funded portion and falls under a separate warranty process. Sailer suggested to add a guest book at the courts to informally track where players are coming from, inspired by a similar initiative at the disc golf course that attracted visitors from as far as Europe.

**Baseball Committee**

Sailer briefly discussed the tubing that was installed at the baseball field. It was noted that the proper equipment never showed up, requiring volunteers to improvise with their own resources. A concern was also raised regarding some baseball field equipment being left outside, and it was agreed to follow up with a baseball member. The scoreboard was reported to be in the process of being repaired. The Board acknowledged that field maintenance planning would need to be addressed at the next meeting in light of upcoming activities.

### **Lion's Shelters**

Lyle Krieg, representing the Lions Club and the Veterans Memorial Committee, presented plans and questions regarding the Lion's-maintained shelters in the park. The Lions intend to paint and stain the shelters for which they are responsible, including the shelter behind the Event Center. It was noted that the shelter behind the Event Center weathered poorly over the winter and is in need of staining. Discussion centered on the ramp leading down to the main large shelter at the beach, which is city-owned but has historically been maintained by the Lions. The Lions proposed replacing the existing wood top rail with a composite deck board to eliminate splinters, improve durability under sun exposure, and reduce the need for frequent staining. The cost was estimated at approximately \$500. The Board discussed the ramp's future under the Long Lake Park Master Plan, with S. Hanson indicating the plan would begin on the opposite end of the park, and this ramp would likely remain in place for a few more years. There was also discussion about whether modifications such as a composite handrail would trigger ADA/handicap accessibility compliance requirements. DuFrane indicated that as long as the structure is not fully reconstructed, it would not be required to meet current ADA grade standards. Regarding the shelter near the beach restroom area, the Lions expressed concern that the structure, which bears their signage, is deteriorating and reflects poorly on the organization. The Board acknowledged the shelter would remain in place for a few more years and encouraged the Lions to include it in their maintenance plan. The removal of deteriorated roadside railings on that shelter was also discussed and agreed to be appropriate, as they are approaching a hazard condition and are unsightly.

Motion by Sailer, seconded by Hogan, to authorize the Lions Club to stain the two shelters they maintain and to install a new composite handrail on the boardwalk ramp leading down to the shelter. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Wishing Well Donation**

The Board was informed that a community member offered to donate a handcrafted wishing well with planter to the City, intended for placement in Peterson Park near the Event Center. The structure would measure 30 by 30 inches and stand approximately 6 feet 7 inches tall. The donor would construct the wishing well and planter; however, a volunteer would be needed for planting the flowers. Some concern was raised regarding the potential for the structure to be misused as a waste receptacle, and it was suggested a false bottom or screen be incorporated into the design. The matter of where specifically to place it was also briefly discussed.

Motion by Hogan, seconded by Sailer, to recommend that City Council accept the wishing well donation. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Veterans Park**

Lyle Krieg and Tim Gagner provided an update on the Veterans Memorial Park, which is part of the City park system. City staff have been assisting with mowing and maintenance around the memorial. The Lions recently installed new edging and plan to add additional granite rock to fill in the area. Five new interpretive signs (2 feet by 3 feet each) are being fabricated and will be powder coated in Detroit Lakes. The signs will tell the stories of the large memorial rock, a World War II veteran, the USS Minnesota, a helicopter and the serviceman killed in it, and a tribute to the late committee member Henry Ditterich, featuring a Purple Heart. A "Remember Me" sign is also planned for near the parking lot entrance by the flags. The Board discussed the sign permit process. It was determined that the Veterans Memorial Committee must submit sign applications to Planning Commission, including images and proposed placement locations, so that staff can verify compliance with the sign ordinance and confirm that signs will not be placed within any road right-of-way. Lammers also noted that she will have to talk with Otter Tail County. The Veterans Memorial Committee indicated they planned to install the signs the week of June 23rd, and Lammers confirmed she would provide an answer immediately following the Planning Commission meeting on June 22nd. Looking further ahead, the committee is exploring the addition of two bronze statues — one depicting a soldier with a prosthetic leg and a dog, and another of a soldier kneeling at a fallen cross — at a projected cost of \$90,000–\$95,000. Significant fundraising will be required, and no concrete quotes have yet been obtained. Lyle Krieg shared a positive anecdote about a passing cyclist who spontaneously praised the Veterans Memorial Park and the general upkeep of the parks in Vergas, which was well received by the Board.

### **Long Lake Park Master Plan**

#### **Sales Tax Update**

Lammers informed the Board that the Minnesota Legislature declined to approve any new local sales tax authorizations for the 2027 cycle, meaning the City cannot bring a sales tax referendum to voters under the current timeline. This leaves the City Council to decide whether to pursue the matter again next year — which would require a special election given there is no general election in 2027 — or to wait until 2028, with any resulting revenue not arriving until 2030. As an alternative funding avenue, Lammers indicated the LCCMR (Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources) may be the most viable path forward. It is the same grant source used for the park's boardwalk project. Lammers emphasized the importance of documenting park usage this summer with photographs — particularly during high-attendance events such as Loony Days — to demonstrate regional significance, a key

LCCMR evaluation criterion. Board members were encouraged to capture images showing large numbers of visitors. The use of a drone was suggested as an effective tool.

### **Review**

A vendor that approached Lammers following legislative testimony presented conceptual playground equipment designs themed around the loon. Concepts included a climbing wall through a loon's head leading to slides, climbing nets shaped as the loon's wings, and additional nature-themed elements such as cattails, walleye, and other fish native to Long Lake. Lammers noted the City already has quality equipment for younger children and that the goal was to serve the 5–12 age range more effectively. Estimated costs for this type of installation would be in the range of \$100,000–\$120,000. The concepts were shared with the Board for informational purposes, with no action taken at this time.

### **Loon Landscape**

#### **Mulch vs. Landscape Rock**

S. Hanson reported that a volunteer workday was recently held to clear overgrowth from the Loon Landscape area. Master gardeners present during that session were unanimous in recommending mulch over landscape rock for the planting beds.

#### **Plants vs. Flowers**

Master gardeners who participated in the workday expressed interest in planting flowers and shrubs in the area but indicated they need a budget allocation for flowers, shrubs, mulch, soil, and peat, as the existing soil quality is poor. The Board discussed an appropriate spending limit and agreed to recommend up to \$1,000 to City Council.

Motion by C. Hanson, seconded by Hogan, to recommend that City Council approve up to \$1,000 for the purchase of mulch, soil, peat, and plants for the Loon Landscape area. The motion passed unanimously.

### **City Worker Update**

DuFrane provided updates on two matters.

**Pickleball Concrete Cracking:** DuFrane reported ongoing efforts to address the cracking in the concrete steps installed at the pickleball courts. The contractor involved indicated the cracking was an expected outcome, DuFrane found unsatisfactory given that no heavy equipment had been used on the surface. Follow-up calls to the contractor had gone largely unanswered, though the contractor did eventually indicate he might come to inspect the site. Another area resident with concrete experience, indicated he could send a contractor to assess the damage and offer options, which was viewed as a positive development. The Board encouraged DuFrane to continue pursuing the contractor and to explore what remediation options, including sealing, might be available.

**Aquatic Plant Management (Beach Weeds):** DuFrane reported that the aquatic plant treatment permit had been changed by the state, with the permitted treatment now limited to copper sulfate — a product he had no prior experience using. Repeated attempts to reach the AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) coordinator in Detroit Lakes had not resulted in a response. DuFrane noted that weed growth in the north end of the lake, including the City beach, is increasing and that treatment needs to occur soon to prevent the beach from becoming unusable. The Board discussed possible approaches, including use of a mechanical harvester, hand-pulling of weeds, and chemical treatment. DuFrane indicated that two community members had offered the use of their boats to apply the copper sulfate treatment. The Board suggested that DuFrane contact Otter Tail County Land and Water Resources for guidance, as well as reach out to the Long Lake Association, which may have relevant experience working with the DNR on the same lake-wide weed issue.

### **Budget**

Lammers provided the budget report. No concerns were mentioned.

### **Other Business**

None.

### **Next Meeting Date/Time**

The next Park Advisory Board meeting was set for **July 9, 2026**.

### **Adjournment**

Motion by Hogan, seconded by Sailer, to adjourn the meeting at 4:00PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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

### **Recommendations to City Council**

- Recommend that City Council accept the wishing well donation.
- Recommend that City Council approve up to \$1,000 for the purchase of mulch, soil, peat, and plants for the Loon Landscape area.

### **Follow Up Actions**

- Pickleball Club: Add a practice board inside court number 4 at the pickleball courts in June.
- Pickleball Club: Continue to monitor and conduct court maintenance as needed for the pickleball courts.
- Lammers: Attend the Planning Commission meeting on June 22nd at 6pm regarding the Veterans Memorial signs.
- Board: Start gathering photos and drone footage of large events at the park to demonstrate regional significance for potential LCCMR grant application.
- DuFrane: Obtain quotes for mulch, dirt, plants, and shrubs for the Long Lake landscape project and recommend a budget (up to \$1,000) to the City Council.
- DuFrane: Follow up with the contractor regarding the cracked concrete at the pickleball courts and explore repair or sealing options if no resolution is provided.
- DuFrane: Contact Otter Tail County Land Resources (or equivalent) to get information and guidance on aquatic plant management and chemical treatment options for the lake weeds.