

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Friday, April 10, 2026

Members present: Tony Vavricka, Dorothy Dybvig, Dave Barsness, Elsie Laursen, John Gaede, Todd Sandell

Members absent: Council Liaison Val Palmer

Staff present: Administrator Kathy George

Other: Jacob Mans, Daniel Fife (via Zoom), Sandy Sandwick

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 a.m. by Chair Dybvig.

Approve Agenda

Motion Barsness, second Laursen to approve the Agenda with the addition of Emerald Ash Borer. Motion passed 5-0. Sandell arrived later.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Motion Gaede, second Vavricka to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2026 meeting. Motion passed 5-0. The March Commission Meeting was cancelled due to a snowstorm.

New Business

Jacob Mans – Camper Cabins

UofM Professor Jacob Mans provided an update on the camper cabin project, stating that the construction plans are ready for review by the building official. He and his UofM students are working with Pine Technical College to make panels for the cabins. Five models are being created, each with a slightly different detail to distinguish them. Mans would like to have an exhibition of the five models; which, it was decided, will fit nicely with Arts in the Park festivities. Future discussion will occur regarding the foundation for each cabin. Mans received a steep discount for building materials from Ryla Timber. He is pursuing a UofM impact grant and a grant in aid program to help support this project. Mans reported that the Empowering Small Communities program ends in June and leftover funds are being redistributing. The City of Sandstone received \$5,000 of these leftover funds. Mans would like to pursue a broader Kettle River Watershed effort, partnering with neighboring communities.

Daniel Fife – Walking Tour

Fife discussed his efforts to create 29 points on a walking tour of Robinson Quarry Park. Most of the content has been created, which he plans to finalize at his next site visit. He would like to schedule a date to come to Sandstone and invited as many Park Commissioners to attend and provide clarification and direction for the final product. He will share dates with Administrator George.

Commission Vacancy: Student Representative

Previously, Anna Smith expressed interest in filling this open seat on the Parks & Recreation Commission; however, she has not been attending. It was noted that she graduates this spring; therefore, another candidate will be pursued.

Signs: Bark Park & Equipment Shed

Commissioners reviewed two sign designs created by Kettle River Grafix; one for the Bark Park and one for the shed at Panther Park. Commissioners liked both signs. With a full sheet of material, two 36”x36” signs, two 24”x24” signs, and two 12”x36” signs can be made.

Administrator George reported that the Sandstone Royalty Committee would like to add some signage to their float, and it would be nice to have a smaller sign at Chris’ Food Center directing people to the dog park. She will work on finalizing the sign order, coordinating with other entities, and utilizing as much of the material as possible.

Panther Park – Pavilion

Two proposals were received for either a 20x20 or a 20x30 pavilion; it is thought that the 20x30 option is most desirable for Panther Park:

Streamline Builders, Esko, MN	\$35,080.56 (wood with metal roof)
Brickwol Construction, Champlin, MN	\$94,705.89 (steel)

The quote received from MWP Recreation was \$46,867.00.

Motion Gaede, second Barsness to recommend the City Council accept the proposal from Streamline Builders for a 20x30 pavilion in Panther Park for \$35,080.56. Motion carried 6-0. This project can be funded by a \$15,000 donation from the Sandstone Lions Club (received in 2025) and the 2026 Park Fund budget for Undesignated Park Projects.

Robinson Quarry Park: Proposal for Archaeological Survey

The scope amendment for adding the work in Upper Robinson (camper cabins, trails) has been submitted to SHPO, the DNR, and Greater MN Regional Parks & Trails for consideration. SHPO is recommending an archaeological survey. Fred Sutherland (who conducted the survey in lower Robinson) provided a proposal of \$19,440 to complete the requested Phase 1 Archaeological Survey, which includes potential artifact curation and delivery of a comprehensive report including recommendations on the need for any further cultural resource evaluation. He is preparing to start this work in April, once the proposal is approved, pending receipt of a license from Office of the State Archaeologist and the MN Historical Society. This expense is not eligible for grant reimbursement.

Motion Barsness, second Vavricka to recommend the City Council accept the proposal from HDR (Fred Sutherland) to conduct a Phase 1 Archaeological Survey of Upper Robinson Quarry Park for \$19,440. Motion carried 6-0.

Emerald Ash Borer

Administrator George shared an e-mail she received from Jonathan Osthus, Plant Health Specialist with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. He is the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

technical assistance coordinator and reported that the presence of EAB was confirmed at Banning State Park near Big Spring Falls off of Pine Avenue. Any ash tree within a designated area (which includes the City of Sandstone) has a high probability of being infested at some level. Administrator George will stay on top of the situation and continue to communicate with the Commission.

Continuing Business/Updates

2026 Events

Commissioners are interested in planning a concert in Robinson Quarry Park to celebrate the Phase 1 & 2 Projects. Nathan Frazer expressed interest in helping.

- Spring Park Clean Up – April 25th; Commissioner Gaede will pick up supplies from the Public Works shop; Administrator George will order donuts; Commissioner Barsness will pick up donuts and water, and order pizza.
- National Night Out – August 4th; Administrator George will organize and invite participants.
- Arts in the Park – Tuesdays in June; Commissioner Vavricka will line up musicians.
- Quarry Days – August 7-8; the Park Commission will share a booth with the Festival Committee.
- Memorial Tree Garden Ceremony - August 9th; Administrator George will organize; D'ears is working on a design for the memorial emblems.
- Robinson Quarry Park Clean up – Fall; Commissioner Barsness is coordinating buckthorn removal.
- Oktoberfest – September 26th; History Center will not provide a beer stein display.
- Quarry City Christmas – November 28th; last year, there was no fire engine to take Santa around
- Santa at Lions Hill – December 19th

Various Updates

Robinson Quarry Park

Camping

There were 6 registrations for 7 days of camping, with \$105 collected in February; there were 3 registrations for 3 days of camping, with \$90 collected in March. All campsites have been entered into the reservation website system.

Legacy Grant Projects

The new small pavilion is scheduled to be delivered the week of May 11th. Senator Rarick will support the bill to amend the grant, extending the closing date; he has requested to be added as a co-author to the Senate bill.

New Monument Sign

Mike Johnson plans to move the sign base located on TH 23 and Old Military Road this spring.

Miscellaneous Updates

- New signs will be installed at the Sandstone Junction Trail this spring.
- Signage will be installed at the Skunk Creek Trail this spring.
- A meeting will be scheduled with Jeremy Kollmann regarding the potential disc golf course at Skunk Creek Trail.

Other

Special Event Permits:

- Sandstone Area Farmers Market – Train Park – 6/27 to 10/31
- Sandstone Area Chamber of Commerce – Panther Park – Easter Egg Hunt – 4/4
- Sandstone Evangelical Free Church – Angle Park – Soccer Camp – 7/13-16
- Rapids Riders Canoe U – Robinson Quarry Park – 5/29-31

Commercial Use Permits:

- UW-Eau Claire Recreation – 3 or fewer events
- Midwest Mountain Guides – 3 or fewer events
- Rapids Riders Whitewater Canoe and Kayak Club

Lions Hill - Brittney's Journal was provided

Adjourn

Motion Vavricka, second Gaede to adjourn at 9:40 a.m. Motion carried 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy George, City Administrator