



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT
P.O. BOX 547, ANACORTES, WA 98221
(360) 293-1918 / (360) 293-1928

Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission

January 13, 2026 at 6pm

**This meeting will be held BOTH virtually and
in person at the City Hall Parks Conference Room
(904 6th Street)**

Access to the meeting via Zoom through this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85776295672>

Preliminary Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approve Dec Minutes
3. Public Comments
4. Correspondence/Communication
5. 2026 Outlook
6. Department Reports
7. Other Business

If reasonable accommodation due to a disability are needed, please contact Brandon Krause at least 48 hours prior to the meeting date (360-299-1961).

December 9, 2025

Parks Commission in Attendance: JoAnn, Sarah, Brad and Chris

Staff in Attendance: Jonn, Bob, Nicole, and Dustin

Call to order: 6:00pm

November minutes passed unanimously.

Public Comments:

None.

Correspondence and Communication:

JoAnn reported on the last Forest Board meeting, with a work party being held in partnership with the Friends of the ACFL. They worked on the Little Cranberry platform and surrounding trails. The local dam inspections were done and accepted by the state, staff is still waiting on the Whistle Lake inspection by the state. The Heart Lake project is in process but slowly.

Jonn shared that there was no Parks Foundation meeting.

W Side Park

Bob reported that the public comments received have been supportive of the project. Concern was expressed by some of the neighbors about the elevation difference and park users looking into their yard and home. All public comments have been shared with the Commission, now Staff is asking what the Commission thinks and recommends. Staff has met with Nels Strandberg, creating a team for partnerships in labor, materials and equipment. There will be a more solid approach after January 1st. This project will be funded through \$75,000 in park impact fees and fundraising.

Walk Fest

Tom Decker was in attendance to speak about this project. He expressed thanks for the partnership on the Rotary Centennial Project.

This new project is a non-rotary project for walking enthusiasts. It is to be held on May 1-4, led by volunteers of which 30 have currently signed up. This opportunity would be shared with both locals and visitors. Tom has also met with Skagit County Parks and they would like to see this offered county wide, but the group is starting small this first year. Walks will cover topics such as art, history, nature and culture. They expect to have 7-8 walks per day. Tom also met with the Friends of the ACFL and they have requested that hike be led out of areas with good parking and groups kept small. Walk Fest is expecting groups of 15-18 at the most.

Their website is in process and will be up soon. They plan to charge \$10.00 per walk with discounts for early registration or families with the goal to make this self sustaining.

In speaking with other community outreach groups, the Family Center suggested a walk for moms, and the Salvation Army a walk for adults with disabilities.

Department Reports:

Dustin shared that boys basketball has finished up and girls basketball will start after the first of the year.

Wonderland Walk, at Washington Park, will be this weekend, Friday and Saturday from 5-8.

Nicole reported that the team has been preparing for the Wonderland Walk. The cultural study at SHIP has been done and the next step is to find \$500,000 in grant match, she is looking to partner with the Port, Samish and the RCO. The crew will be taking various holidays and vacations this month. Staff has been looking into the cost of keeping the ballfield lights on in the winter for fall/winter baseball. The cost just for the lights is

approximately \$3000 per month so staff have requested that the coaches and players only practice one day per week. If they elect to practice more than that, there will be a charge.

Jon gave the report on the Senior activity Center. They have has 150-200 visitors each day. The biggest issue at this time is the Meals on Wheels program. The county will no longer run this program as of July 1. They are looking for community partners to take over this program.

Jon also shared that the PSE lease is near completion. This has been in the works for 7 years.

The Depot Plaza project will be going out for bids soon.

Staff is waiting on final approvals for the skate park restroom.

Luke Currier will be joining Council in the new year. This will most likely bring a new Parks and Recreation Sub-Committee.

All directors have met with Mayor-elect Walters to speak about each department.

The Boys & Girls Club lease is from 2013 and staff is looking to renegotiate it. The Recreation team and their programs need more time and space, mostly from 4pm on.

Other Business:

None

Adjourned at 6:54pm

Respectfully submitted by Darby Jordan

[Parks and Recreation Update: January 2026](#)

[Recreation Staff Report: Dustin South, Recreation Manager and Eli Moore, Recreation Coordinator](#)

Boys Youth Basketball: The season ended this month. Thanks to our volunteer coaches and teen referees for all their hard work this season.

Puzzle Competition (Individual): We held an individual puzzle competition this month on the 17th. We had good participation with the winning participant completing their 300-piece puzzle in about 45 minutes. Our next competition will be a team competition on Thursday, January 15.




Girls Youth Basketball: Recreation staff are forming teams and recruiting volunteer coaches for our next basketball season which will start after the school district's Christmas Break.

Wonderland Walk: The event was held on Friday and Saturday, December 12 & 13 from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. Attendance was the best we have had in several years. We ran out of S'mores supplies by 7 pm the first night and 6:30 pm the second night. Vendors decorated their sites, we had school choirs perform, and parking did become challenging at certain points of the night. We had a couple last minute light vendor back out. Possibly due to the flooding and crazy weather the week prior. Weather during the event turned out to be great. Thanks to the Parks Maintenance Crew for their help setting up the week prior and for helping parks cars and light campfires on both nights of the event. Thanks to all the organizations, choir groups, and other city departments that participated. Thanks to Mayor-Elect Ryan Walters, Council member Carolyn Moulton, and Parks and Recreation Commission members JoAnn York-Gilmore and Christine Hansen for volunteering as greeters at the event.

Drop-in Sports: There have been some gym cancelations due to extra programs held by the elementary school during the month. However, we have been able to navigate through this and still provide the programs. Adult Volleyball takes place at Fidalgo Elementary on Wednesday and Friday evenings. Adult drop-in Basketball takes place on Sunday evenings in the Middle School and Tuesday evenings at

Fidalgo Elementary. Pickle Ball is on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Friday at Mt. Erie Elementary. To see the latest on the drop-in sports schedule visit: <https://www.anacorteswa.gov/971/Drop-In-Programs>
 Other Items of Interest/Upcoming Events: Family Trivia Night, new event, Tuesday, January 13th and Dad Daughter Dance Event is Saturday, February 21st. Staff is working on planning and promoting programs for the upcoming late winter early spring season.

Total Volunteers Hours for December

	Drop-in Sports				
	4	X	16 hrs.	=	64
	Boys Youth Basketball				
	28	X	7.5 hrs.	=	210
	Wonderland Walk				
	14	X	6 hrs.	=	84

Total for Month 358

Parks Manager Report: Nicole Johnston, Parks Manager

Below are a few highlights from the month of December:

-At the cemetery, the crew poured the concrete pad for the columbarium that will arrive at the end of March. During the heavy rains we monitored the swale and retention pond closely and although the water level was high we were in good shape and felt encouraged that everything was working correctly. Grandview was one of site for hosting Wreaths Across America on Dec. 13th. Crew continues to manage leaves at the cemetery and keep large branches off the lawn. The crew was also able to catch up on marker installs.



-I joined an online training “A Splash of Risk: Preparing for Winter Hazards” by WCIA . The summary of the training was to inspect and manage trees proactively, maintain snow and ice removal readiness, keep storm drains clear and document and communicate everything. After the training Nichola and I met with the people from Public Works to review our own plans for when we have snow. Plows are attached, salt is at the facilities, and everyone has access to a shovel. The city is ready if it snows.

-Handrail on the East Cap Sante trail at the rock steps was completed. Thanks to Braydn and Steve for working with Jason Dunton to complete the project.



-Washington Park reservations opened on Dec. 15th for the 2026 reservations and as of 12/21 we had \$28,819 in reservations. We've had a few windy days at the park and a few trees across the loop road. The loop road walkers seem to enjoy the loop road being closed on those days. We continue to say ok to allowing people to decorate a section of trees with ornaments on the loop road near Burrows Channel and the Havekost monument. We did have someone put real candy canes in the trees, which I



took down for obvious reasons. I guess we will have to add that detail to next years sign. As you all know Parks crew was all involved with many aspects of the Wonderland Walk event. Although the number of vendors was down, the event still seems to bring the crowds. Saturday night was the busiest that I've seen it in years. Huge shout out to the crew for all their efforts. Washington Park also was the location for a few non city events- The Luminaria Walk, Bell Ringing event on 12/31 and will also have a Polar Plunge event on 1/1/26.

In other news...

- All irrigations have been winterized.
- Crew continues to work on leaf management at various parks and facilities.
- Blew the Tommy Thompson Parkway, the Loop Road and the Guemes Channel Trail.
- Everyone on the crew taking some kind of additional time off at the end of December.
- Jan. 3rd is the Key Club Tree Pick Up Day. AJ is helping work that event. Make sure to have your Christmas trees out by 8:30am.

-Anacortes Baseball Club is renting Daniel Field during the winter at \$45 per hour. These are hours they are wanting to have access to the lights.

Assistant Director Report: Bob Vaux, Assistant Director

W. 6th PARK PLAN

- Received a dozen or so written comments submitted mostly by neighbors. Have been told of social media discussions going on as well. Lots of general support for the project. It is important to note that the \$75K that has been committed to this project is from Park Impact Fees, a highly restricted funding source that may only be used for adding specific kinds of park facilities. These funds are not available for staffing.
- Director Lunsford and I continue to work with Nels Strandberg and his team on options to make this project go. Working with other City staff as well on regulatory issues.

2026 FOREST PLAN UPDATE

- Submitted second draft of SEPA to PCED on 12/4.

ACFL

- Jamie and I did some illegal car camping patrol a few days this month. We did make one Heart Lake Road contact, did our best to explain the ACFL, how the City does indeed have a campground and why the current situation isn't good for the woods. We also offered to put the fellow in touch with other organizations who could possibly help him out. We all shook hands and parted company. Just about the time I got back to city hall he called to complain about being harassed.
- Jamie and I had a great meeting with Friends of the ACFL staff, reviewing their gathering places for forest education. All the sites have traditionally served this role and are still working well.
- A two-year Rockridge resident called to talk about how much she and her husband love the ACFL. In fact, a big reason why they moved here. She also has a service dog, and they frequently walk together on our trails. She explained that they are regularly approached by off leash dogs (whose owners are typically either running or mountain biking). I gave her some strategies to work with, and Jamie is double checking trailhead signage in that area.

- Jamie and his family were impacted by the Skagit flooding so I filled in for him for a couple of days, focusing mostly on the beaver dam rounds. Did manage 3 off leash dog contacts near the old dump in less than an hour on one of the outings. Thanks to Foreperson Nichola for helping out with LC dam spillway clearing.
- Despite the flood challenges, Jamie doing a great job keeping up with reported trees down. Saturated ground and gusty winds.
- **HEART LAKE PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENT PLAN:** Director Lunsford and I reviewing scopes of work proposed by permitting and engineering consultants. Also working with other City departments on preliminary contract and regulatory issues.

GRANDVIEW CEMETERY EAST HAZARD TREES FELLED

- Dan Rawls and Precision Tree crew did another fantastic job of getting some troubling alder and maple on the ground, protecting the adjacent homes. Always amazing to watch these guys climb, cut, clean up and go home in one piece.

WONDERLAND WALK

- Joined the parking team for yet another year. Numbers were solid and the vast majority of the guests were cooperative and holiday happy.
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Director's Report: Jonn Lunsford, Parks and Recreation Director

Maritime Plaza Expansion: The construction for a new plaza to be built east of the WT Preston is now out to bid. If all goes well, construction will be completed by the end of May and ready to expand the footprint of the Farmers Market and host other community events.

Thanks to Mayor Miller: Thanks to outgoing Mayor Matt Miller for his support during his time in office. With support from the former Mayor we were able to rebuild the trestle after the latest fire and install high quality security cameras in coordination with the Anacortes Police. The Ben Root Skate Park was rebuilt and a new pump track was added. Finally, we were able to rebuild trails on Cap Sante and add a summit lookout in collaboration with our friends at the Anacortes Rotary Club.

We welcome newly elected Mayor Ryan Walters and look forward to great collaboration to come starting in 2026.

New Lease with Puget Sound Energy on Mt. Erie: The City signed a new lease agreement with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) for the cell tower site on Mt. Erie. This lease replaced the one that had first been signed in 1986. This effort was in collaboration with the Anacortes Kiwanis Club who donated the summit to the city in 1951 for parks purposes.