

RECREATION AND PARKS ADVISORY BOARD (RPAB)
ANNUAL REPORT
FY 2026 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026)

Administrative

- Conducted nine RPAB meetings, including regular reviews from Swim and Fitness Center, Arts, Redgate, King Farm Farmstead, and Recreation and Parks Foundation subcommittees.
- Elected vice-chair in January 2026. Welcomed one new member in March 2026.

Formal Recommendations and Advocacy

- In September 2025, delivered testimony to Mayor and Council supporting approval of the King Farm Farmstead Master Plan, stating “Keep it simple and get it done... Create a safe and usable space for Rockville residents and we'll make it something special. The thriving community garden at the Farmstead is a great example of how the community can make our shared spaces vibrant, happy places. We're excited to see the options (and costs) presented at this stage of the process and urge you to prioritize approaches that have a high likelihood of success, fast timelines to completion, and prudent phasing that can reduce the risk of more years (or, relevant in this case, decades) of deterioration and under-use.”
- In same September 2025 testimony, advised the City to not accept a Land and Water Conservation Grant for Redgate Park, stating “Forever is a long time.... congratulations to the City on winning this competitive grant. Finding additional outside sources of funding is critical and we're excited at the City's smart approach and greater focus on these opportunities. That said, in this case and based on what we understand, we think accepting \$1.5 million in one-time support is not worth the tradeoff of losing full control of decisions at Redgate in perpetuity. To be extra super clear, we do not support putting up townhomes, a data center, a coal-fired power plant, etc. at Redgate; we support the City's decision to dedicate Redgate completely to recreation, parks, and nature.... We're concerned, however, that accepting the \$1.5 million grant will imprudently tie your and your successors' hands. As we understand it, accepting this federal funding for Redgate will bar any and all indoor facilities at Redgate (aside from several acres surrounding the legacy clubhouse), requiring Department of Interior waivers for any changes forever. We don't object to the vision for Redgate; instead, we think submitting to federal control for \$1.5 million across 130 acres is giving up too much for too long into the future for (relatively) too little. You all are in possession of more information than us on these issues and we again congratulate the City on winning this competitive grant and transforming a golf course into a beautiful natural area open to all.”
- In October 2025, reviewed, provided comments on, and voted to support the Rockville Baseball Hall of Fame's proposal to install commemorative plaques honoring 16 inductees at the Dogwood Park concession stand.
- In January 2026, reviewed, provided comments on, and voted to support the City accepting a proposal by the Maryland State DAR Legacy of Liberty Tree Project to plant a tulip poplar seedling (genetically identical to the historic Annapolis Liberty Tree) to commemorate America's 250th Anniversary. Specifically suggested planting at Glenview Mansion.
- Discussed at length and developed over several meetings 2027 formal budget input stating broad themes and specific operating and capital budget priorities. “Recreation and Parks are a treasure and defining characteristic for the City—the people in the department, the parks and facilities themselves, and the communities of users participate and take care of it all. We need to continue to support a strong budget and plan for Recreation and Parks while looking proactively at ways to adapt and keep creating great spaces and programs for City residents.”
- In April 2026, delivered testimony on the 2027 budget in line with the Board's input document, applauding the City's budget proposal for funding David Skull and Talbott Park, keeping the ball rolling on long-term needs at Redgate and King Farm Farmstead, and accelerating infrastructure improvements to reduce utility costs. The testimony further asked Mayor and Council to consider greater differentiation in program fees for Rockville residents vs. non-residents, earlier study of ways to expand winter use of the Swim and Fitness Center's outdoor pools, and adjustments to Redgate planning to better connect the park to the Rock Creek Trail and to neighborhoods across Route 28.

Informal Program Reviews and Information Gathering

- Following request from the Rockville Environment Commission in July 2025, asked City staff to develop specific analysis on the environmental effects of the City's annual Independence Day fireworks celebration, including any effects on water and air pollution and potential mitigating actions (e.g., different/cleaner fireworks, alternative drone shows). Informally reviewed and expressed general support for the Recreation and Parks Department to respond via memo the Environment Commission.
- Welcomed the Friends of Redgate in the December 2025 community forum for a discussion on Redgate the best ways to work together to support parks, recreation, and nature in the City.
- In January 2026, received presentation from City staff on the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite and Comprehensive Map Amendment Project.
- In April 2026, one board member volunteer participated in interviews with new Recreation and Parks Director final candidates, sharing feedback with the City's relevant hiring staff.
- Over the course of the fiscal year, visited and received detailed updates on Thomas Farm Community Center, Croydon Creek Nature Center, Glenview Mansion, Redgate Park, Bullard's Park, and Fallsgrove Park.
- Received two briefings on the status of the City's Recreation Leagues, including enrollment trends, costs, and feedback from the public.

In the Community

- In July 2025, spoke at the formal dedication of the new outdoor recreation pool areas at the Rockville Swim and Fitness Center.
- Volunteered with Rockville Recreation and Parks Foundation fundraising efforts at the Rockville Rubber Duck Derby in July 2025, the Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show in October 2025, and Hometown Holidays in May 2026.
- Volunteered with the Recreation and Parks leadership team at the Annual Recreation and Parks Staff New Years' Breakfast in January 2026 at the Rockville Senior Center.
- Performed stream clean up at Elwood Smit Park in April 2026.
- In June 2026, accepted proclamation from Mayor and Council declaring June as Parks and Recreation Month.

FY2028 Plans and Priorities

- Develop priority list for long-term capital investment projects (e.g., Redgate construction, second City swimming pool), delivering recommendations as early as possible in the budget process.
- Increase awareness of the RPAB as a resource for Rockville residents looking to learn more about and/or give input and feedback on the City's facilities and programs. Options include inclusion of meetings in Rockville Reports and the Activity Guide, joint meetings with the broader public and advisory committees at City facilities (e.g., the Swim and Fitness Center, Twinbrook Community Center, etc.), and social media promotion.
- Establish regular annual review of various programs, including youth sports leagues and swim and fitness center uses and programs.
- Coordinate and build understanding and rapport with other boards and commissions with responsibilities affecting and affected by Recreation and Parks, specifically the Historic District Commission and the Environment Commission.