CITY OF OAK HILL

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

January 28, 2026

6:00 P.M.

**Meeting Minutes**

# 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Page called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM on January 28, 2026.

# 2. ROLL CALL

Deputy City Clerk Megan Jones conducted roll call. Chair Page responded "Here." Vice Chair Welch responded "Here." Board Member Taylor responded "Here." Board Member Boyd responded "Here." Board Member Mason responded "Here." All board members were present.

# 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Page moved to the approval of minutes from the January 15, 2026 meeting. Vice Chair Welch I motion to approve with a second by Board Member Boyd.

Chair Page called for the vote. **All board members voted "Yes" to approve the minutes.**

# 4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Event

Board Member Taylor took the lead on presenting this item, having contacted Pamela Blankenship at the Volusia TPO to coordinate a bicycle and pedestrian safety event. She distributed informational materials to the board members and explained that the TPO provides free helmets, helmet fittings, and brings bicycles for a rodeo style event setup. Taylor emphasized that the TPO "would love to come back" to Oak Hill, noting they hadn't hosted an event in the city since 2018 when they attended the Oak Hill Community Festival at Mary DeWees Park.

Taylor presented available Saturday dates: February 21st, February 28th, and any Saturday in March. She clarified that the event would cost the city nothing, they would only need to provide tables and chairs, which the city already owns. The proposed location would be Nancy Cummings Park on the asphalt paved area.

Chair Page raised the procedural question: "If it doesn't cost the city any money, there's no funds involved from the city, do we still have to get approval from the commission?" City staff confirmed that commission approval would be needed and suggested bringing it to the next commission meeting.

The board discussed timing considerations, with concerns raised about potential conflicts with baseball activities. Taylor explained she wanted to get the event on the calendar quickly because "their calendars fill up fast." The board settled on proposing February 28th as the primary date, with March 7th as a backup option.

Vice Chair Welch made a motion: "I make a motion that we present this and we do it on either February 28th or March 7th." Board Member Boyd seconded the motion. During discussion, Taylor clarified that while she had suggested a 10 AM to 1 PM time, staff advised they would block out the entire day at the park and work with whatever time the TPO preferred. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Taylor then shifted to discussing ECHO grant opportunities, having spoken with Daniel Marsh, the ECHO program manager for Volusia County. She distributed a calendar of important ECHO grant dates for 2026, emphasizing the mandatory workshop on April 23rd at 9 AM as the most critical date. She explained that a city staff member must attend, preferably in person at the Volusia County Administration Center in DeLand.

Taylor outlined the subsequent deadlines: June 11th for technical completeness and initial grant applications, followed by July 16th at 3 PM for final submissions after corrections. She expressed concern that "we may not be able to make those dates because we don't have anything already in the process."

The discussion evolved into brainstorming potential ECHO grant projects. Taylor recalled that someone from Lighthouse Cove had previously inquired about converting unused tennis courts into pickleball courts. She suggested focusing on smaller, manageable projects that would not be "so cumbersome and so tedious and so lengthy to try to pull all the information together."

Board Member Taylor raised the Monday night commission discussion about building a bridge from the ball field to the restrooms at Nancy Cummings Park. Taylor added parking improvements to the list of potential projects, explaining that ECHO grants can finance "acquisition, restoration, construction or improvement of facilities to be used for environmental, cultural, historic and outdoor recreation purposes."

Taylor confirmed that matching funds are required on a 1:1 basis, but clarified that the match can include in-kind donations, credits for work already completed by the city, or donated materials and labor. This sparked discussion about the baseball field improvements mentioned at Monday's commission meeting, where someone had already volunteered to donate labor.

Chair Page asked about minimum grant amounts. Taylor replied there was no minimum, but grants can go up to $600,000, with amounts over that considered "exceptional."

The conversation deepened as board members began listing specific improvements needed at Nancy Cummings Park. Board Member Boyd mentioned expanding the fields to accommodate older players, noting safety concerns about "a lip or something" creating a dangerous edge. Board Member Taylor made a comprehensive list: restroom facilities repairs, a bridge from the ball field to restrooms, expanding the ball field for 16-year-olds, new dugouts, scoreboards, lighting, ADA parking, and concrete pads with sidewalks.

Deputy City Clerk Megan Jones then revealed critical information about the park's condition. The bathrooms had been remodeled in 2023 using $33,000 in funds but remain "susceptible to flooding." The remodel was done to minimize flood impact, but the septic system and leach field remain "major problems." Discussion revealed that flooding affects not just the bathrooms but also the well house, playground, and parking areas.

## Priority list

Chair Page transitioned to establish formal priorities for the board, referring to a January 23rd meeting with city staff where they discussed maintaining no more than five active priorities. He explained the concept: "We'll have 5 priorities. When we complete 1, it drops off. Now we add another." This approach would prevent the volunteer board from becoming overloaded while ensuring quality work.

The board began building their priority list:

1. The bicycle and pedestrian safety event (already in progress) 2/28 or 3/7
2. Nancy Cummings Park improvements
3. Community center/storm shelter feasibility
4. Rezoning properties for park designation to meet level of service requirements.

Vice Chair Welch made a Motion to bring these priority items in front of the Commission at the next council meeting. The second was made by Board Member Taylor. **The motion passed unanimously.**

For Nancy Cummings Park, the discussion became detailed and technical. Board members emphasized that grade and drainage issues must be addressed first before any other improvements. Chair Page stated emphatically: "Grade and drainage has to be fixed first… That has to be first step." The board recognized that professional engineering and architectural plans would be required before any construction could begin.

Board Member Mason introduced the community center concept, having conducted extensive research on the church property adjacent to Nancy Cummings Park. She explained that the property was originally intended for a community center and proposed it could double as a storm shelter for Oak Hill residents who currently must travel to New Smyrna

Beach during emergencies. Mason was passionate about the need: "Some people can't travel. Like, worked for a hospice for years, especially in Oak Hill, and some of these people cannot make it to New Smyrna." She noted that FPL would prioritize restoring power to such a facility, ensuring residents could maintain critical medical equipment like oxygen.

Deputy City Clerk Megan Jones cautioned about the controversial nature of the church property, suggesting public input would be essential. Mason listed ideas "We can host weddings there and bingo night and, like, just so many fun things." She described seeing plans with five offices and a senior room that "could create jobs in the city."

Vice Chair Welch presented her priority focusing on level of service requirements for parks. She had contacted the National Recreation and Park Association and discovered that the national standard is 10.2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, while some Florida cities like Altamonte Springs only maintain 3.2 acres. Oak Hill's comprehensive plan currently shows conflicting standards of 6 and 8 acres per thousand residents.

Welch explained the importance: "When Holiday Builders were here Monday, they can go in and they can choose whether they're going to use 8 or 6 acres when they do their open space. They can choose." She proposed identifying city owned properties that could be rezoned as parks to increase the city's park acreage, specifically mentioning the VIA Hall Chung Park (0.5 acres), the Community Trust property on Flamingo Road (2.9 acres), and the Powell property parcels totaling 1.43 acres.

Welch detailed the rezoning process requirements: consistency with the comprehensive plan's future land use element, adherence to Florida Statute 166.041, and accomplishing a legitimate purpose.

## Funding

The funding discussion was interwoven throughout the priority conversations. Board members explored various grant opportunities beyond ECHO, including FEMA grants for storm shelters, HUD grants for community centers, and private corporate grants from entities like Walmart. Chair Page even suggested reaching out to SpaceX for potential funding, with Board Member Mason responding "I have few ins there. I'll see what I can do."

The board discussed the challenge of matching funds, recognizing that mid-fiscal year, the city could not provide cash matches. They explored creative solutions like using the $65,000 spent on recently acquired property as match credit, securing donated materials and labor, and partnering with BST engineering program for design work.

## Ballfield improvements, Nancy Cummings field/ Mary DeWees sprinkler system

The discussion of ballfield improvements was extensive and revealed significant infrastructure challenges. Board members identified multiple issues at Nancy Cummings Park requiring immediate attention, while Chair Page clarified that the sprinkler system improvements were specifically for Mary DeWees Park, not Nancy Cummins.

The board expressed concern about maintaining ECHO grant compliance, as city agreements require ongoing maintenance of grant funded improvements. Chair Page wanted to ensure they weren't "going after echo grants for a park they've already paid for."

# 5. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Jeff Bracy of 196 W Brooks Circle addressed the board with "48 years of knowledge" about Nancy Cummings Park's flooding issues. He provided specific technical information about the drainage problems: "There's probably a 30-foot section from the north side of the chain link fence that goes to the catch basin that they never dug out." He explained that when he served on council in 1997-98, the county had undersized the pipes under Wood Avenue and Hickory Avenue, causing water to back up.

Bracy recommended several actions: completing the pipe removal to the catch basin, working with the county to install larger pipes under the avenues, and potentially acquiring property from the Woods family north of the park for expansion. He also cautioned about drainage issues at the Powell property, where ditches "sometimes will back up and flood," suggesting this be addressed before any community center development.

He concluded by acknowledging the bathroom flooding issues: "The water backs up. It floods that, it floods the well house and to the playground. So, you got a dilemma there."

# 6. BOARD COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Board members used this time to clarify next steps and assignments. Board Member Taylor would complete coordination for the bicycle safety event and forward all ECHO grant materials to Deputy City Clerk Megan Jones to be forwarded. She offered to serve as the primary contact with the ECHO program to avoid multiple people calling.

Chair Page confirmed the approach of maintaining a draft priority list for refinement at the next meeting. The board agreed to add specific items to the next agenda: the bicycle safety event for commission approval, the Nancy Cummings Park improvement breakdown, property rezoning for park designation, and a potential fishing tournament.

Board Member Taylor expressed interest in monthly events, stating "I would like to have an event every month." The board discussed the logistics of planning events given the commission's monthly meeting schedule and the need for advance approval. They agreed to keep "monthly event" as a rolling agenda item.

Mason volunteered to contact the county's community development office about storm shelter grants and to research FEMA funding opportunities. Mason reiterated her commitment to pursuing the community center concept despite potential controversy.

Deputy City Clerk Megan Jones reminded the board that all voting items must be properly noticed on the agenda, and that the agenda must be posted a week in advance of meetings. They also clarified that any board member can suggest agenda items through city staff to be approved by Chair Page.

# 7. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Welch made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Boyd seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:10 PM

**Note:** In accordance with Resolution 2006-17, a three-minute time limit per speaker is enforced. If any individual decides to appeal a decision made during this meeting, a verbatim record of the proceedings will be required as per Florida Statute 166.041(3)(A).

**Attest:**

X

John Barkley
City Manager

X

Roger Page
Chair