

Parks, Recreation & Harbor Advisory Committee

Council Chambers

Bangor City Hall

January 8, 2026 5:15pm

Welcome & Introduction:

Members Present: Ryan Robbins Jennifer Potter, Brianna Woodworth, Richard Trott,
Susan M. Hawes City Councilor, Suzette Furrow

Staff Present: Tracy Willette - Parks & Recreation (Director)

The Parks, Recreation and Harbor Advisory Committee meeting on January 8, 2026, covered several key topics:

Meeting Administration

- The meeting began with a review of the December minutes, which were unavailable due to audio issues during that meeting.
- Ryan Robbins was appointed as the chair of the department advisory committee for the calendar year. Oversee meetings, communicate items to be included on agenda

Facilities Master Plan and Project Recommendations

- The committee discussed the **2021 Facilities Master Plan**, focusing on adherence to the plan and capital requests for equipment and projects.
- **Dakin Pool:** Friends of Dakin Pool Group, efforts to be wrapped up. Working with group to add additional amenities of shade and possible water feature. Funds to be shared with the city by Friends of Dakin
- **Cascade Park:** Efforts are underway to register it as a historic place, and engineering and design work is progressing for this significant city park. Fountain leak challenge
- **Broad Street:** Possible addition of Food Truck Vendors
- **Hannibal Hamlin Parkway:** Assessments of the rock retaining walls in the middle of the stream are planned before tackling other projects in the parkway.
- **Kenduskeag Stream Trail:** Recent improvements include added lighting from the county parking lot off Court Street to Eastern Fire Protection on Harlow Street. Gateway Park we added lighting and reclaimed path & sidewalk and added lighting. The Bangor Rotary is partnering with the city for trailhead improvements and signage. Both Financially and with volunteers. Next to focus on sections along Valley Ave
- **Play Structures:** The committee is considering replacing play structures at various parks, starting with Talbot Park, and exploring options for more inclusive and interactive designs.
- **Fairmont Basketball Court:** The plastic-tiled basketball court was retiled a year ago and is holding up well, receiving significant use.
- **Community Garden:** The community garden is the largest in the state with 270 beds, although plans for paving the parking lot have been postponed.

- **Pickleball Courts:** Williams Park now has three outdoor pickleball courts, converted from an unused tennis court.

Long-Term Projects and Challenges

- **Essex Wood:** The city forestry department is developing a forest management plan for Essex Wood, which offers significant birding opportunities.
- **PAL Center:** A placeholder of \$840,000 has been allocated for the rehabilitation or removal of the PAL Center building at Essex Woods, which currently houses the Maine Academy for Modern Music.
- **City Forest Management:** Efforts are ongoing to maintain the health of the city forest through vegetation management, including wreath-making classes using clipped greenery and contractor work to cut back roadside vegetation for wildfire mitigation.

Recreation Center and Arena Discussions

- **Sawyer Arena:** The arena faced a two-and-a-half-week delay in opening due to significant damage to its original chiller, which was eventually replaced with a rental unit covered by insurance. The ice is built on a sand floor, a unique feature.
- **Park Ranger Program:** The council-approved park ranger program has helped mitigate issues like misuse and drug use in parks and on trails.
- **Recreation Center Ballot Question:** The committee plans to revisit discussions with the council regarding a ballot question for a new recreation center, with a potential vote in June.
- **Facility Tours;** Members are invited to tour the existing recreation facility and Sawyer Arena to understand the current conditions.
- **New Facility Timeline:** If the ballot question is approved, a new facility at Griffin Road could take three to four years to materialize after final engineering and design.

Adjourned at 6:38pm

Next meeting: February 12, 2026