

Parks & Trees Commission Meeting – June 8, 2026

Present: Elizabeth Shook, Bob Williams, Barb Willens, Lisa Riente, Rickey Macklin, Michael Eddings. New commission member Rachel Thomas was welcomed. Commissioner Barbara Canty was absent.

The meeting was called to order by Elizabeth Shook.

Approval of Previous Minutes

A motion was made and approved to accept the minutes from the previous meeting. A correction was made to the spelling of Lisa's name in the previous minutes.

Committee Business

Discussion was held regarding quarterly park assignment rotations for July through September. Elizabeth will prepare and email a spreadsheet listing all parks and commission members to track assignments and future rotations.

Park Updates and Events

The Billy Silver memorial bench dedication was scheduled for Friday at 10:00 am at Broad Street Park. Commission members were invited to attend.

Park Reports

Edgewood Park was clean and well maintained. Broom Park needed grass and bush trimming, and limbs were observed on the ground; overall condition was acceptable.

Kirkwood Commons looked good following the recent festival. Dead trees had been removed. Minor playground litter was observed, and one electrical breaker box remained propped upright.

Magazine Park and Broad Street Park were reported to be in good condition. The wind sculpture lighting was not functioning, and staff will verify whether it was disabled due to previous complaints.

Boykin Park was clean and in good condition, with increased park use observed. Oakland Park's trees appeared healthy, and no issues were reported. A replacement tree had been installed at Scott Park, and staff will obtain a quote to replace the damaged tarp.

Riverfront Environmental Park was heavily used during the weekend, and wildlife activity remained high. Fishing and small non-motorized boats were discussed; motorized boats should not be permitted. Goose droppings continued to create maintenance concerns, and pet waste stations had been refilled.

Wastewater staff continued monitoring the beaver den at Riverfront Environmental Park. Previous sinkhole repairs remained stable, although beaver activity appeared to have shifted beneath the repaired area. The area will continue to be monitored.

City Arena Park's basketball courts remained heavily used. Significant litter was present along the fence line, and broken glass was removed by a commissioner. Members discussed relocating trash cans closer to the playground and the lack of shade near the courts. Trees appeared healthy, and a sprinkler head was observed on the west side of the playground.

Quotes are being obtained for basketball court resurfacing at City Arena Park. Additional pricing will be requested for possible shade structures. Members discussed community cleanup events as a way to improve park conditions and encourage neighborhood ownership.

Town Green remained in excellent condition, and minor sidewalk chalk graffiti was removed. Monument Square, Archives Park, and Hampton Park were reported to be in good condition. Hampton Park continued to receive regular use. Hardware was still needed to reinstall one playground swing, and vines were observed on several trees and shrubs.

Connect Camden App

Urgent park concerns should be reported immediately through the Connect Camden App, email, or phone. Elizabeth advised that commission comments are compiled after each meeting and distributed to Parks, Streets, Sanitation, and other appropriate departments.

An incorrect address location and a broken link to the City Parks map were reported in the app. Elizabeth will coordinate with City staff to investigate both issues.

Additional Business

Members discussed severe trimming of azaleas at Rutledge Square and concerns about private citizens hiring landscapers to work on public property without City authorization. City approval must be obtained before landscaping work is performed in parks.

A resident requesting a memorial tree had been provided the City's approved tree list. The City was awaiting the resident's response before proceeding. Members also suggested including the tree species on future memorial plaques to provide educational value.

Invasive aquatic vegetation at Kendall Lake was discussed. Previous treatment efforts included herbicide application and sterile grass carp. Staff will continue monitoring conditions.

Elizabeth reviewed commission appointment expiration dates and explained that members who complete three consecutive years must remain off the Commission for one year before becoming eligible for reappointment.

The Commission discussed communications sent by individual commissioners. Members agreed that commissioners should clearly identify when comments are made as private citizens and that official Commission positions should be discussed and approved before being communicated publicly.

Legacy Tree Program

Discussion continued regarding a possible Legacy Tree Program, including replacement or expansion of the Legacy Bench Program, funding and cost recovery, City financial procedures, planting schedules, staff responsibilities, and Council approval requirements.

Elizabeth will meet with Finance and City administration regarding the feasibility of accepting donations, determine how funds could be managed, and report her findings to the Commission. Members will review the proposal during the summer recess and continue discussion at a future meeting.

Staff and Community Updates

Members requested additional standard park benches at Riverfront Park and discussed previously removed benches near Town Green.

The Commission agreed not to hold a July meeting, following its normal summer schedule. Members also discussed the possibility of a July river cruise social gathering.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting: Monday, August 10, 2026.