



AGENDA
Spencer Parks and Recreation
Advisory Board
Regular Meeting
10:30 a.m.

DATE
September 2, 2026

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 10:30 a.m. Regular meetings focus on action items, departmental reports, and other business. This meeting is open to the public and is held in the Hilda B. Palmer Board Room at Town Hall, located at 460 South Salisbury Avenue. Please find meeting agendas, minutes, and other information at spencernc.gov/town-government-and-services/appointed-boards-and-commissions/parks-recreation-advisory-board.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER – Chair Bob Pendergrass**
- 2. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
- 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 5, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes**
- 4. NEW BUSINESS**
 - a. DISCUSSION – Upcoming Events; Various Town Staff Members**
- 5. OLD BUSINESS**
 - a. UPDATES ON PROJECTS – Special Projects Planner Joe Morris**
- 6. NEXT MEETING DATE – October 7, 2026**
- 7. ADJOURNMENT**

MINUTES
SPENCER PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 5, 2026

The Town of Spencer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board met in regular session in the Hilda B. Palmer Board Room at Spencer Town Hall on Wednesday, August 5, 2026, at 10:38 a.m.

Members present: Chair Bob Pendergrass

Vice Chair Dionne Dixon

Secretary Vivian Koontz

Member Phip Sparger

Also present: Alderwoman Erin Moody, Town Clerk Anna Kanode Ward, Special Projects Planner Joe Morris, and Town Manager Peter Franzese.

Absent: Member Jim Gobbel and Member Jack Moore.

Chair Pendergrass called the meeting to order.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The Board reached consensus to adjust the agenda in order to better accommodate the presenters' time.

PRESENTATION – Plays in the Park; Connie Dinkler, Local Playwright, and Spencer Dixon, Rowan Arts Council

Connie Dinkler, a playwright, business owner, and Spencer resident, and Rowan Arts Council Executive Director Spencer Dixon presented the proposed Town of Spencer Annual Outdoor Play Festival, also known as Plays in the Park, and answered questions from the Board.

Mr. Dixon reviewed the RAC Grassroots Arts Grant program, including eligibility, allowable costs, timelines, and match requirements. The application deadline was September 7, 2026, with awards anticipated in early October. Projects must be completed by June 30 of the applicable fiscal year, with final reporting due thereafter.

The Board discussed whether the Town should apply directly or partner with a nonprofit or theater group. A municipal application may limit eligible costs, while a nonprofit partner may offer greater flexibility. Potential costs included lighting, microphones, security, advertising, compensation, and minimal set, prop, or costume needs. Grant awards typically range from approximately \$2,000 to \$9,000, with most awards between \$2,000 and \$5,000, and require a one-to-one match.

The Board discussed forming a committee or working group to explore budget and timeline needs, grant opportunities, and potential partners.

Action

Vice Chair Dixon moved to recommend staff pursue the proposed play festival concept and form a subcommittee to facilitate planning, including consideration of grant funding, budget, timeline, sponsorships, and partnerships. Secretary Koontz seconded the motion, which carried by a vote of 4-0.

PRESENTATION – Mobile Play Program; Amy Smith, Rowan County Public Health

Rowan County Public Health (RCPH) Health Education Specialist/Wellness Coordinator Amy H. Smith presented the Mobile Recreation initiative and answered questions from the Board.

The 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment identified Spencer as a health empowerment zone. Mobile Recreation is a field-day-style service that brings fitness, active play, organized games, and supervised youth activities to residents. The program promotes healthy lifestyles, reduces cost and transportation barriers, encourages youth and family participation, and supports mental health through outdoor activity and community connection. RCPH would cover the City of Salisbury contract cost, resulting in no direct expense to the Town.

Action

Secretary Koontz moved to support moving forward with the Mobile Recreation partnership and related contract coordination. Vice Chair Dixon seconded the motion, which carried by a vote of 4-0.

PRESENTATION – StoryWalk; Sierra Fitts, Rowan County Public Health

RCPH Public Health Education Program Manager Sierra Fitts presented the proposal to expand StoryWalk into Spencer and answered questions from the Board.

StoryWalk would promote literacy, outdoor activity, family engagement, and health by placing a children’s book on outdoor sign panels along a walking route.

The program would require approximately 22 aluminum pedestal signs. RCPH would fund the signs and books, while the Town would provide the location and installation. The Rowan County Literacy Council would assist with book purchases and monthly changes.

Potential locations included Library Park and the future Stanback Forest Center area. Library Park was noted for its literacy connection and existing pathways. The Stanback Forest Center was discussed as a possible future location for books related to natural history, biology, and outdoor education.

Action

Vice Chair Dixon moved to support moving forward with the StoryWalk project. Member Sparger seconded the motion, which carried by a vote of 4-0.

UPDATES ON PROJECTS – Special Projects Planner Joe Morris

Special Projects Planner Morris presented his monthly report and answered questions from the Board.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 3, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Dixon moved to approve the June 3, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes. Member Sparger seconded the motion, which carried by a vote of 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Sparger moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chair Dixon seconded the motion, which carried by a vote of 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 11:56 a.m.

APPROVED BY:

Bob Pendergrass, Chair

ATTEST:

Anna Kanode Ward, Town Clerk

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Updates – September 2, 2026

1. Stanback Forest Center

- Staff is working with designer Pete Bogle on the project.
- The Town is in the process of hiring a civil engineer to survey and map the site.
- Purchase orders have been issued to Bogle Architectural Firm and Len Raker Landscape Architect.
- Once survey work is complete, design for exterior landscaping will begin.
- The architect has received the building's as-built drawings, and interior design plans are now underway.

2. Grant's Creek Blueway

- The civil engineer has provided a no-rise certification document.
- The study has been shared with the Rowan County Floodplain Administrator and the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).
- Review of the no-rise certification is underway.
- Staff will seek bids for site clearing and grubbing in October.
- Construction of the streamside canoe/kayak launch is expected to begin this spring.

3. Rocky Branch Loop Trail

- Staff is in the process of submitting design-build criteria to the Board of Aldermen for review.
- The goal is to seek requests for qualifications beginning in October.
- Ideally, a designer and construction team will be identified in November.
- Design work would take place over the winter.
- Construction is anticipated to begin in early spring.

4. Committee report on one act play festival

- A small committee of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board met with Connie Dinkler to discuss the possibility of a one-act play festival to be held at Spencer town park.

- The committee discussed strategies for implementing the festival based on the creation of a nonprofit organization and applying for grants through the Rowan Arts Council.
- The best option for moving the festival forward this spring is to seek sponsorships and plan an event sometime in April.
- Discussions are ongoing and more reporting will be made back to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

5. Reports to Board of Alderman

Reports have been provided to the board of Alderman on three separate items. In August, the board heard a proposal from the Rowan County Master Gardeners Association to create a pollinator garden at the Yadkin River trail head. The pollinator garden will be created in memory of Jean McCoy, a Spencer resident and master gardener. The board of aldermen have also heard updates from the Rowan County Health Department on the Mobile Play program and the StoryWalk project.