



DEPARTMENT of PUBLIC LANDS
Parks, Natural Lands, Urban Forestry, and Trails Advisory Board Meeting
Steward, Advocate, Activate
June 4 2026

Join in person: Public Lands Administrative Building: 1965 W 500 S., Salt Lake City, UT 84104, Upstairs Parks Training Room

Join Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89614127667?pwd=2aaQ3OtzD5dzPcvSwX0xmbBgOnffvj.1>

Meeting ID: 896 1412 7667

Passcode: 06\5170

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

I. Call to Order, Introductions, and Welcome (5:00 pm)

- a. Austin Whitehead, Ginger Cannon, Steve Bloch, Sarah Foran, Tom Merrill, Aaron Wiley, Kerri Nakamura

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes (5:05 pm)

- a. Minutes from May 7, 2026
- b. Mr. Bloch motioned to approve the May meeting minutes. Mr. Whitehead seconded. The Board voted to approve the May meeting minutes. Mr. Merrill abstained.

III. Public Comment (5:10 pm)

- a. Verbal comments are limited to no more than 3 minutes; 15 minutes total. Written comments are welcome.
- b. Board meetings are intended to be a place for people to feel safe and comfortable in participating in their government. A respectful and safe environment allows Board meetings to be conducted in an orderly, efficient, effective, and dignified fashion, free from distraction, intimidation, and threats to safety. We welcome everyone and ask all meeting participants to keep comments free of discriminatory language.
- c. Tom Green, District 4, came to discuss youth baseball. A group is interested in forming a program for the Babe Ruth league, which is for ages 13-15. There

was a required coaching certification, and all the coaches are now certified. There are now some funding issues, and the rulebooks have changed around 5 years ago. The organization doesn't have a field that meets the standards of other teams in the country. The kids are playing on softball fields. He continued to discuss how the fields are being used and managed. He is asking for the department to build a field, and they'll run the programming.

- d. Amy Jacobs, District 1, came to discuss the bridge closure at Cottonwood Park. She shared that this closure causes significant accessibility barriers for seniors, people with disabilities, those with mobility limitations, and owners of injured dogs. The longer interim route is not an equivalent substitute for the bridge closure. There are also safety concerns not only for people but also for dogs in an emergency. People in the community feel shut out of the dog park, and she is asking the City to prioritize restoring this connection and to explore temporary access solutions. She proposed using the northeast quadrants of the Cannon Building and installing pedestrian-style chain-link gates.
- e. Jim Webster, District 6, came to discuss Miller Park. A pathway was installed in the park to encourage people to stay in the park rather than face people's backyards. Due to the oil spill, the path was destroyed, including the retaining structures. Mr. Webster wrote a CIP application 10 years ago to reinstate the lower path. This morning, his house was broken into, but it happens a lot. The police encouraged him to put up barbed wire, and the Public Lands asked him to take it down. This is his first concern. Mr. Webster would also like to know the status of the CIP regarding construction and who has been awarded the bid. He's concerned with who won the bid, how much money is available, and the qualifications of this group.
- f. Anne Cannon, District 6, inquired about the property the Church of Latter-Day Saints is putting up for sale, and if there are any options to extend the property in Wasatch Hollow. This might eliminate the expensive bridge and staircase from Rosecrest if there were an opening at this juncture. She wanted to share this with the Board and the Department to see if they're interested. The kids already enter the park this way.

IV. Director's Report (5:25 pm)

- a. Summary of current high-priority department items – Kim Shelley
- b. Ms. Shelley shared her Director's Report time with Commander Cluff from the Green Space Squad for a presentation. Commander Cluff shared his screen to display his presentation. This program was developed within the last year. This group not only do enforcement in the parks, but they also do a lot of community engagement, as well. They patrol the parks on bikes and

undergo extensive training and practice in different scenarios before entering the green spaces. They have teams on the Westside and Eastside. The units introduced themselves. Because of grant funding and City Council support, they've been able to conduct almost 80-90% of their enforcement in public spaces. They also help out in high-crime areas, as needed. Commander Cluff said this team was formed because, in 2024, they didn't have enough bike squads to cover public spaces in parks and address the safety issues parks face. Commander Cluff continued to share why the team was developed.

- c. Ms. Foran asked if there is a downtown squad and if there's any interaction with the Green Space Squad. Commander Cluff said there are three squads, and they interact regularly as they are allowed to travel about a mile outside the radius of those shelter areas. There is some overlap in those areas. One benefit of the Green Space Squad is that they're not call-responsive, so they can go anywhere quickly as problems pop up. Commander Cluff continued to discuss the Green Space Squad.
- d. Their areas of responsibility are proactive enforcement in public spaces, community outreach and visibility, targeting drug markets on the Westside, responding to community concerns, and being available to assist other officers around the city where needed. Commander Cluff continued to break down the Green Space Squad's areas of responsibility. He shared the main contact information for Sergeant Austin, the primary point of contact for the Green Space Squad. They work Tuesday through Friday, noon to 10 PM, but they have other bike officers and Green Space Squads on throughout the week to funnel calls and requests to.
- e. Commander Cluff shared many issues that are reported after the fact, and there's not much they can do about them. They need to observe something in their presence to take enforcement action. He asked the Board to pass this information along to the community. They would rather check on the issue than have something going unreported. Mr. Wiley shared he's already seen a big impact on the Westside. Mr. Wiley asked if there's a regular hotline people can contact. Commander Cluff said that if it's related to public spaces, Sergeant Austin is the best contact. There's also the non-emergency dispatch. Mr. Wiley asked what to do with the needles they pick up in parks. Commander Cluff said officers can clean those up, as well as the Advantage Cleanup team that they contract with.
- f. Mr. Whitehead asked how they interface with the Park Ranger Program. Commander Cluff said well. They did a great job, especially in Cottonwood Park, when there were many issues. Ms. Cannon asked if the next time the Board receives a Park Ranger update, the Green Space Squad could provide an update on their summer stats and further data coordination. Ms. Foran asked what most of the calls are in response to and what the outcomes are. Sergeant Austin started on the Green Space Squad in November. Ms. Cannon said they may need more time to get more data. Commander Cluff

said they could get that data together and come back and report it. The Board and staff continued to discuss the Green Space Squad. Mr. Bloch asked if the scope of work is extended to the Foothills. Commander Cluff said they tend to stay where the problems are, but they can go up into the Foothills. Outside the Green Space Squad, there are mitigation officers dedicated to addressing homelessness issues.

- g. Ms. Shelley thanked Commander Cluff for his work and partnership. Ms. Shelley shared that Maria Romero had to step away and expressed thanks to Ms. Larsen for stepping up as Board Manager through at least August. Ms. Shelley introduced Jon Rudeas as the new Director of the Planning & Design Division. Mr. Rudeas introduced himself and his background. The Board asked Mr. Rudeas about some of his prior projects and experience.
- h. Ms. Shelley said the Board was made aware that on May 21st, Public Lands gave their budget presentation to the City Council, which went well. City Council has until June 30th to adopt a balanced budget. The June 2nd public comment period was the last, but some Council members are still seeking input. Surveys are available on their website.
- i. Ms. Shelley shared that in 2023, Public Utilities commissioned a water-efficiency report that showed water use across sectors. Public Lands uses about 4% of the resources across the entire service area for Public Utilities. Residential accounts for about 53%, commercial properties account for about 23%, and institutional accounts for about 14%. Ms. Shelley continued to discuss water usage.
- j. Ms. Shelley shared that they've been working with Public Utilities, the State Division of Water Quality, and the Salt Lake County Health Department to notify people that E. coli has been detected in the water at City Creek. It varies throughout the year, and water quality monitoring shows that October is the highest month for E. coli. Ms. Shelley and the Board continued their discussion of the City Creek water issue and water usage. Ms. Shelley will have Ms. Larsen send out a written update for Pioneer Trail.

V. Board Actions (5:35 pm)

- a. Fields Committee Proposal – Aaron Wiley, Board Member
- b. Mr. Wiley said he'll need to push this discussion out as they're still consolidating the committee work. Mr. Wiley said the goal of this committee is to make it simple for parks to understand what fields can be used for each level of baseball recreation and what constitutes a safe baseball field. They want to help the Department understand the different field types. This would be an ad-hoc committee. The plan is to bring this back for discussion in August.

VI. Staff Presentations, Updates & Discussions (5:40 pm)

- a. Public Lands Events Presentation - Jana Cunningham, Communication & Engagement Manager

- b. Ms. Nakamura shared a heartwarming story about a constituent in her neighborhood who said they haven't missed Yoga in the Park at Jefferson Park since it started, and it's the best part of their week. Ms. Cunningham shared her screen to display her presentation, and she's here to share how PNUT can support Community and Volunteer Events. Ms. Cunningham passed out a brochure that will also be mailed out. Ms. Cunningham shared how her team handles their promotion. With their small budget, they do a lot of organic external promotion (newsletters, social media, canvassing, community calendars, etc.). They've also been posting yard signs in the park about a week before an event. The yard sign includes a QR code that links to the event webpage. The team has a small budget for paid promotional options, including the brochure mailer, paid ads, and the City Cast newsletter.
- c. Ms. Cunningham shared how PNUT can support is becoming familiar with the events in your respective district, following the Department on social media, subscribing to newsletters, sharing the events on your social media platforms, clicking interested and shared on Facebook with you see the event, gather and share local community email lists and/or forward our events to those lists, share information with your community connections and community/neighborhood councils, attend events, and send us your photos to share. Mr. Wiley asked if there was a way to filter events by district. Ms. Cunningham said that at this time, the calendar does not have the capacity to filter by district. The Board and staff continued to discuss Community and Volunteer Events.
- d. Ms. Cannon shared that the Board is actively working to increase its engagement and is tracking this. Mr. Merrill asked about the timing of the newsletters. Ms. Cunningham said it's once a month, and it's typically spaced a week apart. Mr. Merrill said he's going to schedule some time on social media to post in the groups he's part of. Mr. Whitehead said he's added the Public Lands calendar to his personal calendar, and it's been a game-changer. The Board and staff continued to discuss Community and Volunteer Events.
- e. Ms. Foran asked if they have records on attendance or neighborhood successes. Ms. Cunningham said not at this time, but it's something they could do in the future. They are exploring Placer AI, which can analyze demographics, how many people are coming to the park, and the times, helping them target their advertising. Ms. Foran suggested raffles to track attendance. The Board and staff continued to discuss Community and Volunteer Events.
- f. Mr. Bloch asked how they decide where to hold events. Ms. Cunningham said they receive direction from the Mayor's office on which areas of the city to activate. About 65% of these are on the Westside. Mr. Bloch asked about activating District 3 more. Ms. Cunningham said it has a lot to do with budget, how many events they can do each year, and direction from the

Mayor's office. Ms. Larsen added that District 3 has unique parks, and finding the right event for those parks can be challenging. Mr. Bloch asked who runs the movie nights. Ms. Cunningham said other organizations do movie nights. Last year, they had to cancel the movie event at Lindsey Gardens because of the weather. Ms. Nakamura added that they're also trying to activate parks that aren't as naturally activated by the community. The Board and staff continued to discuss Community and Volunteer events.

- g. Ms. Foran shared that there could be a limitation when people look at the permitting process and become overwhelmed, but that there could be a way to partner with local community groups to offer services that were previously provided. Ms. Larsen shared that one of her goals as Partnership Coordinator is to find partners that could eventually take on some of the events the Community and Volunteer team hosts, so our team can expand its capacity. For example, they are working to finalize a partnership with the Tracy Aviary to help us activate our spaces outside of Public Lands events. The Board and staff continued to discuss Community and Volunteer Events.
- h. Ms. Shelley and Ms. Larsen shared some examples of community partners that have taken a more active role in hosting what used to be Public Lands-led events. Ms. Cannon reminded the Board that we have. Public Lands Department, not a Parks and Recreation Department. She said the number of events, given the Department's current staffing and funding, is amazing, given the capacity. Most cities have full recreation programs. The Board continued its discussion of recreation and park programming.

VII. Board Discussion (6:20 pm)

- a. Administrative Update – Public Lands Staff Member
- b. Ms. Larsen said she has no updates but asks for patience during this transitional time as Ms. Romero leaves. Ms. Larsen does have a full-time job outside of Board management, so she asks for understanding if there is a drop in the level of service that's been provided to the Board.
- c. Committee Reporting (6:25 pm)
 - i. Foothills: Steve Bloch, Board Member
 - ii. Mr. Bloch said the committee and staff are trying to figure out a path between what the Department committed to do, which was to have a community engagement process as they worked through the Foothill open space zones, what the environmental dispute resolution team proposed, what the City Council and Mayor's office has asked for, and what the committee can do, and the expectations. He hopes to accomplish more with the Board during its month off to discuss this further. He asked for the timeline regarding getting East City Creek on ShapeSLC. Ms. Shelley said Mr. Fonarow wants the committee to have time to provide input. They will discuss further in their next meeting.

- iii. Mr. Merrill asked for a 15-second overview of the Foothills Committee. Mr. Bloch said there are 7 open-space zones in the Foothills. The committee's focus will be to interface with the department, review, and meet with stakeholders to drive those initiatives to the finish line. The Board continued its discussion of the Foothills Committee.
 - iv. Communications: Sarah Foran, Board Member
 - v. Ms. Foran said they have no updates but are working to reschedule their meeting due to changing schedules.
 - vi. Urban Trails: Thomas Merrill, Board Member
 - vii. Mr. Merrill said they are getting their committee members back and establishing SMART goals.
 - viii. Jordan River Trail
 - ix. Mr. Wiley said they're working to update their SMART goals and better understand how to support the community and Public Lands. The current scope is no longer relevant. Mr. Murdock shared that Ms. Larsen is working to reinstate an Adopt-a-Spot program. The Jordan River Commission is working to provide the committee with a list of every business within a quarter mile. The Department will draft a letter to accompany the Adopt-a-Spot program information.
 - x. Bylaws: Ginger Cannon, Vice Chair
 - xi. Ms. Foran asked where the draft Bylaws are. Ms. Cannon said there's a folder, but they aren't ready for Board review and comment. There are some updates they need to include. Once they have legal review, they'll bring it to the Board for action.
 - xii. SCAAMP: Ginger Cannon, Vice Chair
 - xiii. Ms. Cannon said that with the internal leadership changes in Public Lands, some things have been put on hold. They have a review of the CIP criteria, which they hope to make usable by this fall for the Board's process and their assessments. They are also looking at documentation for the asset management plan.
- d. Board comments, question period & request for future agenda items **(6:40 pm)**
- e. Ms. Foran asked for clarity on a volunteer request button on the website. Ms. Cunningham said we can do private volunteer events for groups. The Board and staff discussed how staff coordinate, support, and help run these events. Mr. Murdock discussed how this is also launching the department's desire to implement an Adopt-a-Spot Program.
 - f. Mr. Bloch requested a written update for the Fisher Mansion project. Mr. Murdock clarified that Public Lands does not run it. Mr. Murdock said Facilities runs it. Public Lands maintains the grounds, and Facilities maintains the building.

- g. Mr. Wiley asked for an update on which westside projects will be completed this year. Ms. Cannon said staff updates the project websites regularly and encouraged board members to direct the community to them. Mr. Murdock suggested that the staff can provide an update on what will be included in the tranche two bond.
- h. Mr. Whitehead asked if there was a place to see the status of all open water fountains and bathrooms. Mr. Murdock said all water fountains and bathrooms should be open unless under maintenance, and if they are closed for any reason other than maintenance, report it on ShapeSLC.
- i. Ms. Foran asked for an update on the bathroom study. Ms. Shelley said they can provide a written update.
- j. The Board continued to discuss the written update and presentation requests.
- k. [Board Engagement Opportunities/Requests](#)
- l. Ms. Cannon asked everyone to update their tracking sheet for community event participation. She and Ms. Nakamura have been discussing doing something for National Public Lands Day. Ms. Larsen shared that the Community Events team is holding a weeklong scavenger hunt and is partnering with outside organizations (community councils, non-profits, Friends of Groups) to host locations and days. She proposed PNUT potentially running a location and day. The Department is hosting a large volunteer event for National Public Lands Day. The Board discussed options for participation. Ms. Foran said she can share her group connections to see if they'd be interested in running an event.
- m. Mr. Wiley asked about funding for America 250. Ms. Shelley and Ms. Cunningham said they have additional funding they are putting towards the July 3rd Drone Show. There's improved PA, more drones, and we will be handing out limited food vouchers. The Board and staff continued to discuss America 250.
- n. Staff is working on scheduling interviews for the open PNUT positions. Mr. Whitehead asked about the applicant pool for the indigenous position. Ms. Shelley said they're still working on it.
- o. Written Update:
 - i. Taufer Park Update
 - ii. Special Events
 - iii. Park Ranger Program
 - iv. Water Conservation
 - v. Recent Council Agenda Items
 - vi. Next Meeting: Thursday, August 6, 2026

VIII. Adjourn (7:00 pm)

- a. Mr. Wiley motioned to adjourn. Mr. Merrill seconded. The Board voted to adjourn the meeting.

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