

### Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

02/11/2026

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Meeting Date

04/08/2026

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Date Minutes Were Approved



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Lilly Lazo (Apr 9, 2026 09:29:38 PDT)

Chair

### CERTIFICATION AND ATTESTATION

I hereby certify that the accompanying document is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the aforementioned meeting. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.



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Mariana Manzanarez (Apr 9, 2026 08:12:41 PDT)

Staff Liaison





## **City of Avondale**

### **Parks, Recreation & Libraries Advisory Board Meeting**

#### **Board Members**

Lilly Lazo, Chair

Ivan Carreno, Board Member

LaChrisha Dourisseau, Board Member

Timothy Kroll, Board Member

Cecilia Lopez, Board Member

Patti Nielson, Board Member

Amy Soucinek, Board Member

Kenneth Shoaff, Alternate Member

#### **Parks, Recreation & Libraries Department**

Corey Larriva, Director

Stacy Swainston, Assistant Director

Mariana Manzanarez, Administrative Assistant



# Parks, Recreation & Libraries Advisory Board Meeting Notice & Agenda

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

**MESQUITE CONFERENCE ROOM | 11465 WEST CIVIC CENTER DRIVE | AVONDALE AZ, 85323**

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Request to Speak: Anyone wishing to speak regarding items listed on the agenda or under unscheduled public appearance should submit a Request to Speak online at <http://www.avondaleaz.gov/requesttospeak> prior to consideration of that agenda item.

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## REGULAR MEETING

**6:00 PM**

*Physical access to the conference room will be available 30 minutes prior to the meeting.*

### 1. CALL TO ORDER BY CHAIR

### 2. ROLL CALL AND STATEMENT OF PARTICIPATION BY THE STAFF LIAISON

**Present:** Cecilia Lopez, Lilly Lazo, Timothy Kroll, Patti Nielson, Amy Soucinek, LaChrisha Dourisseau, Ivan Carreno, Kenneth Shoaff

**Absent:**

**Staff:** Corey Larriva, Stacy Swainston, Mariana Manzanarez

### 3. UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES (Time is limited per person. Please state your name.)

### 4. CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR VOTING

The Board discussed nominations for the position of Chair. Patti, LaChrisha, and Tim nominated Lilly to continue serving as Chair. The vote was unanimous in favor of Lilly remaining in the role.

For Vice Chair, Amy Soucinek was nominated by Patti. LaChrisha and Lilly expressed their agreement with the nomination. The vote was unanimous in favor of Amy serving as Vice Chair.

**Motion:** Patti Nielson

2<sup>nd</sup>: LaChrisha Dourisseau

**8-0 Approved**

### 5. MINUTES

The Board will consider the approval of the December 10, 2025, meeting minutes. The Board will take appropriate action.

**Motion:** Patti Nielson

2<sup>nd</sup>: Cecilia Lopez

**8-0 Approved**

### 6. SPECIAL EVENT INPUT – UPCOMING SUMMER AND FALL EVENTS

The Parks, Recreation and Libraries Board reviewed and discussed board member input regarding upcoming summer and fall events, including entertainment and activity planning.

Stacy provided an overview of feedback, outlining activities to maintain, improve, or modify for future events.

Discussion began with Avondale Fiesta. The event features live stage music, including Banda and Mariachi performances. Four board members shared that they have attended the event and expressed appreciation for its family-oriented atmosphere, free admission, and easy accessibility. Parking was discussed as an area for improvement, with suggestions for additional parking assistance to improve traffic flow. It was noted that extended stays by attendees enjoying the entertainment contribute to congestion. Potential partnerships with rideshare services such as Uber were suggested to alleviate parking challenges. Additional ideas included reaching out to local schools to invite youth bands to participate, including the West Point Mariachi band. Board members discussed incorporating more food competitions and enhancing patio-style spaces to create a more inviting atmosphere for restaurants and encourage greater engagement and food sampling. Working with newer vendors and food trucks to introduce them to the community was also recommended, with La K'lera mentioned as a potential vendor addition.

Information was then presented regarding the Memorial Day Ceremony. The event currently includes memorial exhibits, a musical tribute with an orchestra, a traditional flag ceremony honoring those who served, and a vendor providing free breakfast burritos, along with community partners and activities. Amy shared that she has connected with a nonprofit veterans' organization and suggested providing additional resources to attending veterans, such as haircuts and informational services. The Board discussed bringing back the Hometown Heroes banners to offer another opportunity for recognition. Lilly suggested inviting honored heroes to attend and recognizing one individual during the program. Other ideas included incorporating a guided walk through the exhibits, hosting a flag-folding demonstration as suggested by Corey, and placing flags on veterans' gravesites, with Goodyear Cemetery identified as a potential location. The possibility of adding public competitions was also mentioned. One board member noted having attended the ceremony previously.

The Juneteenth Celebration was also reviewed, with information provided about planned activities. Shirt giveaways were discussed, along with a Dance History Month performance coordinated through Freemance that would involve student participation. Food truck options were suggested, including Ocho's Rios for jerk chicken. Louisiana Flavors was mentioned as a potential vendor but is currently closed. Lilly recommended incorporating more historical context and educational elements into the event and inviting Black-owned businesses to participate through crafts, storytelling, or vendor opportunities. The celebration was identified as a strong opportunity to host an open mic segment or showcase local businesses. Ivan suggested inviting We Rise to participate. Kenneth proposed hosting a T-shirt artwork contest and reaching out to local art teachers to engage students. The Board emphasized the importance of community involvement and engagement to increase attendance, noting that six people attended the previous event.

Information was also presented regarding the Light Up the Sky event. The event features the largest fireworks shells in the Valley, a variety of food trucks and exhibitors, a Kid Zone with sports games, live music, crafts, and face painting. The use of the barn as a cooling space was complimented as an effective way to help attendees escape the heat. It was noted that most attendees arrive around 7:25 p.m. to watch the fireworks. This year, the event will be co-branded and included in advertising efforts. Food trucks are booked through the raceway and pay a portion of their proceeds to the raceway. Vendor fees and sales overhead were discussed, and it was noted that the City of Avondale pays a \$500 fee for barn use under its agreement with Phoenix Raceway. Additional ideas included hosting a watermelon eating competition divided by age groups, as suggested by Amy, and creating quiet zones for children who may feel overstimulated or prefer smaller crowds. Corey noted the potential for the barn space to be used for other events. Patti complimented the police department for effectively managing parking and maintaining traffic flow. Lilly emphasized the importance of fostering community unity and suggested incorporating a unifying message or ribbon, potentially distributed through libraries or local businesses. She also mentioned the idea of a community quilt project or a bounce-back item to encourage continued engagement.

Lastly, information was shared regarding Mercados and Melodies, including event dates and times. The upcoming event is scheduled for March 20 and will feature a country theme. Cecilia inquired about the possibility of hosting a Child Entrepreneur Night, staff noted it may return next year or potentially be incorporated into Kid Fest. The Board concluded its discussion after reviewing recommendations and feedback for continued event enhancement and community engagement.

## 7. PROJECT OVERVIEW - DONATELA PARK

Staff will provide an overview of the park design and the construction timeline for the upcoming project.

Corey provided additional information regarding Donatela Park, including its exact location at 113th Avenue and Palm Lane.

The project will develop a 5.37-acre neighborhood park and has been included in development plans since 2010. Donatela Park will feature a shaded inclusive playground, restrooms, three picnic ramadas, two open turf areas, a basketball court, a quarter-mile loop path, an outdoor fitness station, a pollinator garden, LED area lighting, and designated parking.

The City of Avondale is working closely with ADA guidelines to incorporate inclusive playground features that accommodate individuals of all abilities. Construction is expected to take approximately 14 months. There is also interest in exploring the addition of pickleball courts as a potential future enhancement. Tim asked whether neighboring homes were included in the planning process, and Corey confirmed that surrounding residents have been engaged, with multiple meetings held to address concerns such as parking and traffic. Discussion also included how the walking path would accommodate morning walkers. Tim complimented staff on continuing to improve park designs with each new project.

Groundbreaking is anticipated in March, with construction continuing into next spring. Tom asked whether the city uses a consistent group of contractors and Corey explained that contractors bid on projects and are selected through that process. Cecilia asked about the water at the Crystal Gardens ponds, and it was noted that the trails in that area are open to the public. Patti mentioned sand volleyball and suggested incorporating shade structures, potentially funded through bond dollars. It was noted that sand used for similar amenities has previously been sourced from Nebraska. Lilly inquired about bike trails, and Corey shared that the bike trail project is in its second year of design, with existing gaps that need to be addressed. The long-term goal is to connect Festival Fields and Friendship Park, ultimately linking multiple areas throughout the community.

Ivan asked whether modifications are being made to existing parks to improve ADA accessibility, continuing the Board's discussion on inclusivity and enhancements across the park system.

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion:** Patti Nielson

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Timothy Kroll

**5-0 Approved**

Meeting Adjourned at 8:00 pm

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Individuals with special accessibility needs, including sight or hearing impaired, large print, or interpreter, should contact the City Clerk at 623-333-1000 or TDD 623-333-0010 at least two business days prior to the meeting.

Personas con necesidades especiales de accesibilidad, incluyendo personas con impedimentos de vista o oído, o con necesidad de impresión grande o intérprete, deben comunicarse con la Secretaria de la Ciudad al 623-333-1000 o TDD 623-333-0010 al mínimo dos días hábiles antes de la junta.