

**PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

Phil Bazemore Active Adult Center
500 S. Jefferson Street
Monroe, NC 28112
Tuesday, July 21, 2026 - 6:00 PM

AGENDA

Item 1 Public Input – Chairman McGee

Item 2 Approval of Minutes – May 19, 2026 – Chairman McGee

Item 3 Parks and Recreation Division Updates – Mr. Hovanec and Ms. Yandle

A. Bazemore Active Adult Center, Community Centers, Athletics – Mr. Hovanec

B. Monroe Aquatics and Fitness Center – Ms. Yandle

Item 4 Upcoming Parks and Recreation Events – Mr. Hovanec

CITY OF MONROE
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING
PHIL BAZEMORE ACTIVE ADULT CENTER
500 W. JEFFERSON STREET, MONROE, NC 28112
MAY 19, 2026 – 6:00 P.M.
MINUTES

Members Present: Jose Ayala, Deborah Dillion, Debra Huhnerkoch (arr. 6:21p.m.), Chairman Franco McGee, Joseph Milner, and John Thomasson

Members Absent: Jalen Sowell and Fatima Garcia

Staff Present: Pete Hovanec, Alison Nichols, Jeff Wells, and Leann Yandle

Visitors: Kevin Mussen, Russell Phillips (arr. late)

Chairman McGee called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

Item No. 1 Public Input Ms. Nichols read the guidelines for public input aloud. Chairman McGee invited Kevin Mussen to speak.

Mr. Mussen introduced himself as a resident of Monroe and expressed his appreciation for all that Parks and Recreation has done to upgrade the disc golf course at Dickerson Park, including the funding and the work of the grounds crew. Everything happened quickly, and the disc golf community is very appreciative. The player count has doubled, and the park is always packed with pickleball and disc golf players.

Item No. 2 Approval of Minutes – March 17, 2026 Mr. Thomasson made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2026 meeting. Mr. Ayala seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with the following votes:

AYES: Ayala, Dillion, McGee, Milner, and Thomasson

NAYS: None

Item No. 3 Parks and Recreation Division Updates

- Ms. Yandle presented Monroe Aquatics and Fitness Center updates. Membership total is 6,133. There are 15,984 members, and staff saw 33,000 visits in April. The water park opened last weekend with 260 visitors on Saturday and 275 on Sunday. Ms. Yandle classes being offered, including mindful meditation, CPR, a Novant stress and mental health seminar, and parents' night out. Ms. Yandle went on to review current and upcoming initiatives and programs, including Purses with Purpose and a swim clinic led by Special Olympics gold medalist Cullen Jones. Craft show registration will open in June, and the America 250 Fitness Challenge is underway. The

board members congratulated Ms. Yandle and her staff for reaching their goal of 6,000 memberships and discussed the Purses with a Purpose community outreach. Ms. Yandle also noted that summer camp registration is full for every week except the last two weeks when the year-round schools are back in school.

Although the public input period had already ended, Chairman McGee invited visitor Russell Phillips to come forward to speak as he was not present at the start of the meeting. Mr. Phillips stated he is from Rock Hill, South Carolina and is with the House Head United organization. They try to make awareness of the different months through their house music celebrations. Many communities have enjoyed the awareness the organization brings and the good feelings the music brings. They have been doing this for about two years. In October they did breast cancer awareness. This month they are doing veterans' month. They are excelling a lot in New Jersey and Atlanta and are hoping Monroe is a good place to start out grass roots.

Chairman McGee asked if the proceeds from the house events go to non-profits.

Mr. Phillips responded that his organization is a 501 (c)(3) and that they donate checks and canned goods to some organizations like the Salvation Army.

- Mr. Hovanec presented Bazemore Active Adult Center updates, stating participation at the center has remained steady and the Senior Games were successful. The center recently hosted a shred event, scam and fraud prevention programs, and intro to AI classes. 104 people attended the senior prom, and there are currently 52 people on an overnight trip to Myrtle Beach. Mr. Hovanec mentioned upcoming programs and initiatives like the America 250 Backyard Bash and Alzheimer's Awareness Month and Alzheimer's Walk. Staff is considering re-vamping the ceramics program to be more inclusive. Community partners of note included the Cooperative Extension, Wingate Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy, the Sheriff's offices, Cardinal Hospice, and the Union County Arts Council.
- Mr. Hovanec said that the new participant tracking system has been installed at Dickerson Community Center and reviewed the numbers from May 1-17, noting that it is difficult to track pickleball numbers since it's outdoors. Summer camps at Dickerson and Sutton Park start June 8, and Prime Time in the Parks starts June 18. The Staff is already planning the Back-to-School Jamboree. The Juneteenth celebration will be June 13 and will include performers and vendors with a focus on providing education and a family-friendly atmosphere. Music on Main has started, and plans for the July 4th celebration are underway. The board discussed ways to track outdoor participants at Dickerson, including the possibility of outdoor scanners. They also discussed the new pickleball courts recently opened in Indian Trail and the possible effects on numbers at Dickerson.
- Mr. Hovanec stated that the first youth indoor soccer season has begun quite successfully with 130 children registered. Flag football registration is currently open. Mr. Hovanec reminded the group that Parks & Recreation has partnered with Monroe Athletic Foundation for track this year. Baseball season is underway, and the numbers have been very good this year. In the fall, staff will hold a coaches' meeting and appreciation dinner. Coaches have been outfitted with gear and access to videos they need. Staff has had no problem finding coaches this year. There are a lot of

new coaches, and staff wants to retain them. Starting in January, staff wants to extend the program age limit from 12 to 14 to give kids who want to play a sport but might not be able to play for school teams can play. Staff would also like to expand interests and offerings, e.g., offering disc golf clinics and more exposure to golf. There are a lot of opportunities afforded by the Parks & Recreation facilities. Staff would also like to expand adult athletics such as basketball and soccer leagues.

Item No. 4 Facility Rental Regulations Update Mr. Hovanec advised the board that City Council adopted the policy as requested. As this has been extensively discussed over the last several months, no further discussion is needed at this time.

Item No. 5 America 250 Update Mr. Hovanec updated the board on the plans the America 250 committee has made so far, including monthly patriotic movies shown at the Dowd Center Theatre, the expanded July 4 celebration, the Serve Monroe initiative, the passport program at the Monroe Science Center, and the possibility of a 5k in September. Mr. Hovanec explained plans to create a community mural made of 600 tiles hand-painted by community members and assembled on the side of a building downtown. The Communications department will also create a video project “250 Voices for 250 Years” compiled of video clips of community members answering a prompt. The board discussed the participation of surrounding communities outside Monroe, which has been minimal.

Chairman McGee noted that he would like board members to have name badges to wear at community events.

Mr. Hovanec stated that he and Dr. Milner had met to discuss ideas which might be brought before the commission at a later date.

Ms. Dillion made a motion to adjourn. Dr. Milner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with the following votes:

AYES: Ayala, Dillion, Huhnerkoch, McGee, Milner, and Thomasson

NAYS: None

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.



STAFF REPORT

TO: Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: July 21, 2026

FROM: Peter Hovanec, Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Director

PREPARED BY: Peter Hovanec, Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Director

SUBJECT: Parks and Recreation Division Updates

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission will be presented updates of plans and programs in each of the four Parks and Recreation divisions.

REVIEW

Parks and Recreation divisions include Athletics/Special Events, Community Centers, Monroe Aquatics and Fitness Center, and the Bazemore Center for Active Adults. Each of these divisions interfaces daily with the public and provides services and activities contributing to the quality of life of Monroe and Union County residents.

RECOMMENDATION

Presented for informational purposes; no action is needed at this time.



STAFF REPORT

TO: Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: July 21, 2026

FROM: Pete Hovanec, Parks and Recreation Director

PREPARED BY: Pete Hovanec, Parks and Recreation Director

SUBJECT: Upcoming Parks and Recreation Events

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Staff is sharing the events and activities scheduled for the remainder of 2026.

REVIEW

The Parks, Recreation and Tourism department is responsible for the majority of City events and public activities. Most recently the department hosted the community for two celebrations: the Juneteenth Celebration at Belk-Tonawanda Park and the Independence Day celebration held in Downtown. Both events drew large crowds despite near record-breaking heat. Our large community-wide Back to School Jamboree was also held this past weekend.

Moving forward, the department has the regularly scheduled Music on Main events in July, August and September. Additional events like an America 250-themed 5K scheduled for September 20 and our first “sanctioned” Disc Golf Tournament on September 20, also America 250-themed, have been added to our calendar. We will also continue our “Prime Time” weekly events at the community centers, which will run until school starts.

Staff is coordinating the Monroe Arbor Day event and will once again host and organize our Halloween Happenings event in early October and our Christmas Tree Lighting in early December.

Another event being discussed City-wide is a Veterans Day Celebration. The specific details for the event are not yet known, but Parks and Recreation Staff will play a major part in its development.

Each community center will also continue to host smaller events as well.

RECOMMENDATION

For informational purposes only; no action needed at this time.