

**PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

Phil Bazemore Active Adult Center
500 S. Jefferson Street
Monroe, NC 28112
Tuesday, August 18, 2026 - 6:00 PM

AGENDA

Item 1 Public Input – Chairman McGee

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

Item 3 Staff Notes for Informational Purposes Only – July 21, 2026 – Chairman McGee

Item 4 Parks and Recreation Division Updates – Mr. Davis and Ms. Yandle

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

B. Monroe Aquatics and Fitness Center – Ms. Yandle

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.

CITY OF MONROE
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING
PHIL BAZEMORE ACTIVE ADULT CENTER
500 W. JEFFERSON STREET, MONROE, NC 28112

JULY 21, 2026 – 6:00 P.M.

STAFF NOTES FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission of the City of Monroe was scheduled to meet at the Phil Bazemore Active Adult Center located at 500 W. Jefferson Street in Monroe, North Carolina at 6:00 p.m. on July 21, 2026. Due to the lack of a quorum, Chairman Franco McGee proceeded with the agenda for information purposes for those attending. Staff notes were prepared *for information purposes only*.

Members Present: Jose Ayala, Fatima Garcia, Chairman Franco McGee, and Joseph Milner

Members Absent: Deborah Dillion, Debra Huhnerkoch, Jalen Sowell, and John Thomasson

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

Visitors: Samantha Buttrey and Ty Buttrey

Due to the lack of a quorum, Chairman Franco McGee proceeded with the agenda for information purposes for those attending. Staff notes will be prepared for information purposes only. The meeting began at 6:05 p.m.

Item No. 1 Public Input No one had signed up to speak during Public Input, but visitor Ty Buttrey said that he was a former professional baseball player who recently moved to Monroe and would like to be involved in the baseball community here. Visitor Samantha Buttrey introduced herself as a former Charlotte Hornets dancer who loves helping with youth development.

Mr. Hovanec and Chairman McGee expressed interest in further conversations.

Item No. 2 Approval of Minutes – March 17, 2026 No action taken due to the lack of a quorum.

Item No. 3 Parks and Recreation Division Updates

- Ms. Yandle stated that the Monroe Aquatics and Fitness Center currently stands at 6,360 memberships and about 17,000 members. In June the MAFC saw 45,000 visits between the main facility and the water park. Ms. Yandle reviewed current and recently completed community initiatives including a school supply drive for UCPS and a purse drive for Turning Point. Summer day camp is almost over and has been full and successful. The new blocks are installed at the indoor pool, and the MAFC can now host swim meets. Upcoming programs include the Water

Park Splash Bash, swim lessons, the continuation of the mobile book bus, and Hornets Hoops day camp. The annual craft show will take place in October, and the America 250 Fitness Challenge continues through October. Staff hosted a sensory-friendly swim session that saw low attendance, but that may have been due to conflicts with church attendance. Staff plans to try again during a different time slot.

- Mr. Hovanec reviewed data collection for Dickerson Community Center on the screen, which reflected steady attendance for table tennis and line dancing. The center saw 800 visits in June, not including day camp attendance. Prime Time Fridays at the community centers have been successful, averaging about 40 youth per event. Summer camp will end August 7, and staff is preparing for after-school programs at Dickerson and Winchester Community Centers plus a partnership with an area church at J Ray Shute Community Center. The Back-to-School Jamboree was held on Saturday and had over 1,000 attendees. The Bazemore Active Adult Center is very busy and well-utilized. It is purposely free for all participants because the center accepts grant money. Staff will need to address providing more parking in the future. The center is averaging about 215 visitors per day.
- Mr. Hovanec stated that the athletics program is booming. 240 participants are playing flag football, which is way up from past years. Soccer registration is underway. Staff has expanded the upper age limit from 12 to 14 and has received a strong response. Indoor soccer was very successful, and staff would like to rebuild the baseball and softball programs.

The board discussed positive changes at Dickerson Park since the pickleball courts have been installed and the disc golf course has been improved, including a decrease in crime calls. Board members also discussed baseball fields being used for soccer practices and the possibility of introducing micro-soccer.

Chairman McGee asked Mr. Wells to look into the possibility of using green space at Concord and Patton Avenues as a playground.

Item No. 4 Upcoming Parks and Recreation Events Mr. Hovanec stated that the Juneteenth celebration had roughly the same amount of people as last year, but they were scattered a little more and didn't stay as long because of the heat. There were about 1,300 people this year and about 1,500 people last year. Overall, it was a good success and good community event.

Chairman McGee said that the event was very organized and that the success of an event isn't always reflected in the numbers. The event was well put together and applicable to the holiday.

Mr. Hovanec reviewed the 4th of July event, which saw about 10,000 people, about 1,000 more than last year. Staff closed two Downtown streets for this event for the first time in a long time and hosted a hot-dog eating contest. The event had a lot of cross-departmental support, and the athletics and event staff did an excellent job.

Mr. Hovanec discussed upcoming events, including Music on Main concerts, the Arbor Day event, which

will probably happen the second week in November at Dickerson Park, and the America 250 5k on September 19 at MAFC/Parks Williams Park. The Professional Disc Golf Association is also hosting a sanctioned disc golf tournament, the Bearskin Creek Classic, on September 19-20 at Dickerson Park. There is a possibility of a Veterans Day event, and Halloween Happenings and the Christmas Tree Lighting are scheduled as usual.

Ms. Nowell, the Downtown Director, presented the America 250 Community Mural project. The mural, comprised of individual tiles painted by community members, will be 8' x 12' and will be displayed in Downtown Monroe. Ms. Nowell handed out tile kits to board members to take home and paint.

The board discussed Parks and Recreation contracts and partnerships as well as the importance of family programming. The board also discussed concerns community members had about security at the 4th of July event and the importance of proactive communication. Chairman McGee asked Mr. Wells to pass along that community feedback to the police.

Mr. Hovanec said the Winchester pickleball schedule has changed slightly and is now open 10 am – 12 pm for ages 50+ and 12 pm – 2 pm for all ages.

The meeting ended at 6:49 p.m.



STAFF REPORT

TO: Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: August 18, 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.