

RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSION FOR THE PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE

CITY-BROOKS PARK MASTER PLAN + LAKES VISION SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Amended Meeting Minutes

Meeting Minutes amended per Commissioner Carl Stages' request at June 29, 2026 meeting.

The City-Brooks Park Master Plan + Lakes Vision Special Committee met at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, at the Eugene A. Young Administrative Offices at Milton J. Womack Park, Room 1800, 6201 Florida Blvd., Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

- I. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by BREC Superintendent Janet Simmons, at 10:00 a.m.

- II. Roll Call

Committee Members present: Carl Stages, Rob Stuart, Zach Corbin, Chris Meyer, Jason Andreasen, Mike Raby, Randy Albarez, and Janet Simmons.

Committee Members absent: Cricket Gordon, Mike Polito, and Christina Melton.

BREC Staff present: Angela Harms, members of Sasaki and the public were also present.

Staff reminded committee members that the meeting was scheduled for discussion purposes only in accordance with Louisiana Open Meetings Law. No public comment period was held, and no final decisions were to be taken during the meeting.

- III. Review and Adoption of Prior Meeting Minutes

- a. Resolved, That the reading of the minutes of the City-Brooks Park Master Plan and Lakes Vision Special Committee Meeting of March 13, 2026, be dispensed with, and that they be approved as written.

Motion by R. Stuart; Second by Z. Corbin; Janet Simmons called for the vote with all in favor, none opposed. Approved by unanimous consent.

- b. Resolved, That the reading of the minutes of the City-Brooks Park Master Plan and Lakes Vision Special Committee Meeting of April 1, 2026, be dispensed with, and that they be approved as written.

Motion by Z. Corbin; Second by R. Stuart; Janet Simmons called for the vote with all in favor, none opposed. Approved by unanimous consent.

- IV. Information Items/Presentations

- a. Stakeholder Engagement

- i. Presentation of Current Survey Results and Stakeholder Feedback

Josh Brooks of Sasaki summarized survey results from over 3,000 responses, highlighting consistent feedback, especially near City-Brooks Park. Respondents prioritized improved paths, safer access, water features, events, markets, performance spaces, family-friendly food, and adventure play. Views on the golf course were mixed, with Sasaki

noting it can coexist with expanded park uses. Full survey comments, many focused on golf, will be shared.

ii. Discussion of Any Other Suggested Forms of Engagement

The committee discussed whether existing engagement data is sufficient to advance the master plan and highlighted upcoming outreach, including a June 11 community meeting and prior in-person efforts that increased survey responses. Members reviewed gaps in data collection, particularly around visitor demographics, and emphasized the role of key attractions like Knock Knock Children's Museum and Baton Rouge Gallery in drawing regional visitors. Discussion also focused on improving engagement methods, noting limitations of current surveys and the need for broader, more inclusive outreach, including one-on-one stakeholder meetings and input from underrepresented groups. While recent stakeholder discussions were described as productive, members expressed interest in hearing more candid community feedback. The committee considered conducting a statistically valid survey to strengthen decision-making, acknowledging potential costs, timeline, and the importance of third-party administration. Members also stressed evaluating how new data would align with existing feedback and requested full survey results, including open-ended responses, for further review.

b. City/Brooks Park Master Plan Alternatives

i. Presentation of Current Alternatives

Josh Brooks presented two City-Brooks Park alternatives based on stakeholder input and site analysis, focused on preserving history, improving access, and strengthening connections. Both include enhanced recreation, infrastructure, and stormwater improvements, with a recommendation to retain a reduced nine-hole golf course. Concept 1 ("Big Loop") features a park-wide circulation loop with expanded recreation and amenities. Concept 2 ("Active Armature") centers on Dalrymple Drive with organized connections, distributed recreation, and enhanced lakefront use. The committee was asked whether to move forward with these options or explore additional alternatives.

ii. Discussion on Any Other Suggested Alternative Designs

Mike Polito asked about a potential track near McKinley Junior High and whether there is community interest. Josh noted Sasaki could study the idea and emphasized broader needs for active recreation, while Christina Melton said a track was requested by community groups. Discussion also covered trail connectivity, with Josh noting limitations if the golf course remains, and Rob Stuart highlighting Concept 2's stronger connections. Participants discussed options if the golf course were reduced or removed, with Josh suggesting more passive open space and Christina raising governance concerns tied to the Children's Museum. There was general agreement that modest golf reductions could improve the park overall, though costs, design expertise, and long timelines (10–15+ years) were noted. Committee members expressed mixed preferences between Concepts 1 and 2, but broadly supported moving forward with both. There was strong consensus to retain golf, reflecting community feedback, and not to pursue an option eliminating it entirely.

c. Governance Recommendations

i. Presentation of Current Recommendations

Josh Brooks presented proposals for two different conservancy models for the overall governance and operations and maintenance plan. Recommend by Sasaki was the Unified Conservancy to manage the University Lakes system and City-Brooks Park, while BREC, LSU, and the City-Parish retain land ownership. The model includes exploring an Economic Development District for funding and maintaining public oversight. The conservancy would gradually assume operations and maintenance, with next steps including legal agreements, board formation, and feasibility studies. Estimated annual operations are \$5–\$6 million, with total project investment potentially reaching \$120–\$130 million. Another conservancy model would be the Public Land Ownership mechanism.

ii. Discussion of Governance and Implementation Considerations

Committee members raised questions about how the conservancy model would impact City-Brooks Park and partner organizations, including Knock Knock Children’s Museum and Baton Rouge Gallery. Key concerns included how existing agreements, maintenance responsibilities, and long-term funding—particularly for major capital needs—would be addressed. There was also discussion about governance structure, potential funding mechanisms such as an EDD, and the importance of clearly communicating the conservancy’s role and benefits to the public. The team noted that further analysis is needed on partner relationships and financial projections, and that planning and governance should move forward together. It was agreed that additional stakeholder engagement is necessary, alongside continued evaluation of City-Brooks Park alternatives and further discussions among landowners to determine whether the conservancy model is the appropriate path forward.

V. New Business – NONE

VI. Committee Member Questions

VII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 2:10 p.m. by Z. Corbin; Second by R. Stuart; BREC Superintendent Janet Simmons called for the vote with all in favor, none opposed. Approved by unanimous consent

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Angela Harms", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Angela Harms
BREC Director of Planning & Engineering