

**RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSION
FOR THE PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE**
Special Meeting – 5:00 p.m.
BREC Administration Building
6201 Florida Boulevard
Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Commission Minutes
September 11, 2025

Call to Order

A special meeting of the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC) was held at BREC's Administrative Offices on September 11, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Vice Chair Clarice Gordon. Commissioner Wade Evans offered the invocation and Commissioner Kenneth Pointer led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was taken and a quorum of Commissioners was present, including Clarice Gordon, Vice Chair; Kenneth Pointer, Treasurer; Mike Polito, Dwayne Rogers, Lon Vicknair, David McDavid, Carl Stages and Dustin Yates. Commissioners Donna Collins Lewis and Collis Temple, III were absent. Staff members present were Janet Simmons, Interim Superintendent; Reed Richard, Assistant Superintendent of System Planning; Aneatra Boykin, Chief Administrative Officer; Maurice Velasquez, Interim Chief Operating Officer; Reed Richard, Assistant Superintendent System Planning; Johanna Landreneau, Interim Chief Human Resource Officer; Corey Luttrell, Robyn Lott, Jim Fleshman, Angela Harms, RaHarold Lawson, Mike Raby, Steven Knight, Tia Edwards and Ebony Allen. Murphy Foster, legal counsel, was also in attendance. The rest of the audience consisted of other BREC staff, sign language interpreters, media, and the public.

Public Comment

Commissioner Gordon announced that public comment would be allowed prior to a vote being taken on any agenda action item and explained the process to be observed.

Reports of Officers and Standing Committees

Commissioner Gordon acknowledged, Interim Janet Simmons for the Superintendent's Report.

Interim Superintendent Simmons informed the Commission that BREC received the Keep Louisiana Beautiful Healthy Communities Grant. She told the Commission that she would be attending the NRPA (National Recreation and Park Association) Conference and the AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums) Conference with Zoo Director Jim Fleshman.

Commissioner Polito inquired about the anticipated impact on the audit completion following the resignation of Don Johnson, former Chief Financial Officer.

Interim Superintendent Simmons responded that she has been meeting with Finance Director Rhonda Williams, and does not anticipate any delays in the audit's completion.

Commissioner Polito sought clarification regarding Interim Superintendent Simmons' statement that ten percent of the Imagine Your Parks 3 (IYP3) ten-year master plan task list has been completed. Interim Superintendent Simmons confirmed that was correct.

Commissioner Rogers requested a summary of the tasks completed to date, and Interim Superintendent Simmons stated that she would provide that information.

Commissioner Rogers also requested a copy of the Capital Improvement Plan, noting he

was unsure if he had previously received it. Interim Superintendent Simmons conferred with Reed Richard for clarification and responded that the plan was included in last year's budget. She added that, although Commissioner Rogers should have already received it, she would ensure it is provided to him again.

Commissioner Rogers inquired about the future location of the BREC Foundation office. Interim Superintendent Simmons explained that the plan is to possibly relocate the office to the former café space adjacent to the Goodwood Library.

Commissioner Evans also asked for a copy of the capital improvement plan.

Interim Superintendent Simmons then read the following resolution:
Resolved, That the Commission accept the 2025 Mid-Year Report.
Motion by Mr. Stages
Second by Mr. Pointer

There being no discussion, Commissioner Gordon called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 9

Nays: 0

The motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Gordon introduced the following discussion item, which included a public comment:

DISCUSSION: The Commission will review and discuss the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between BREC and the Civic Collaboration Foundation, including BREC's funding commitment, the Foundation's responsibilities, and the anticipated benefits of the Master Plan for City-Brooks Park and the University Lakes system.

Commissioner Gordon recognized Mr. Peter Davis for a two-minute public comment. Mr. Davis expressed concerns regarding the execution of the agreement between BREC and the Civic Collaboration Foundation (formerly Gulf Coast Restoration and Protection Foundation).

Commissioner Gordon acknowledged Interim Superintendent Simmons, who noted that she had distributed hard copies to them with her summary of the cooperative endeavor agreement (CEA), which included her concerns with the contract.

Commissioner Pointer moved to defer the discussion until he could gain a better understanding of the CEA and Commissioner Evans seconded. Commissioner Gordon agreed, stating that she also could not speak to discussing something she had just received that day.

For clarification, Interim Superintendent Simmons explained that the CEA itself had been shared with the Commission the previous week, but her summary was provided at the current meeting.

Commissioner Rogers also seconded the motion to defer, adding that he too could not discuss the topic without time to review the concerns outlined in the summary.

Commissioner Evans commented that if there were any "high points" requiring immediate attention, they should be discussed that evening to understand the urgency. Commissioner Evans rescinded his second to the motion to defer.

Commissioner Pointer added that he would like to hear from Chris Meyer with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation regarding the CEA. Mr. Meyer spoke about the benefits of this opportunity.

Commissioner Rogers called for a point of order. It was confirmed that Commissioner Pointer moved to defer the item and Commissioner Rogers seconded.

Commissioner Evans asked Commissioner Rogers if he would be willing to rescind his second in order to allow discussion on the item.

Commissioner Polito noted that if there is a motion to discuss the item on the floor and it is seconded, then discussion should proceed. Commissioner Gordon agreed. Commissioner Polito asked for Mr. Meyer to continue.

Commissioner Rogers again called for a point of order, clarifying that the current motion on the floor was to defer the item. He stated that discussion could only take place regarding the motion to defer, not on the agenda item itself.

Murphy Foster, legal counsel, supported Commissioner Rogers' point of order, adding that discussion should be limited to the motion to defer and that it was inappropriate for third parties, such as Mr. Meyer, to participate in the discussion.

Commissioner Polito continued that he would still like to discuss the original item.

Commissioner Evans suggested that we should have a motion and a second to discuss the item and then a motion and second to defer per Robert's Rules.

Mr. Foster offered guidance stating that the motion (item) was for discussion, but there was a motion and a second to defer the item. At this time, the only discussion to be had is a discussion amongst the board whether or not to defer the item.

Commissioner Pointer then withdrew his motion to defer.

Mr. Foster explained that with the withdrawal of Commissioner Pointer's motion, Commissioner Rogers' second became the motion. Without another second, the motion would die, allowing discussion on the item to proceed.

Commissioner Gordon seconded the motion to defer the item.

Commissioner Polito made comments that were inaudible.

Commissioner Gordon called for a roll call vote to defer the item. The results are as follows:

Yeas: 4	Ms. Gordon, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Vicknair, Mr. Stages
Nays: 5	Mr. Pointer, Mr. Polito, Mr. Evans, Mr. McDavid, Mr. Yates
Absent: 2	Ms. Lewis, Mr. Temple

The motion to defer failed.

Commissioner Gordon then opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioner Polito asked Mr. Meyer to clarify the purpose of the CEA, specifically

whether it would establish a governing body or create a working committee to form the governing body.

Mr. Meyer explained that the CEA would be an agreement for joint investment in a plan with BREC's partners. The purpose is to establish recommendations on governance and sustainability moving forward.

Commissioner Polito asked what BREC's contribution would be.

Mr. Meyer responded that BREC's contribution would be \$300,000. He noted that this amount includes elements of master planning for City-Brooks Park. The contract includes both a governance component and early stages of master planning, which are incorporated in BREC's IYP3 plan.

Commissioner Polito asked when the master planning would take place.

Mr. Meyer confirmed that a portion of the master planning would occur during the process. He further explained that the purpose of the CEA is to bring BREC, LSU, and the City-Parish together to understand long-term costs as well as potential early programmatic investments that have not yet been considered.

Commissioner Polito asked what level of vote or input BREC would have in creating the recommendation.

Mr. Meyer responded that BREC would first need to agree to accept the plan outlined in the CEA. Commissioner Polito clarified by asking who from BREC would sit on the committee.

Mr. Meyer responded that it would be the decision of the Commission.

Commissioner Evans asked Mr. Meyer to provide the Commission with a summary of the project that would include details such as the total number of acres, what is owned by whom, what land is available for future commercial activities, and whether over-the-water commercial activity should be considered. He noted that, on the surface, the project will require ongoing maintenance, but there is uncertainty about ownership responsibilities. Commissioner Evans also pointed out that the total project cost is \$531,000, with BREC covering over half of that amount. He then asked how many partners BREC has in this project and whether the cost-sharing arrangement is equitable. He concluded by stating that he thinks this is a great idea but has additional questions of this nature that need to be answered before moving forward.

Mr. Meyer responded that this would be part of the process and explained that the majority ownership belongs to BREC. He stated that a portion of the study would focus on determining what land is available and added that planning needs to begin now while dredging is still underway.

Commissioner Gordon asked about the fine details of the master plan. Mr. Meyer replied that the plan would outline responsibilities and clarify who is accountable for what. Commissioner Gordon noted that BREC is already maintaining City-Brooks Park. Mr. Meyer responded that BREC is not reaching the potential of its assets, to which Commissioner Gordon clarified that BREC already has governance over City-Brooks Park.

Commissioner Pointer then asked if there would be a community engagement component,

and Mr. Meyer confirmed that there would be.

Commissioner Rogers stated that BREC has had several opportunities related to City-Brooks Park that the Commission has chosen not to pursue. He questioned who on the Commission was representing this effort, noting that the idea was new to him.

Mr. Meyer explained that the conversation was initially started on BREC's behalf by former Superintendent Corey Wilson.

Commissioner Rogers added that he had no objection to the discussion but emphasized that the lake system's owners had done a poor job of maintaining it. He stressed the importance of keeping that issue separate from the park. He also requested a copy of the recommendations from the Trust for Public Land, stating that he had not seen or been provided with that information.

Mr. Meyer responded that the information had been presented during a workshop. Commissioner Rogers then asked BREC executive staff if anyone had a copy of the recommendations that could be provided. Mr. Meyer reiterated that the material was covered during a workshop organized with the Trust for Public Land.

Commissioner Evans asked when the workshop took place. Mr. Meyer replied that it occurred sometime last year. Commissioner Evans requested that the information be provided to the Commission to ensure clarity in decision-making. Mr. Meyer asked that the Commission or staff let him know what they needed.

Commissioner Gordon acknowledged Commissioner Polito.

Commissioner Polito made comments that were inaudible.

Commissioner Gordon recognized Interim Superintendent Simmons.

Interim Superintendent Simmons stated that she has a two-page document from the Trust for Public Land, which she will provide to the Commissioners. She stated that they should have also received a copy of the CEA and a document related to Sasaki. She also noted that she will instruct staff to follow up with phone calls in the future to confirm the successful delivery of the documents by email.

Commissioner Gordon announced that there were two more public comments before closing the discussion.

Commissioner Gordon recognized Mr. Linton Naquin for a two-minute public comment. Mr. Naquin believes that the lake project is too complicated to have the City Park involved.

Commissioner Polito interjected to ask Mr. Naquin a question regarding the conservancy and if it would simplify the current situation.

Mr. Naquin indicated that it would make sense for the Lakes Project, but the park (City-Brooks Park) shouldn't be involved and that he believes that while there is always room for improvement, BREC has done a great job maintaining the park.

Commissioner Gordon recognized Mr. Coleman Brown for a two-minute public comment. Mr. Brown expressed that there should be more time to review this CEA because there isn't

enough information.

Commissioner Gordon closed the discussion and acknowledged Interim Superintendent Simmons to proceed with the next item on the agenda.

Interim Superintendent read the following discussion topic:

DISCUSSION: The Commission will discuss current law regarding whether public agencies may fund the Interim Superintendent's membership or dues into civic or nonprofit organizations.

Motion to discuss by Mr. Evans

Second by Mr. Polito

Murphy Foster, legal counsel, recalled that this topic was raised at the previous meeting, during which there was a motion for BREC to fund certain memberships. It was noted at that time that BREC could not directly fund the memberships. However, research indicated that the BREC Foundation could pay for the memberships, provided the funds used are private funds raised by the Foundation and not funds given to the Foundation by BREC.

Commissioner Polito asked Mr. Foster whether BREC could be a member of an organization, such as Rotary. Mr. Foster responded that he would need to look into it but indicated that the answer would likely be no.

Interim Superintendent Simmons explained to Commissioner Polito that the City Club and Rotary bylaws require that memberships remain with individuals rather than organizations.

Commissioner Evans stated that an organization could be a member if the organization allows it, using as an example the City of Central's CEA with the Chamber of Commerce. He added that if the BREC Foundation is willing to pay, he has no objection, and this would allow the Interim Superintendent to exercise networking on behalf of BREC.

Interim Superintendent Simmons stated that last month the Zoo Foundation agreed to pay her dues for both organizations.

Commissioner Polito clarified that the Zoo Foundation is now part of BREC Foundation and he did not intend to discuss the Foundation's actions. He suggested that it would be beneficial for members of the BREC Commission to meet with the City Club and Rotary boards to explore the possibility of BREC becoming a member of their organizations.

Ms. Boykin offered clarification regarding BREC obtaining memberships. She stated that BREC, as an agency, can hold a membership as long as it remains with the agency rather than an individual. She added that the issue arises with organizations such as the City Club and Rotary, which only issue memberships to individuals, and BREC cannot pay for individual memberships.

Standing Committee Reports

Commissioner Gordon moved to the next item on the agenda under Standing Committee Reports reading the following resolution:

Resolved, that the Commission declare that an approximate 6-acre portion of Industriplex Park is obsolete and not needed for public purposes, and authorized the Superintendent to begin the process of selling the property at a minimum of its appraised value of \$975,000, pending all legal review. The proceeds will be used to reinvest in parks and recreation facility improvements in the same service area. Authorize the superintendent to execute the necessary documents.

Motion to defer by Mr. Stages
Second by Mr. Evans

There being no discussion, Commissioner Gordon called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 9

Nays: 0

The motion to defer passed.

Unfinished Business and General Orders

Commissioner Gordon read the next agenda item under Unfinished Business and General Orders as follows:

DISCUSSION: Rules and Regulations regarding the procedure for bringing newly created positions and/or classifications before the Commission.

Commissioner Gordon then read the resolution associated with the discussion as follows:

Resolved, That the Commission approve the addition of the Director of Athletic Program Development, the Director of Equestrian Operations, and the Director of Learning and Development to the organizational structure.

Aneatra Boykin, Chief Administrative Officer, explained that she, Murphy Foster, and Johanna Landreneau reviewed the law regarding newly created positions and classifications. She stated that the statutes provide that the Interim Superintendent has the authority to make recommendations to the Commission regarding positions and pay, while the Commission has the authority to make decisions on positions and pay.

She added that BREC's policy, Chapter 4, provides that the Interim Superintendent can make decisions regarding positions, pay, dismissal, and removal of employees, while the Commission has authority over classifications. She defined classifications as groups of positions, using "Directors" as an example. Ms. Boykin clarified that in the case of the Interim Superintendent, the proposal involves creating three new positions, not new classifications. She referenced the agreement entered into with the Interim Superintendent, which delegated this authority to her. Additionally, she cited R.S. 33:45:70.3 to explain that the Commission has the authority to establish rules governing how the agency operates.

Commissioner Stages asked whether the Routine Transaction Report would remain the same or include less information.

Ms. Boykin responded that the report would remain the same, noting that its purpose is to put the Commission on notice.

Commissioner Stages then asked how new positions are created. Ms. Boykin explained that new positions would be typically vetted through the HR (Human Resources) Committee before being brought to the Commission as an information item.

Commissioner Stages asked why the Commission would want to forgo maintaining the authority to make these decisions. Ms. Boykin stated that this is a matter for discussion by the Commission, but under the current policy, which the Commission has approved, the Interim Superintendent holds that authority.

Commissioner Stages added that the Commission has a fiduciary responsibility to be

informed about all matters affecting the agency.

Mr. Foster noted that several policies require review and stated that this policy is among the more complicated. He recommended that new positions be brought to the Commission for approval for the purpose of transparency.

Commissioner Stages asked how this could be addressed. Mr. Foster responded that currently personnel decisions remain within the Interim Superintendent's authority, while classifications would be presented to the Commission for approval.

Ms. Boykin added that Commissioner Stages could recommend that the policy be revised by the Commission.

Commissioner Stages asked when the policy was adopted. Ms. Boykin replied that it was adopted under the previous Superintendent, Carolyn McKnight.

Commissioner Evans stated that the Commission has the ultimate check and balance with the budget.

Commissioner Polito added that when the final board is seated that they could do a bylaws review.

Commissioner Gordon stated that she had previously read the resolution.

Motion by Mr. Evans

Motion by Mr. McDavid

Commissioner Gordon recognized Commissioner Stages who asked whether new departments are being created and if there would be support staff for these positions.

Interim Superintendent Simmons replied that the Athletic Director would not have support staff and would report directly to the Interim Superintendent. She explained that the Director of Equestrian already has staff, and the Director of Learning and Development is currently a part of the HR component of the IYP3 plan.

Commissioner Stages requested the salary ranges for the positions. Interim Superintendent Simmons stated that the Director of Equestrian may initially be a 1099 employee until BREC determines the long-term structure of the program.

Corey Luttrell, Human Resources Director, provided the salary ranges, noting that the 14 Pay Grade currently ranges from \$80,961.00 to \$129,538.00, and the 16 Pay Grade ranges from \$99,753.16 to \$159,604.00.

Commissioner Evans added that Farr Park is an important asset and expressed interest in determining how to utilize it to its fullest potential.

Commissioner Rogers asked how the Director of Athletics Program Development would function without any staff to oversee.

Interim Superintendent Simmons explained that the role is primarily focused on developing relationships with external entities, such as Visit Baton Rouge, to attract more participants for tournaments and selling our parks to the public.

Commissioner Stages asked how the role of the Director of Athletics Program Development would differ from that of the Director of Partnerships and Development.

Interim Superintendent Simmons explained that the Director of Partnerships and Development is focused on managing CEAs, MOUs, and other partnerships. She noted that the current Director of Partnerships and Development cannot take on additional responsibilities due to the volume of partnerships BREC currently manages.

Commissioner Pointer asked whether these positions would go through the normal hiring process or if candidates had already been identified. Interim Superintendent Simmons stated that the positions will follow the normal hiring process, although some potential candidates that have been identified who may have an interest in the positions.

Commissioner McDavid asked if the Athletic Director will be responsible for recruitment. Interim Superintendent Simmons confirmed that the Athletic Director will assist with recruitment in collaboration with Visit Baton Rouge.

There being no further discussion, Commissioner Gordon called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 9

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

New Business

Commissioner Gordon called for a motion to go into Executive Session.

Motion by Mr. Evans

Second by Mr. Pointer

Commissioner Gordon called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 9

Nays: 0

The motion passed.

Executive session started at 6:30 p.m. and concluded at 6:42 p.m.

Ms. Boykin read the following resolution following Executive Session:

Resolved, That the Commission, having concluded the Executive Session held pursuant to LSA-R.S. 42:17(A)(2), and after due consideration, hereby authorizes the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and General Counsel to negotiate and, if appropriate, execute settlement of Worker's Compensation claims regarding Marc Bowman and Byron Cage, upon terms deemed advisable, with final approval thereof authorized without further public disclosure at this time

Motion by Mr. Evans

Second by Mr. Polito

There being no discussion, Commissioner Gordon called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 9

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

Adjournment

Commissioner Polito made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rogers. Commissioner Gordon adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m. without objection.

Janet C. Simmons, Interim Superintendent
and Ex-Officio Secretary

Clarice Gordon, Vice Chair

DRAFT