PenMet Parks
Parks For All. Parks For Life.

Peninsula Metropolitan Park District

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STUDY SESSION MINUTES

October 20, 2026, 5:00 PM
PenMet Parks District Headquarters - 2416 14th Ave NW, Gig Harbor WA 98335

Call to Order Time: 5:01 pm

Commissioner Roll Call:

	Present	Excused	Comment
William C. (Billy) Sehmel, President	X		
Kurt Grimmer, Clerk	X		
Steve Nixon	X		
Maryellen (Missy) Hill	X		

Quorum: Yes

ITEM 1 Board Discussion

1a. Adaptive Recreation Discussion

Director of Recreation Services, Tracy Gallaway, provides brief presentation and overview of Adaptive Recreation programming, including highlights and 2027 programming overview.

The District received grant funding to support adaptive equipment; a passenger van with wheelchair transportation coming next month will very much expand opportunities for recreation on this campus; an RFP for adaptive wheelchairs will also be going out and we're working on a bid for beach wheelchairs, and a few additional equipment purchases.

In 2024, the District had no adaptive recreations programs; in 2025 we partnered with Megan Blunk for our first Adaptive Rec camp; this year programming has expanded and enrollment and participant hours continue to grow as more people learn about weekly basketball and the camp; more expansion planned for next year, based on budget and capacity.

The adaptive wheelchair program ran during basketball season as a 1-hour weekly clinic session; Megan advocated for a 90-minute session to allow for participants coming from further locations; this has served 8 – 11 unique individuals varying weekly on participation.

This year's Adaptive Sports & Rec Camp ran for three half-days, similar to last year, with expanded activities and features, serving 30 youth, ages 4 – 16 with about 11.5 hours of programming and total of over 300 participant hours.

In addition to program fees, financial assistance and legislative support helped offset expenses; overall cost recovery at approx. 67%; demographic data shows 20% in-district participants and a large portion from greater Pierce County area.

Our Adaptive Cycling Center, available to all ages and abilities, saw 194 unique riders with 639 total experiences and an average user rating of 5/5;

Outdoors For All shared that their other cycling centers, in Seattle and King County, took a few years to achieve these kinds of numbers.

Board Question: Do the numbers for total experience reflect how many times the bikes were used? **Answer**: Yes.

Board Comment: My son had some mobility issues while learning to walk, and our physical therapist has adaptive cycles available for use; maybe reaching out to area pediatricians, health care and physical therapy providers might be a good thing to explore for marketing and outreach

In 2027 we look to create an action plan with our Inclusion Task Force that feeds into our Strategic Plan; expand and look for ways to build opportunities that are diverse, barrier free and accessible to other populations, leveraging equipment and offerings. Our model of pilot, adapt and grow our program has served us well and we intend to continue.

Adaptive open gym will continue from 4:30 – 6pm as we try to create consistency for these very committed participants; once we have more equipment we may be able to expand hours or other offerings.

We want to do cross promotion with Outdoors For All for the cycling center and look at expanded programming with pop up events, veterans, climbing, kayaking and skiing. We see good flexibility for this as a shared resource; we could operate year-round if trained to operate and oversee the site.

Board Comment: Glad to hear skiing as an option; Vashon Parks runs a ski bus, as Gig Harbor did years ago, and Outdoors For All has a ski center at Snoqualmie; while we are being intentional and careful with planning, it would be great to see that possibility opened up for us. **Staff Response**: We have been discussing this in some detail and plan to pursue further.

Director Gallaway introduces Megan Blunk, who provides a presentation, referencing visual slides, on the Adaptive Sports & Rec Camp, beginning with thanks to PenMet and the Board for their support in putting this camp on, and creating a very special experience for all; we have received so much praise and gratitude from kids and parents for the attention to detail put in, many had never experienced anything like this; a large focus went into designing activities for kids on power chairs, who are an often-overlooked population, and we plan to continue doing more.

Have worked with hundreds of clinics, it has been a dream to design the camp and fulfill the operations; we did that by communicating with over 70 volunteers and 30 participant families to create av plan to meet the needs of each participant, and figuring, adjusting and adapting when things needed changes and moving on if a plan didn't realize.

Some participants included Laura, who we met at Healthy Kids Day at the Tom Taylor YMCA, who lives in Gig Harbor and whose nephew has a spinal cord injury but lives in Colorado; he had been hesitant to try adaptive sports, so we suggested he come down and volunteer so he flew in to help and now plans to return next year.

A young girl in a power chair we met at a Metro Parks booth, also came to camp; she wasn't ablet o move her arms in some ways and a little hesitant to join in; we provided pool noodles for her to use while playing tag and soon she was fully engaged and racing around in her chair.

Another participant who is new to Gig Harbor, has a recent disability and it is unknown if it will be temporary or forever; he joined basketball practices and recently joined the wheelchair basketball team for a tournament where he dominated based on the work he put in at PenMet drop-ins.

Met another participant in the PenMet parking lot while she was there trying out Outdoors For All; Megan approached her to talk about the upcoming camp; she had dreamed of being a camp counselor and was excited for the opportunity to join.

We used tools, ideas and equipment of all kinds, often creating them from scratch; everything from fishing net, PVC wheelchair guards, handheld leaf blowers, poles, pool noodles and others in addition to borrowing wheelchairs of all different types and sizes from all over like Portland, Seattle, Olympia and more; also Billy Shoes, a company that makes life-changing adaptive footwear that unzip easily and are extra wide so they can be worn during activities because they fit with leg braces.

Board Question: Did you design or build a lot of this equipment or tools?
Answer: Yes, a lot of these started as an idea last year and we worked with special ed teachers, PenMet staff to help test, build, upgrade, modify for use with different activities.

We held a lot of meetings, working with volunteers to help orient everyone, with gear, equipment, language, process to really help them understand how to help and keep things going and encouraging for campers; providing humor and laughter is very important, so we had costumes including a giant rooster and others too.

We ordered a small battery-operated pitching machine that could be held on campers' lap and then we positioned 3 different targets so they had to turn their chair and actually aim and be in control of the ball; the targets were also active participants who had to maneuver their chair to try and catch or dodge the balls.

We had a lot of participation and support from other agencies, including local firefighters who came out, volunteered and helped to educate the community and participated in wheelchair rugby; Nerf Gun business owner who is in a wheelchair, who we met at the Maritime Gig, volunteered, and brought equipment to camp; other volunteers came from all over, including State Rep Adison Richards.

Having volunteers assigned one on one allowed for more engagemeht; we had photo booths, comic book writing, drawing, pictures for campers; small toys, figurines, arts & craft station; cheerleading and more. We split activities into sections, with wheelchair rugby, basketball, catch stations set up with the portable blowers; also did some Cushman trail activities and mini golf. We also

hope to put on a professional development event for area PE Teachers, with occupational and physical therapists and Special Education professionals.

Board Comment: We are seeing that you are able to give autonomy and some independence to these kids and families who have lost some or all of that by giving them the ability to control tools or make the actions. It is surprising to learn that the little difference in having to turn and aim at different targets made such a big impact. These inventions and adaptive tools that you have brought to all these people through your careful thought and customization are exceptional. This is truly extraordinary and I feel very grateful that you and your energy and ideas have come to PenMet.

Board Comment: One thing I've noticed in all these slides is that every participant had smiles and are clearly enjoying themselves. Thank you for partnering with PenMet to put this camp on. I was recently on a camping trip in Eastern Washington and met someone a few sites down whose friends attended the adaptive camp and had the highest praise to share.

Board Question: How long did the planning take? **Answer**: It started right after last year's camp was wrapped. Everything ramps up as we get closer and understand who the campers and what the numbers are so we can get the details going to customize the experience for them and to coordinate vendors, tools, supplies, volunteers and work with staff is constant.

Board Comment: The way this camp was personalized to each attendee, based on the activity and the needs and wants of each participant, along with your care and attentiveness was incredible. These experiences are wonderful and the families are also so proud and happy for their campers.

The Board would like to learn more about opportunities to volunteer and how to continue encouraging and supporting this camp and program.

ITEM 2 Adjournment Time: 6:08 pm

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS MEETING PROCEDURES

The Board of Park Commissioners encourages the public to attend its Board meetings. All persons who attend Board meetings must comply with Board Policy P10-106 providing for the Rules of Decorum at Board Meetings. This Policy is to preserve order and decorum and discourage conduct that disrupts, disturbs, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of Board meetings. A copy of the policy is available at each meeting and at www.penmetparks.org.

Approved By the Board on November 3, 2026

William C. (Billy) Sehmel, Board President

Kurt Grimmer, Board Clerk

Attest: Amanda Walston, Board Secretary