

Missoula City Council Climate, Conservation and Parks Committee Minutes

December 10, 2025

10:10 AM

Council Chambers (in person) or TEAMS (virtually)

Attend in person: City Council Chambers, 140 W Pine, Missoula MT

Members present: Stacie Anderson, Bob Campbell, Daniel Carlino, Betsy Craske, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Sean McCoy, Eric Melson, Mike Nugent, Amber Sherrill

Members absent: Mirtha Becerra, Sierra Farmer

Others present: Staff Present: Corena Maurer, Ryan Applegate, Dale Bickell, Anneliese Brown, Cheyenne Campbell, Leigh Ratterman, Morgan Valliant, Annette Marchesseault, Lucy Rummmler, Anne Geiger, Haley Erickson, Melissa Glueckert
Others Present: Dr. Kyla Bennett, Jared Petrino, Katie Fairbanks, Martin Kidston, Tim Gray, Rob Roberts

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1.1 Roll Call

1.2 Approval of the Minutes from December 3, 2025

The minutes were approved as submitted.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.1 Allegiance Field Synthetic or Natural Turf

Matt Ellis discussed the use and impact of the stadium and expanding the shoulder season.

Matt spoke about community use of the stadium.

Matt discussed details of the turf that is being proposed for installation.

Dr. Kyla Bennett spoke about Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) testing and that PFAS from this field will contaminate the aquifer and river. They also discussed heat islands caused by artificial turf. They spoke against installing artificial turf.

Kristen Jordan spoke in support of the Paddleheads as a community venue. She asked for more clarification on the recycled tires being used.

Jared Petrino explained how the tires are prepared for use on the field. Jared also spoke about being the leading installer in the industry and they cannot be compared to other artificial turf fields.

Kristen asked what does recyclable mean and to walk through the process of recycling a field.

Jared explained the process for removal and installation of their turf.

Kristen asked how we will be protecting aquafer.

Jared does not have the information at this time.

Kristen states there is no way to prevent the harmful contaminates from getting into the aquafer from artificial turf.

Matt states the Paddleheads are committed to not using PFAS.

Gwen Jones asked who long artificial turf lasts compared to natural grass.

Mat responded that natural grass has a 20-25 year life and artificial turf would have 10-15 years on infield and 15-20 years on outfield.

Gwen asked when the last time the natural field was replaced

Matt gave a brief history of the field and maintenance.

Gwen asked about the process going from turf to grass and grass to turf.

Jared explained the processes.

Gwen asked about carbon capture and bio soil.

Jared discussed the carbon cache process.

Kristen talked about stormwater runoff and septic leachate. They talked about bio soil and how it works.

Ryan Applegate states he does not have adequate information to give a good response about runoff.

Stacie Anderson asked about the timeframe for a needed decision.

Matt states a decision is needed by the end of December for Spring installation.

Stacie asked if the current field is playable for another season.

Matt states yes, the field is playable as a backup plan.

Stacie asked for more clarification on the recycling process.

Jared discussed that this information and practice is being included in the contract.

Stacie asked for more data on the use of recycled tires.

Jared states they will provide testing results.

Matt says the information is in the packet provided by Donna Gaukler.

Dale Bickell spoke about a memorandum of understanding with the Paddleheads and what that entails.

Amber Sherrill asked for more clarification on recycling, including costs and the company remaining in business, and what would happen if they are no longer in business.

Matt talked about recycling with the Paddleheads.

Jared talked more about recycling and about the sustainability in his company.

Amber asked the cost of recycling a field.

Jared explained that information is in the bid.

Amber asked if the company has ever recycled a field.

Jared shared they have recycled several fields.

Amber asked if there has been a field done like this one with the close proximity of the river.

Jared states that they have done a field with close proximity to the river. He would have to ask for the testing in regards to river impact.

Amber asked if we have done any tests on the river for fertilizer or pesticides leaching into river.

Dale is not aware but have water treatment tests our water quality has improved over the years.

Eric Melson asked about the use of cork and coconut as infill.

Matt states weather is the factor that those materials not being used.

Eric asked about the relationship with High School sports.

Matt discussed a use agreement with Parks & Recreation to help facilitate this relationship.

Eric asked for more clarification on Matt saying, "If not us, then someone else will do it."

Matt explained this is a chance to have artificial turf and do it responsibly. There are fields put in town that are not this responsible with installation and upkeep.

Eric asked about the plan for where the drainage.

Matt states he is not the expert but it will not be drained into the sewer.

Betsy Craske asked about heat and temperature limits on the field.

Matt states the quality of the product will help mitigate temperature. Metal cleats will not be allowed on the field.

Kristen would like Dr. Bennett to respond to what has been shared to this point.

Dr. Bennett talked about the plastic grass causing the bulk of the heat problems. They spoke about the recycling process and researching green boards. They spoke about PFAS and requesting the full laboratory analysis of the turf.

Kristen asked about the City's requirement for climate lens resolution.

Matt states Donna's presentation discussed the climate lens.

Kristen asked about long term risks and health costs.

Ryan talked about capacity increases balanced against the use of the field.

Mike Nugent asked about the possibility of a natural grass field alternative for winter use.

Ryan states no, there is option without damaging the turf.

Kristen talked about written analysis for climate lens resolution. Temp and extended use - what temp will make it so the turf cannot be used? How many days shut down in the summer because of heat vs how many cold weather days of use gained?

Matt discussed that the artificial turf facility in Glacier that the Paddleheads play on does not have an issue with the heat.

Jared says the turf will be Cool Play and temperature results are available. Cool Play uses more fibers and less plastic to stay cooler.

Kristen asked for Dr. Bennett to respond to Jason's response.

Dr. Bennett states this is a plastic product and FieldTurf should provide temperature measurements.

Kristen asked for specific temperatures and supporting data.

Kristen asked what weather would prevent use of the field in winter months.

Matt states weather is an issue year round.

Ryan shared the experiences at Fort Missoula's artificial turf field.

Kristen asked about playing on a field that is testing at 120 degrees and above and what the air temperature is at that time.

Matt talked about his experiences playing on artificial turf fields.

Jared talked about the temperature results and the difference in temperatures on artificial turf.

Kristen would like to see the air temp vs surface temps with cool play turf.

Kristen asked about snow removal.

Matt says they will be working with Parks and Recreation to establish a process.

Ryan discussed how snow is removed from the artificial turf at Fort Missoula.

Kristen asked about handling of microplastics during snow removal.

Stacie talked about an artificial turf ban in Colorado. Does FieldTurf install fields in Colorado?

Jared states that nothing is PFAS free, and yes they install in Colorado.

The artificial turf ban in Colorado was discussed.

Mike Nugent asked about standards currently used in other City parks. He asked about rubber and use in other park.

Ryan states he would have to research and report back.

Mike asked if information or statistics are available on the artificial turf fields at the University.

There was discussion on the item being held in committee

Amber would like to see more scientific reviews and data.

Bob Campbell asked about possible financial constraints if the item is not approved by the end of December and possibly affect the playing season.

Gwen discussed the transition in leadership with the parks department.

Amber talked about having a clear guideline and questions prepared for the next meeting.

Mike feels the item should be heard again mid January and all questions should be sent to Ryan Applegate at Parks.

Daniel Carlino says the Paddleheads want an answer, and he would like to vote on the motion.

Matt says they will respect the process, natural grass installation would happen in the fall.

Bob asked about rates and additional costs being effected.

Sean McCoy supports holding the issue in council. His biggest concern is the PFAS.

Public Comment:

Sara L - Families for a Livable Climate - they spoke against artificial turf.

Youpa S - Families for a Livable Climate - they spoke against artificial turf.

Jeremy D - Resident of Ward 5 - they spoke against artificial turf.

Allison R - Grow Safe, Non-Toxic Missoula - they spoke against artificial turf.

Vicki W - Pollution Ecologist - shared her neighbors concerns and comments. They spoke against artificial turf.

Liz A - Resident of Ward 1 - likes that the committee is taking more time to evaluate.

Bob G - Free Cycles - they spoke against artificial turf.

Karla A - Ward 3 Resident - they spoke against artificial turf.

This item will be held in committee.

Option A: The Missoula City Council denies the application of synthetic turf as requested by the Paddleheads thereby defaulting to natural turf.

Option B: The Missoula City Council supports the installation of synthetic turf at Ogren Park, Allegiance Field, contingent upon the following conditions:

- The Paddleheads shall bear all additional costs associated with synthetic turf installation.
- The project must comply with current climate and best environmental practices available for synthetic turf and meet all permitting requirements.
- The Paddleheads shall enter into a mutually acceptable agreement with the City to support broader community financial goals and user needs.
 - The agreement must include reuse of existing turf, topsoil, and irrigation components where practical and financially feasible.
- A second agreement shall establish Parks and Recreation as the scheduling entity for community-wide programs at the Stadium to meet seasonal demand (winter/early spring/late fall) by prioritizing overflow requests from Fort Missoula Regional Park and Playfair Park

3.2 West Broadway River Corridor Master Plan Update

Staff presentation.

Morgan Valliant presented an update on the West Broadway River Corridor.

Kristen asked about the railroad bridge.

Morgan states we do not own the bridge. The bridge could potentially turn into a commuter trail.

Amber thinks a lot of thought went into the plans and looks forward to the project.

Sean asked about setbacks.

Morgan talked about creating riparian buffers.

Sean asked if the Conservation District has been involved.

Morgan discussed their involvement.

Sean asked about Fire Department use of the boat ramp.

Morgan talked about working with the Fire Department on the project.

Morgan shared where to find more information on the project.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:47pm.

Submitted by: Corena Maurer

City of Missoula Parks & Recreation