



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
DRAFT Meeting Minutes  
Regular Meeting on Thursday, January 15, 2026**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The duly noticed regular meeting of the Burlingame Parks & Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Chang at 7:00 pm.

**a. Chair Rotation**

Staff reviewed the annual rotation policy, under which the Vice Chair becomes Chair, and the most senior commissioner in the rotation becomes Vice Chair.

Following this rotation:

- Vice Chair Brunello assumed the role of Chair.
- The new Vice Chair position passed to the most senior member in the rotation (identified in discussion as Commissioner Wettan).

Staff noted that the meeting-room microphones were not amplified and requested that commissioners speak loudly so the audio recording could capture the proceedings. Chair's duties were then handed to Chair Brunello.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Chang, Brunello, Wettan, Giere, Yu, Francesconi, & Weller

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Director Glomstad, Recreation Manager Acquisti, Recreation Supervisor Crossfield & Recording Secretary Helley

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Lucas Mo and family

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Brunello noted that the November 20, 2025, draft minutes had been distributed and asked if commissioners had any amendments, changes, or edits.

Hearing none, a motion to approve the November 20, 2025, minutes as written was made by Commissioner Yu and seconded by Commissioner Chang.

By voice vote, the eligible commissioners voted “aye”, with no opposition. The newly seated commissioners abstained (5-0-2 Francesconi & Weller abstained).

**4. CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**5. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**6. PRESENTATIONS**

None

**7. OLD BUSINESS**

None

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Swearing in of New Commissioners**

Staff administered the oath of office to Commissioner Todd Weller and Commissioner Elizabeth (“Beth”) Francesconi. Each new commissioner repeated the standard oath and signed the oath document. Staff confirmed completion of the oath. Chair Brunello welcomed the new commissioners.

**b. Approval of Tennis Ball Collection Bin Installation at Washington Park Tennis Courts**

Recreation Supervisor Molly Crossfield presented the staff report recommending that the Commission approve the installation of a tennis ball recycling collection bin at the Washington Park tennis courts.

Lucas, a fifth-grade Burlingame resident and avid tennis player at Washington Park, observed large numbers of used tennis balls discarded after limited use. After conducting independent research, Lucas learned that used tennis balls are difficult to recycle, often end up in landfills, and have significant environmental impacts. Lucas proposed installing a collection bin at Washington Park and emptying it weekly, with the collected balls to be cleaned and shipped to RecycleBalls.org, a nonprofit that repurposes used tennis balls into environmentally friendly products (e.g., dog balls, court surfaces). Staff viewed this as a youth-led sustainability

initiative that promotes waste reduction and community engagement, and recommended Commission approval. Supervisor Crossfield then invited Lucas to address the Commission.

### Public Comment Opened on Item 8.b

Chair Brunello opened public comment for Item 8.b – Approval of Tennis Ball Collection Bin Installation at Washington Park Tennis Courts.

Lucas stated he loves playing tennis, meeting new friends, and reading. He explained that at his local tennis courts, he noticed piles of used tennis balls accumulating along the fences and decided to take action. His research learned:

- Tennis balls take about 400 years to decompose.
- They generate approximately 20,000 metric tons of methane.
- Around 125 million used tennis balls end up in American landfills each year.
- A tennis ball typically lasts only one to two playing sessions, unlike a baseball, which lasts much longer.

He estimated that the local impact in Burlingame was about 1,200 discarded balls per month across city courts and 1,050 per month at BHS.

His proposed solution is to install a recycling collection box at Washington Park and partner with RecycleBalls.org to give used tennis balls a second life. He said that RecycleBalls converts balls into dog toys, tennis court surfaces, and other green products.

His first prototype box is made from a reused tennis ball cardboard container and coated with wax to make it waterproof. He planned to test the box on a shared tennis/pickleball court so both tennis and pickleball players could understand its purpose. He believed that the 19,800 balls per year could be collected.

He requested that the Commission certify and support his program and allow placement of his tennis ball recycling box on the Burlingame tennis courts.

### Commission Questions to Lucas and Staff (Public Comment Period Still Open)

Commissioner Wettan asked Lucas whether a tennis ball could be placed in a regular home recycling bin or if it required a special recycling process. Lucas responded that standard recycling systems do not properly process tennis balls, and that RecycleBalls uses a special machine designed to handle them.

Commissioner Yu commended the idea and asked whether Lucas planned to expand the program to BHS tennis courts. Lucas replied that he intended to expand to BHS after the Washington Park program was launched, provided the pilot proved successful.

Commissioner Giere asked whether RecycleBalls would pick up the balls or if they had to be shipped. Lucas answered that RecycleBalls.org is based in Vancouver. He and his family would collect and clean the balls and then ship them to the organization. Lucas and his family confirmed that they would cover the shipping costs under the current plan.

Chair Brunello thanked Lucas for his initiative, noting that he himself had not done similar public advocacy in fifth grade. He referenced the staff report's indication that Lucas would personally facilitate the program and raised a question about long-term continuity. Lucas replied that if the program works well, he hopes to continue similar efforts in college, mentioning that Stanford University already operates a RecycleBalls program. If he could not maintain local involvement, he planned to hand the program over to his younger brother.

Director Glomstad asked what Lucas was currently using to collect the balls and where the container would be placed. Lucas replied that he had tried using a metal box but noted that this design might not be ideal because it could be damaged easily or exposed to water.

Supervisor Crossfield added that she would work with Lucas on the design and placement of the container, using the City's pickleball recycling program as a model. She stated that the pickleball recycling initiative is operating successfully, with consistent collection and tracking. They would aim to make the tennis recycling boxes visually consistent and clearly labeled, and ensure they are water-resistant. On the shared tennis/pickleball courts, they would locate the tennis ball bin on the tennis side and the existing pickleball bin on the pickleball side to minimize confusion. While some co-mingling of balls is likely, clear signage and placement should keep it manageable.

Commissioner Wettan asked whether the City Attorney had raised any concerns about the proposal or if legal review had been sought. Staff responded that the City had not sought legal review for the pickleball recycling program, and staff did not see a need to involve the City Attorney for this substantially similar tennis program.

Wettan expressed concern about long-term sustainability and who would assume responsibilities in future years and noted that tennis instructors rely on City courts and that the program might eventually shift to City staff if volunteers moved on. If that happened, shipping costs would need to be addressed and could become a burden on the department. Glomstad suggested options such as using a portion of court rental fees to fund shipping or partnering with a high school club (e.g., an environmental or recycling club) to assume responsibility for collections.

Commissioner Chang asked for more details about the existing pickleball recycling program. Supervisor Crossfield explained that a local high school student manages the pickleball recycling effort. The collection bins at the courts are never full for long; the students regularly empty them.

The student maintains a spreadsheet tracking how often she collects balls and the quantity collected, typically in the double digits per pickup. She originally started the program in Foster City and then expanded it to Burlingame.

Commissioner Wettan suggested that to make both the pickleball and tennis programs sustainable, the City's Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) could help connect with ongoing clubs at BHS, such as a recycling or environmental club, so that these groups could adopt collection and oversight as recurring projects. Crossfield replied that the pickleball student had already discussed the idea of involving a BHS recycling club, and that a similar model could be used for tennis.

#### Additional Public Comment – Lucas's Parent

Lucas's parent joined Lucas and Supervisor Crossfield at the podium to elaborate on the long-term plan and program structure. They explained that they had researched RecycleBalls.org and learned that it operates at multiple program tiers. The entry-level tier they are currently pursuing requires participants to pay shipping costs. A more advanced paid tier allows participants to pay approximately \$600 in exchange for reusable, pre-designed plastic collection boxes, after which RecycleBalls covers shipping charges. They emphasized that they envisioned the project as long-term and multi-layered, not a short-term experiment.

They cited RecycleBalls' reputation and partnerships, including work with major tennis events such as the US Open, as reasons for selecting that organization over others. They noted that standard municipal recycling is not suitable because tennis balls require complete removal of the outer felt layer and recovery of the rubber core for efficient reuse, a process not handled by typical recycling streams. Nearby institutions, such as Stanford University, and local organizations have already partnered with RecycleBalls. Lucas has regular tennis practices on Saturdays and Sundays, and several close friends from tennis with whom he can rotate collection duties when he is away. In addition, as the program stabilizes at Washington Park, they intend to gradually expand to BHS courts in coordination with those partners.

Chair Brunello asked if there were any further public comments on Item 8.b. Hearing none, he closed public comment.

Chair Brunello opened the Commission deliberation.

Commissioner comments included that they were very impressed with Lucas's initiative, research, and willingness to take on the work of collecting, cleaning, and shipping balls. The presence of an existing and successful pickleball recycling model gave them additional confidence in the feasibility of a parallel tennis program. They appreciated that both Lucas and his family, as well as staff, had considered succession and long-term sustainability, including potential involvement of other youth volunteers and school clubs, and use of RecycleBalls' higher-tier options.

MOTION: Commissioner Yu moved to approve the installation of a tennis ball recycling collection bin and associated program at Washington Park tennis courts, consistent with the staff report and Lucas’s proposal. Seconded by Commissioner Wettan. The motion carried unanimously, 7–0.

## **9. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

### **a. Parks & Recreation Department Reports**

Director Glomstad Senior Valentine’s Day Dance is scheduled for Friday, February 13, from 4:00–5:30 pm at the Community Center. Commissioners were invited to attend and engage with senior participants, either informally or as volunteers, and the Lunar New Year Celebration (Senior Event) was scheduled for Wednesday, February 18, from 1:00–2:00 pm at the Community Center. The event will celebrate the Year of the Horse with an afternoon focused on culture, community, and connections, including traditional teas and festive desserts.

Kids Night Out is scheduled for Friday, February 6, and is geared toward children under age 12. The week of February 17, P&R will have Presidents' Week camps. The Royal Ball is on Friday, March 13. The event will feature a horse-drawn carriage traveling through the park and costumed princess characters.

The Town Square ribbon-cutting ceremony is anticipated in March. “Meet Six Neighbors / Invite the Whole Community” Event is scheduled for April 25 at the Town Square.

### **b. Commissioner Reports**

Commissioner Yu, who is serving on the Time Capsule Committee, reported that the committee’s work is progressing well. She noted a renewed outreach push after the holidays to encourage participation from all who live or work in Burlingame, including students, families, businesses, and organizations. She explained that the new 50-year time capsule will be housed at the Burlingame Community Center, with plans to seal it in the spring and reopen it in 50 years. She described some items currently on display in the Library from the 25-year Time Capsule, letters written by 4th and 5th graders (e.g., from Roosevelt Elementary), whose authors are now in their mid-30s. Items such as contact lens boxes and a cassette tape, the latter prompting a moment of nostalgia as staff and commissioners recalled how to use a tape player.

#### Introductions – New Commissioners

Commissioner Elizabeth (“Beth”) Francesconi introduced herself. She has lived in Burlingame for 18 years. Has three grown children who attended Burlingame schools and then high school in San Francisco. She worked in executive communications for 35 years. She and her husband are now empty nesters, and she is exploring her “third chapter”, which includes service on the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Commissioner Todd Weller introduced himself. He lived in Burlingame since 2007 and grew up in San Mateo, making him a Bay Area native. He has a strong passion for outdoor spaces, parks, and sports, and has been active in athletics since childhood. He expressed that Burlingame's parks and recreation system is a key part of what makes the City special, and he looks forward to supporting Burlingame over the next three years or more as a commissioner.

Chair Brunello and fellow commissioners welcomed both new commissioners.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Chair Brunello asked if commissioners had any items to propose for a future agenda.

- Commissioner assignments

No additional future agenda items were suggested.

### **10. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 pm.

The next meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission is scheduled to be held in person on Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joleen Helley  
Recording Secretary