

Laurel Park-Tree Board Minutes for July 2, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 by Tom Canape in Council Chambers.

In attendance were Tom Canape, Irv Wilke, Richard Klose, and Jon Rutt.

Guests – Jack Sterling, Amy and Shawn Mullaney, Cami Story.

Public input – None

General Items

1. LPB Minutes for June 4, 2026 – We do not have a quorum.

New Business

2. Riverside Park Cleanup - Jack Sterling from Yellowstone River Research Center explained the cleaning up the junk on the east side of the berm of the shooting range for the Rod and Gun Club Range. They presented a waiver of liability to the City at the June 4 meeting.
3. Sensory Park - Amy Mullaney from LMCF asked for a MOU or a document from the city agreeing to partner on the Sensory Park, see attached statement. Discussion on Sensory Park for Murray Park being a good project.

Old Business

4. Floating Island for South Pond – Research Assistant will be starting to take samples for the future placement of a Floating Island.
5. Other Parks – Planted trees at Veterans Park to replace dead ones.
6. Billie Riddle Splash Park Toilets – Budget approved for \$100K and being tasked to engineer.
7. Riverside Park Campground – Mayor is investigating a Camp Host or another way to manage the park.
8. American Legion Building at Riverside Park – Nothing new
9. Riverside Hall/Lions Club – Irv showed a picture of the backstops that the bb gun shooters are using. See attached. Lacking protection for the walls.
10. Laurel Rod and Gun Club Building – Tom is working with the mayor to get something done. The Rod and Gun Club looked at the building again. Building is in relatively good shape.
11. Tree Board Business – We are a Certified Tree City. Arbor Day in Laurel will be October 6, 2026.

Other Items.

Next month's meeting will be on Aug 6, 2026.

Adjourn 6:23

Submitted Jon Rutt



S.T.E.A.M. All-Inclusive Community Park Partnership

Good evening Chairperson and members of the Park Board.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak with you this evening.

My name is Amy Mullaney, and I am here on behalf of the Laurel Montana Community Foundation to share an exciting opportunity that has the potential to benefit our community for generations.

Our vision is to build an innovative **S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) All-Inclusive Community Park** in Laurel. This will not simply be another playground—it will be an educational destination where children of all abilities can learn, explore, imagine, and play together.

The park will feature interactive educational experiences, sensory play, accessible equipment, outdoor classrooms, engineering activities, music, art, nature exploration, and opportunities that encourage curiosity while promoting healthy outdoor recreation.

Why Murray Park?

After evaluating several locations, we believe Murray Park offers an outstanding location for this project because it already serves families throughout Laurel, has room for future growth, and will bring new visitors to the area.

What We Are Asking For

Tonight, we are respectfully requesting that the Park Board recommend to the Laurel City Council one of the following:

- Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), or
- Adoption of a Resolution expressing the City's willingness to partner with the Laurel Montana Community Foundation throughout the planning and construction process.

This partnership would allow the Foundation to request assistance from the City when appropriate, including:

- Ground preparation by the City Street Department or Parks Department when available.
- Engineering assistance for planning and infrastructure.
- Technical guidance during project development.
- Collaboration throughout construction as resources allow.

We are **not** asking the City to financially fund the park today.

Instead, we are asking for a partnership.

Why This Partnership Matters

Many state and federal grants strongly favor or require collaboration between nonprofit organizations and local governments.

By having the City formally partner with the Laurel Montana Community Foundation, our grant applications become substantially more competitive.

Grant reviewers consistently score projects higher when they demonstrate:

- Strong local government support
- Long-term maintenance partnerships
- Community collaboration
- Public ownership or public benefit
- Sustainability after construction

This simple agreement could help leverage hundreds of thousands of dollars in outside funding that otherwise may not be available.

Benefits to the City of Laurel

This project will:

- Create a destination park unlike any other in our region.
- Increase tourism and visitation from neighboring communities.
- Support local businesses by bringing additional families into Laurel.
- Provide educational opportunities for schools and community organizations.
- Increase recreational opportunities for residents of every age and ability.
- Demonstrate Laurel's commitment to accessibility and inclusion.
- Leave a lasting legacy for future generations.

Perhaps most importantly, this project allows us to bring significant outside investment into our community rather than relying primarily on local tax dollars.

The Laurel Montana Community Foundation's Commitment

The Foundation is committed to leading the fundraising efforts.

We will pursue grants, private donations, corporate sponsorships, fundraising events, and philanthropic partnerships to make this project a reality.

Momentum Already Exists

This project is no longer just an idea—it has already begun.

The Laurel Montana Community Foundation has been entrusted with **\$28,000 in seed funding** through a generous donation from the White Buffalo Foundation.

The White Buffalo Foundation shared a vision of creating an inclusive, educational park that would serve children and families throughout our community for generations. Their generosity has provided not only the financial foundation for this project, but also the inspiration and confidence to move this vision forward.

This initial investment demonstrates that respected philanthropic organizations believe in the value of this project and its potential impact on Laurel.

We see this gift as the catalyst that allows us to begin planning, pursue additional funding opportunities, and build partnerships that will transform this vision into reality.

Rather than starting from zero, we are already building upon an investment that has been made in our community. With the City's partnership, we can leverage this initial \$28,000 into significantly larger grants and donations, multiplying its impact many times over.

Our goal is to relieve as much of the financial burden from the City as possible while working together as partners.

Closing

Every great community has projects that define it for decades.

We believe this can be one of those projects.

Tonight, we are simply asking for your support in helping us open doors to funding opportunities that will allow us to bring this vision to life.

With your recommendation for an MOU or Resolution, we can begin pursuing larger grants and partnerships that otherwise would not be available.

Thank you for your time, your service to our community, and your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.

LAUREL COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

S.T.E.A.M.

ALL INCLUSIVE PARK

Explore. Learn. Create. Belong.

A budget-friendly, all inclusive park that inspires curiosity and discovery through hands-on S.T.E.A.M. play for all abilities and all ages.

- S SCIENCE**
Explore nature and make discoveries
- T TECHNOLOGY**
Interact, imagine and invent
- E ENGINEERING**
Build, construct and problem solve
- A ARTS**
Create, express and design
- M MATHEMATICS**
Count, measure and create patterns



PARK OVERVIEW

- Interior play area approx. 50' x 50'
- Total fenced area with covered seating approx. 6,000 sq ft
- Covered seating on all sides
- Fully accessible pathways and play features
- Budget-conscious materials and layout
- Designed for inclusive S.T.E.A.M. learning and exploration

BUDGET FRIENDLY FEATURES

- Durable, low-maintenance materials
- Modular play components
- Multi-use open spaces
- Native and pollinator-friendly landscaping
- Phased development approach

MATERIALS & FINISHES



S.T.E.A.M. FEATURES INCLUDED



- SCIENCE STATION**
Nature & Discovery
- WATER PLAY TABLE**
Explore & Experiment
- ENGINEERING WALL**
Build & Problem Solve
- TECHNOLOGY PANEL**
Interact & Imagine
- SENSORY TUNNEL**
Crawl & Explore
- MUSIC STATION**
Sound & Rhythm
- ART STATION**
Create & Express
- MATH PANEL**
Count & Learn
- SPINNER BOAT**
Movement & Balance
- INCLUSIVE SWINGS**
ADA Accessible

ALL EQUIPMENT AND ROUTES ARE DESIGNED TO BE ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE FOR EVERYONE

PHASED FUNDRAISING PLAN

PHASE 1 FOUNDATION & ACCESS	- Fencing & Gate - Walkways & Site Access - Covered Seating & Picnic Tables - Basic Landscaping & Signage	\$100,000
PHASE 2 CORE PLAY & S.T.E.A.M. STRUCTURES	- Inclusive Play Structure - Swing Set & Spinner Bowl - Rubber Surfacing - Core S.T.E.A.M. Panels	\$140,000
PHASE 3 SENSORY & LEARNING ELEMENTS	- Sensory Tunnel & Features - Music & Art Stations - Water Play & Science Station - Engineering Wall	\$90,000
PHASE 4 ENHANCEMENTS & BEAUTIFICATION	- Additional Landscaping - Shade & Comfort Features - Educational Signage - Lighting & Finishing Touches	\$70,000
TOTAL PROJECT GOAL: \$400,000		

INSPIRING EVERY MIND

BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY THROUGH LEARNING AND PLAY

A SPACE WHERE EVERYONE CAN EXPLORE, CREATE, AND BELONG.



WAYS TO GIVE
• Individual Donations
• Corporate Sponsorships
• Grants from Foundations
• Community Fundraising Events