



**CITY OF  
MOUNT  
DORA**

**Parks and Recreation  
900 N. Donnelly St.  
Mount Dora, FL 32757  
352-735-7183  
Fax: 352-735-3681**

**E-mail: [parksandrec@cityofmoundora.com](mailto:parksandrec@cityofmoundora.com)**

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**PARKS AND RECREATION  
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
City Hall Board Room, 510 N. Baker Street, Mount Dora, FL 32757  
May 18, 2026 at 5:30 PM**

**AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of Minutes
  - A. March 26, 2026 Meeting Minutes
- IV. Public Comment
- V. Presentations
  - A. Introduction of Jasmine Blackwell and Donovan Jackson
- VI. Action Items
  - A. Request Approval of the Naming of the Frank Brown Sports Complex Football Field
- VII. Resolutions
- VIII. Ordinances
- IX. Discussion Items
  - A. FY 26-27 Budget Process
- X. City Staff
  - A. Parks and Recreation Update
  - B. Cultural and Special Events Update
- XI. Communications and Reports
  - A. Chairperson Marlene Straughan
  - B. Board Member Bailey Stack

- C. Vice Chairperson Derrick Campbell
- D. Board Member Patrick Murray
- E. Board Member Warin Epstein
- F. Board Member John Abner
- G. Board Member Jack Whittaker

XII. Future Meeting Dates

- A. Thursday, July 23, 2026, 5:30 p.m - Date Change Due to Budget Workshop
- B. Monday, September 21, 2026, 5:30 p.m
- C. Monday, November 17, 2026, 5:30 p.m

XIII. Adjournment

**NOTICE:** Please note that, for purposes of Section 286.011, Florida Statutes, two or more members of the City Council may be present at this meeting, and this meeting may be considered a City Council meeting.

**NOTICE:** If any person decides to appeal any decisions at this meeting with respect to any matter considered, such person may need a record of these proceedings. For such purpose, a person may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

**NOTICE:** In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) and Florida Statutes, Section 286.26, persons with disabilities needing a reasonable accommodation to participate in a public hearing or meeting should contact the City of Mount Dora’s ADA Coordinator at least 48 hours prior to the proceeding. The ADA Coordinator may be contacted by phone at 352-735-7126, ext. 1111, or by email at [clerk@cityofmounddora.com](mailto:clerk@cityofmounddora.com).

If hearing impaired, telephone the Florida Relay Service numbers (800) 955-8771 (TDD) or (800) 955- 8770 (Voice) for assistance.

If you have any comments or question regarding the contents of this agenda packet, please call Jennifer Schwarz at (352) 735-7183 ext. 1605.



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**DATE:** May 18, 2026

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Members

**FROM:** Troy Shonk, Director of Parks and Recreation

**SUBJECT:** March 26, 2026 Meeting Minutes

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**Introduction:**

**Discussion:**

**Budget Impact:**

**Strategic Impact:**

**Recommendation**

**Attachment(s):**

1. 03.26.26 PRAB Minutes

Prepared by: Jennifer Schwarz, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation

Reviewed by: Troy Shonk, Parks & Recreation Director

Final Approval - 5/6/2026

**CITY OF MOUNT DORA,  
FLORIDA PARKS &  
RECREATION ADVISORY  
BOARD MINUTES**



**March 26, 2026  
City Hall  
510 N. Baker St.  
Mount Dora, FL 32757**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Having been duly advertised as required by law, Chairperson Marlene Straughan called to order the March 26, 2026, regular meeting of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board at 5:30 P.M. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:**

Marlene Straughan, Chairperson  
Derrick Campbell, Vice-Chairperson  
Bailey Stack  
John Abner  
Warin Epstein  
Patrick Murray  
John Abner  
Jack Whittaker

**Also Present:**

Troy Shonk, Parks & Recreation Director  
Jennifer Schwarz, Parks & Recreation Deputy Director  
Christopher Carson, Cultural & Special Events Manager  
Gretchen Gomez, Parks & Recreation Admin Supervisor

**Members Not Present:**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. January 26, 2026 Meeting Minutes**

***MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES BY BOARD MEMBER STACK; VICE-CHAIRPERSON CAMPBELL SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION APPROVED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE.***

<i>YES</i>	<i>Chairperson Straughan Vice-Chairperson Campbell Board Member Stack Board Member Murray Board Member Epstein Board Member Abner Board Member Whittaker</i>
<i>NO</i>	<i>None</i>

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Steven Anderson put in a request that the football field at Frank Brown Sports Complex be named after his father, Johnny James Copeland. Mr. Anderson expressed how his father helped kids in the community and was part of a football league. He thinks it would be a nice way to honor his father.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### **A. Nathaniel Bell Community Resource & Recreation Center**

Tela Williams, the Resource & Recreation Center Supervisor, gave the Nathaniel Bell Community Resource and Recreation Center presentation. She listed shared priorities from various boards, stakeholders, and key staff, as well as the mission statement, core values, and the guiding principles.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

## **RESOLUTIONS**

## **ORDINANCES**

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **A. Donnelly Park Building Painting**

Mr. Shonk informed the board that the Donnelly Park Building will be undergoing outdoor painting.

## **CITY STAFF**

### **A. Parks & Recreation Update**

- Mr. Shonk updated the board on the city landscape and the issue with most plants being loss due to the freeze. Staff is now working on the beautification. Mr. Shonk also informed the board about the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Docks and updated them as to how the project is going. He also informed the board about the success of registration for the Summer Camp programs.

### **B. Cultural and Special Events Update**

- Mr. Carson informed the board about the busy Spring Season filled with events, including the new St. Patrick's Day Event. He also informed the board that him and his team are busy working on the Freedom on the Waterfront Event as it will be the 250<sup>th</sup> Year.

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS**

### **A. Chairperson Marlene Straughan**

Mr. Straughan is thankful for the luncheon presented at the Resource & Recreation Center.

### **B. Vice-Chairperson Derrick Campbell**

- C. Board Member Bailey Stack**  
Mr. Stack discussed beautification for District 1, specifically Highland St.
- D. Board Member Patrick Murray**  
Mr. Murray brought up the possibility of upgrading Lillie Park.
- E. Board Member Warren Epstein**  
Mr. Epstein brought up the possibility of upgrading Frank Brown Sports Complex playground.
- F. Board Member John Abner**
- G. Board Member Jack Whittaker**  
Mr. Whittaker shared excitement over the 250<sup>th</sup> Year Freedom on the Waterfront event.

**FUTURE MEETING DATES**

- A. Monday, May 18, 2026, 5:30 p.m**
- B. Monday, July 20, 2026, 5:30 p.m**
- C. Monday, September 21, 2026, 5:30 p.m**
- D. Monday, November 16, 2026, 5:30 p.m**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned by Chairperson Marlene Straughan at approximately 6:00 P.M.

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**MARLENE STRAUGHAN, CHAIRPERSON**  
**City of Mount Dora**

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**GRETCHEN GOMEZ, ADMIN SUPERVISOR**  
**City of Mount Dora**



# CITY OF MOUNT DORA

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**DATE:** May 18, 2026

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Members

**FROM:** Troy Shonk, Director of Parks and Recreation

**SUBJECT:** Request Approval of the Naming of the Frank Brown Sports Complex Football Field

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**Introduction:**

This is a request for the board to approve the naming of the Frank Brown Sports Complex Football Field.

**Discussion:**

Resolution No. 2021-123, approved on November 15, 2021, established the City's policy and criteria for naming City facilities. The policy prohibits names that are already in use, names that are discriminatory or derogatory, and the use of company names, corporate logos, insignias, brands, or direct advertising text.

The policy also permits City facilities to be named in honor of an individual when the honoree has a significant tie to Mount Dora and has made a significant contribution to the history, progress, development, or culture of the City during his or her lifetime. The policy further requires that the individual be deceased for at least six (6) months, have been a resident of the City of Mount Dora at the time the significant contributions were made, and ideally have a direct association with the facility being named.

Johnny James "Tonk" Copeland was a lifelong Mount Dora resident who dedicated his life to serving local youth and families through athletics, mentorship, and civic involvement. During the 1980s and 1990s, Mr. Copeland opened community game rooms that provided safe and welcoming gathering spaces, while also organizing men's baseball, women's softball, youth football, cheerleading, and recreational basketball programs.

Mr. Copeland founded the East Town Raiders football program and later established the Mount Dora Wildcats youth football organization, now known as the Mount Dora Hurricanes. These programs helped create lasting athletic traditions and expanded opportunities for youth

participation in the Mount Dora community.

Mr. Copeland was also committed to ensuring that financial hardship or lack of resources did not prevent children from participating. He consistently helped provide equipment, transportation, and broader community experiences, including college visits and participation in the Bethune-Cookman University Homecoming Parade, encouraging young people to envision greater opportunities for their futures.

Based on Mr. Copeland's lifelong ties to Mount Dora, his direct association with youth athletics, and his significant contributions to the City's recreational and community life, naming the Frank Brown Sports Complex football field in his honor is consistent with the City's facility naming policy.

**Budget Impact:**

There is no anticipated budget impact beyond nominal costs associated with administrative implementation and field signage. Any such costs will be managed within existing budgeted resources unless otherwise directed by City Council.

**Strategic Impact:**

This action supports the City's Strategic Plan by strengthening community identity, recognizing local history and culture, and enhancing the public value of City recreational facilities. The action also aligns with Objective 1.4 of Goal 1, Economic Development, by reinforcing a consistent community brand image, and Objective 3.1 of Goal 3, Fiscal Resources, by preserving opportunities for public and private partnerships to support priority projects.

**Recommendation** Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to approve the naming of the Frank Brown Sports Complex Football Field the **Johnny James "Tonk" Copeland Football Field**.

**Attachment(s):**

Prepared by: Jennifer Schwarz, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation

Reviewed by: Troy Shonk, Parks & Recreation Director

Final Approval - 5/11/2026



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**DATE:** May 18, 2026

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Members

**FROM:** Troy Shonk, Director of Parks and Recreation

**SUBJECT:** FY 26-27 Budget Process

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### **Introduction:**

The FY 2026–27 Budget Calendar establishes the schedule and major milestones for preparation, review, and adoption of the City’s annual operating and capital budgets. The calendar provides a structured timeline to ensure coordination between departments, Administration, Finance, and City Council throughout the budget process.

### **Discussion:**

The FY 2026–27 Budget Calendar establishes the timeline and process for development, review, workshop discussions, public hearings, and final adoption of the City’s annual operating and capital budgets. The calendar provides coordination between departments, Finance, Administration, and City Council to ensure timely preparation of departmental budgets, Capital Improvement Program (CIP) requests, personnel requests, enterprise fund planning, and compliance with all statutory Truth in Millage (TRIM) requirements.

The proposed schedule includes budget workshops beginning in June 2026, review of Capital Outlay and CIP projects in July 2026, presentation of the Proposed Budget Book in August 2026, and required public hearings for tentative and final budget adoption in September 2026.

The budget process is intended to support responsible financial planning, long-term capital investment, operational sustainability, and alignment with the City of Mount Dora Strategic Plan 2025–2030 priorities and service objectives.

### **Budget Impact:**

### **Strategic Impact:**

The FY 2026–27 budget process supports implementation of the City of Mount Dora Strategic Plan 2025–2030 by aligning financial planning, capital investments, operational priorities, and staffing resources with the City’s long-term strategic initiatives, infrastructure goals, and high-quality service objectives.

**Recommendation**

**Attachment(s):**

- 1. FY26-27 Proposed Budget Calendar

Prepared by: Jennifer Schwarz, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation

Reviewed by: Troy Shonk, Parks & Recreation Director

Final Approval - 5/6/2026



CITY OF  
MOUNT  
DORA

**Budget Calendar  
FY 2026-27**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Required Activity</b>	<b>Requirement Reference</b>
March 09-13, 2026	Departments	Mid-Year Budget Meetings with Finance	Internal
April 1, 2026	Budget	Open budget for operator input	Internal
April 1, 2026	Departments	Personnel Requisitions due to HR and Information Technology Forms due to IT	Internal
April 21, 2026 Tuesday - Regular Meeting	City Council	Mid-Year Budget Amendment	Internal
May 11, 2026	IT & Procurement	Cost allocations for Communications and Copy Machine Due	Internal
May 18, 2026	Departments	CIP and Capital Outlay forms completed and turned into Finance	Internal
May 29, 2026	Departments	Department entry due by the end of the day	Internal
On or before June 1st	Property Appraiser	LCPA provides an estimate of 2026 total assessed values of non-exempt property for budget planning purposes.	Section 200.065(8), FL Statutes
June 2 – 5, 2026	Departments	Budget clear-up review with department head	Internal
June 8, 2026 Monday 6:00PM	City Council	Budget Workshop 1. Set budget parameters 2. Fire Assessment	Internal
June 16, 2026 Tuesday - Regular Meeting	City Council	City adopts preliminary Fire Assessment rate resolution	
On or before July 1st	Property Appraiser	Submit 2026 certified taxable values to the City Council.	Section 193.023(1), FL Statutes, Section 200.065(1), FL Statutes
July 1, 2026	Budget	Deadline for City to submit estimated Fire Assessment Revenue to Property Appraiser for TRIM notice.	Day 1 of TRIM process

July 6, 2026 Monday 6:00PM	City Council	Budget Workshop 1. Capital Outlay and CIP 2. Enterprise	Internal
July 7, 2026 Tuesday - Regular Meeting	City Council	City Council Sets Maximum Millage 6:00 PM	Section 200.065(2)(b), FL Statutes
July 20, 2026 Monday 6:00PM	City Council	Budget Workshop 1. Governmental Funds 2. Internal Services	Internal
No later than August 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Budget	Notify the Property Appraiser of: 1. The Proposed millage rates for FY 2026-27; 2. The rolled back millage rates for FY 2026-27; The date, time, and place of the public hearings to consider the proposed millage rates and tentative budgets.	Section 200.065(2)(b), FL Statutes  Day 35 of TRIM process
August 14, 2026	Budget	Advertise public hearings to consider final adoption of the fire assessment rate resolution.	The mailed notice and public advertisement of the adoption of the annual assessment resolution statutorily must be at least 20 days prior to the public hearing (not inclusive).
August 21, 2026	Property Appraiser	Mail notices of proposed property taxes for 2027 to each taxpayer listed on the current year assessment roll.	Section 200.065(2)(b), FL Statutes, Section 200.069, FL Statutes (Day #55 of TRIM)
August 21, 2026	City Council	Proposed Budget Book to Council	Internal
August 24, 2026 Monday 6:00PM	City Council	Final Budget Workshop 1. Overall budget	Internal
By August 28, 2026	Budget	Post tentative budget to website at least two days before budget hearing – keep for 45 days	Internal
September 3, 2026 Thursday - Special Meeting	City Council	Conduct 1 <sup>st</sup> public hearings to consider adoption of the proposed millage rate and tentative budget for fiscal year 2026-27. All hearings <u>must</u> begin after 5:00 P.M. Millage rate must be done first.  Tentative budget and Proposed millage rate	Section 166.241(3), FL Statutes, Section 200.065(2)(c) – (e), FL Statutes

September 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2026 Thursday - Special Meeting	City Council	Conduct public hearings to consider adoption of the Fire Assessment Rate resolution	Has to be 20 days after 8/21, & before 9/15. 20-day requirement between the posting of the mailed notices & the adoption of the final resolution Best option is Sept 10 <sup>th</sup> .
September 11, 2026 Friday	Budget	Advertise public hearings to consider final adoption of the budgets, increases in property taxes and operating expenditures (if applicable), and adoption of millage rate for fiscal year 2026-27.	Section 200.065(2)(d), FL Statutes, Sections 200.065(3), (a), (b),(h)-(i), FL Statutes'. Must be advertised within 15 days of adopting a tentative millage/budget
September 15, 2026 Tuesday - Regular Meeting	City Council	Conduct public hearing to consider final adoption of the millage rate and budget for fiscal year 2026-27. All hearings <u>must</u> begin after 5:00 P.M. Millage rate must be done first.	Section 166.241(3), FL Statutes, Section 200.065(2),(d),(e), FL Statutes. Must be within 2-5 days after advertisement.
September 18, 2026	Budget	Sends out Resolution or the ordinance adopting the final millage rate to the Property Appraiser, the Tax Collector and the DOR	Within 3 days of final hearing
September 30, 2026	Budget	Sends out email to Lake County Manager with the CRA and NE CRA budgets	Section 163.387(6)(b), FL Statutes
October 1, 2026	Budget	Adopts Budget in BS&A	Internal
On or before October 15, 2026	Budget	Submit TRIM Packet to DOR through OASYS eTRIM	Due within 30 days of final hearing



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**DATE:** May 18, 2026

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Members

**FROM:** Troy Shonk, Director of Parks and Recreation

**SUBJECT:** Parks and Recreation Update

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**Introduction:**

Staff update on Parks & Recreation items.

**Discussion:**

The Parks & Recreation Department is unique in both its structure and scope of responsibilities. In addition to overseeing traditional parks and recreation services, the department also manages Special Events, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) within the downtown district, cemetery operations, building maintenance, and city facility care. With expansive operational responsibilities, the department plays an essential role in shaping the City's public spaces, facilities, community events, and overall quality of life.

The work performed by the department is a major part of what defines the character and identity of the City of Mount Dora. From maintaining parks and beautifying public spaces to supporting downtown activity, community programming, and facility operations, the department helps create the welcoming atmosphere and sense of community that make Mount Dora a special place to live, work, and visit.

Our team takes great pride in serving the community and making a positive impact every day through the services, programs, events, and spaces we provide.

**Budget Impact:**

**Strategic Impact:**

This item supports multiple initiatives identified within the City of Mount Dora Strategic Plan 2025–2030, including promoting tourism, beautification of public spaces, enhancement of parks and open spaces, and providing high-quality community services. The Parks & Recreation Department contributes directly to the City’s vision of creating “a diverse, vibrant, and sustainable community” while supporting a “vibrant downtown, an inviting and accessible lakefront,” and maintaining Mount Dora’s “historic character and small-town charm.”

Additionally, this item aligns with Strategic Initiative 2: Beautify Mount Dora, which focuses on enhancing the City’s aesthetic appeal through “well-maintained landscaping, public art, hardscape design elements, and streetscapes where appropriate,” as well as ongoing improvements to parks, open spaces, and community amenities.

### **Recommendation**

#### **Attachment(s):**

1. April 2026 Newsletter
2. May 2026 Newsletter

Prepared by: Jennifer Schwarz, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation

Reviewed by: Troy Shonk, Parks & Recreation Director

Final Approval - 5/6/2026



# Parks and Recreation



## Paddle Into Spring at Palm Island Park

The self-service kayak launch at Palm Island Park is officially open, making it easy to get out on the water this season. No equipment needed. Your rental includes everything required for a smooth experience. With four kayaks available, you can reserve your spot right from your phone. Rentals are self-serve, just \$25 for two hours, and can be booked by scanning the QR code onsite or through the app.

It's an easy way to get out on the water and enjoy Lake Dora at your own pace, whether you're looking for a relaxing paddle or a new way to explore the city from a different view.

## New Scoreboard at Frank Brown Park

Frank Brown Park has a new scoreboard, installed for the Mount Dora Pop Warner football and cheerleading program. This upgrade, completed by the City's Building Maintenance team with support from the Electric Department, enhances game day experience and provides a better playing environment for our youth athletes.



## Trail Work Keeps Things Rolling

Through the City's partnership with SORBA Orlando, volunteers continue to maintain and improve Mount Dora's mountain bike trails. During a recent workday, crews reworked trail features, opened new sections, and refreshed existing paths. They also graded and seeded areas to support long-term trail health. These ongoing efforts help keep our trails safe, enjoyable, and ready for riders of all levels. 21

# Parks and Recreation

## Honoring a Legacy

The City has officially named the new Community Resource and Recreation Center in honor of longtime Northeast Mount Dora resident Nathaniel Bell, following a unanimous vote by City Council. Recommended by the Northeast Community Redevelopment Agency, this recognition reflects a life dedicated to service, leadership, and uplifting others.

Nathaniel Bell was an educator, City Council member, veteran, and community advocate whose impact continues to shape Mount Dora. Over a 38-year career in education, he mentored generations of students, many of whom remember him most for the opportunities he created beyond the classroom. Known for taking children on trips in his well-loved bus, he introduced them to experiences they may not have otherwise had, from beaches and fairs to major attractions. That same passion led to the creation of Liberty Bell Charters, which grew into a well-known local business.

His service extended into City leadership, where he helped support housing opportunities for local families and played a role in developing recreational spaces that continue to serve the community today. Naming the Community Resource and Recreation Center in his honor ensures his legacy of creating opportunity, connection, and community will carry forward for generations.

## Nathaniel Bell Community Resource and Recreation Center



# Parks and Recreation

## The Nathaniel Bell Community Resource and Recreation Center

**Add Video**

Construction of the Bell Center continues to make strong progress as the project moves closer to its August opening. The roof is now complete, including the waterproof membrane, which is a key milestone that seals the building and allows interior work to continue without weather delays. Exterior painting has started, giving a clear look at the building's final appearance, while work continues on the main entrance glass.

Inside, drywall is going up throughout the building, and ceiling grid installation has begun in areas like the kitchen and child activity spaces, with additional rooms to follow. Major electrical systems are nearing completion, and HVAC units are now in place and being brought online to help control humidity. This step is important as it allows for final interior finishes like cabinets and flooring to be installed properly.

Outside, the parking lot is currently being graded, preparing the site for paving and improving access to the facility. With the building now protected from the elements and interior systems coming together, the Nathaniel Bell Community Resource and Recreation Center is steadily taking shape as a future hub for community connection, recreation, and opportunity.



**Add Video**



# Parks and Recreation

## Spring Sports Are Back at Frank Brown Park

Spring youth soccer and adult kickball are underway at Frank Brown Park, bringing energy back to the fields. Adult kickball games take place on Wednesdays starting at 6:15pm so come out and watch! Athletics offer a fun way for the community to stay active and connected.



## Cornhole Champions Crowned

Congratulations to this season's adult cornhole champions. Nine teams competed over four weeks of regular season play, followed by a week of playoffs to determine the winners. It was a great season of friendly competition and community fun.



## Summer Camp is Almost Sold Out!

Open spots for summer camp are extremely limited. Many programs are already full, and remaining availability is going quickly. Families are encouraged to check what's still open and register soon to secure a spot before summer break begins.





# Parks and Recreation



## Lifeguard Training Completed

Our recent Red Cross lifeguard training has wrapped up, preparing participants with the skills needed to keep our community safe. The City is fortunate to have Aquatics and Wellness Supervisor Kristi certified to teach these courses in-house, helping expand local training opportunities. Keep an eye on the Parks and Recreation Facebook page for upcoming classes.



**City of Mount Dora Parks and Recreation**

## Line Dancing in the Park!

Line dancing showcases have started at Sunset Park, bringing fun, fitness, and community together in the fresh spring air. Join in every first Wednesday of the month from 5-7pm and enjoy an evening outdoors with music and movement.



**230 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Mount Dora, FL**



**Wellness Schedule**



In between showcases, weekly line dancing classes are offered at Donnelly Park, giving everyone a chance to stay active and connected. Programs like these support both physical and mental wellness while making the most of this beautiful time of year.

## Senior Club Brings the Community Together

St. Patrick's Day at the Senior Club luncheon was a hit, filled with great food, fun, and connection. The Senior Club continues to offer a welcoming space for those looking to stay active and social. The club meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 12-3pm at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center, and participation is free.

**Learn More**



**803 Florida Avenue  
Mount Dora, FL**



# Parks and Recreation

## Making Waves in Mount Dora

The Mount Dora Swordfish AAU Swim Team recently hosted an invitational swim meet, bringing teams together for a weekend of competition at the Lincoln Avenue pool. Even more exciting, several Mount Dora swimmers have qualified for the Junior Olympics in Iowa this year, a big accomplishment for these athletes. Interested in joining the AAU swim team or learning more? Email for details.



Email Aquatics 

## Swim Lessons Now Open!

Swim lesson registration is open for both youth and adults, with spots filling quickly. In Florida, learning to swim is a critical safety skill, and early instruction plays an important role in drowning prevention.

The City of Mount Dora's program is designed for all skill levels, from infants to adults, whether you're just getting comfortable in the water or looking to improve. Led by certified instructors at the Lincoln Avenue Community Pool, the program focuses on safety, confidence, and skill development, with opportunities that grow from swim lessons to recreation swim, AAU, and Masters programs.



1200 N. Unser Street  
Mount Dora, FL

Register Online 





# Parks and Recreation



## Waterfront Improvements and Smart Savings

City crews recently completed important work at the Fourth Avenue dock, safely removing aging sections that had reached the end of their service life. By handling the project in-house, teams from the Mount Dora Boating Center and Marina, Building Maintenance, and Public Works worked together to complete the job efficiently while saving an estimated \$40,000 to \$50,000.

The dock remains a priority as the City plans for long-term improvements. Design options for a full replacement are in progress, with grant funding already pursued to support the project. Updates will be shared as planning continues.



## 2026 CITY EVENT SCHEDULE

<b>14</b> FEB	<b>AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY FESTIVAL</b> CAULEY LOTT PARK   10:00 AM - 5:00 PM	<b>09-11</b> OCT	<b>BICYCLE FESTIVAL</b> GILBERT PARK   6:00 AM
<b>20-22</b> FEB	<b>SCOTTISH HIGHLAND FESTIVAL</b> ELIZABETH EVANS & DONNELLY PARK   10:00 AM	<b>17</b> OCT	<b>FALL FESTIVAL</b> SUNSET PARK   6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
<b>17</b> MAR	<b>ST. PATRICKS DAY BLOCK PARTY</b> SUNSET PARK   6:00 PM - 9:00 PM	<b>11</b> NOV	<b>SALUTE TO SERVICE</b> GILBERT PARK   11:00 AM
<b>25</b> MAY	<b>MEMORIAL DAY REMEMBRANCE</b> PINE FOREST CEMETERY   10:00 AM	<b>21</b> NOV	<b>LIGHT UP MOUNT DORA</b> DOWNTOWN   5:30 PM
<b>20</b> JUN	<b>JUNETEENTH FESTIVAL</b> CAULEY LOTT PARK   3:00 PM	<b>05</b> DEC	<b>CHRISTMAS PARADE</b> DONNELLY STREET   10:00 AM
<b>03</b> JUL	<b>FREEDOM ON THE WATERFRONT</b> ELIZABETH EVANS PARK   5:00 PM - 9:00 PM	<b>12</b> DEC	<b>SNOW IN THE PARK</b> ELIZABETH EVANS PARK   3:00 PM - 6:30 PM
<b>04</b> JUL	<b>INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE</b> DONNELLY STREET   10:00 AM	<b>19</b> DEC	<b>NORTHEAST CHRISTMAS PARTY</b> MOUNT DORA MIDDLE SCHOOL   10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
<b>12</b> SEP	<b>PIT MASTERS AND POURERS</b> ELIZABETH EVANS PARK   3:00 PM - 6:00 PM	<b>31</b> DEC	<b>NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION</b> SUNSET PARK   9:00 PM - 12:30 AM

\*Plaid in the Park is every 2nd Saturday at 3pm at Sunset Park\*

## Save the Dates for 2026

The 2026 City Event Schedule is packed with community favorites and signature celebrations. From cultural festivals and patriotic traditions to holiday events and waterfront gatherings, there is something for everyone throughout the year.

Residents are encouraged to save the dates and plan ahead to enjoy the many experiences that bring our community together.



# Parks and Recreation



**Junior Division  
Big Blue**



**Senior Division  
Heat**

*The winter basketball season wrapped up with a great turnout! The season ran from mid-February through April and welcomed over 177 participants. Thank you to everyone who came out to support, including our fans, staff, and especially our volunteer coaches who helped make the season a success.*



**Swim Lessons For  
All Ages**

*Swim lesson registration is now open for both youth and adults, with spots filling quickly. In Florida, learning to swim is an essential safety skill, and early instruction helps prevent drowning.*

*Programs at the Lincoln Avenue Community Pool are available for all skill levels, from infants to adults, and focus on building safety, confidence, and skills with certified instructors.*



# Parks and Recreation

Our lifeguards used this month's in-service training to sharpen their skills and prepare for the 2026 swim season.



1200 N. Unser Street  
Mount Dora, FL



Ready for Swim Season

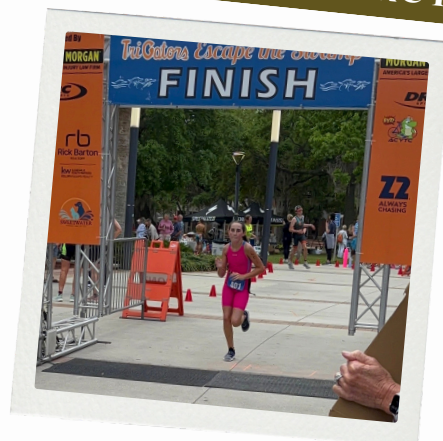


Line Dancing at  
Sunset Park

Our line dancing participants took to Sunset Park and showed off their moves, bringing great energy to Historic Downtown. Want to give it a try? Check out the Aquatics and Wellness schedule.



Making Waves  
Beyond the Pool



Our very own AAU swim team member, Bri, recently completed her first triathlon in Clermont. Way to represent Mount Dora!

# Parks and Recreation

*Blair Park has been brought back to life through a great community effort. Parks and Recreation partnered with the Mount Dora Garden Club and a Scout from Troop 277, who led the project as part of his Eagle Scout journey, to help refurbish the park.*

*After weathering three hurricanes, over 14 inches of rain, and even a freeze, the space needed some extra care. Thanks to this collaboration, Blair Park has a refreshed look and is ready to be enjoyed once again by the community.*

## Blair Park Gets a Fresh Start



*The restrooms at Donnelly Park have received a full refresh, thanks to the work of our Facilities Maintenance team. Upgrades include new paint, flooring, countertops, mirrors, and fixtures, creating a cleaner and more welcoming space for everyone.*

*Located in one of our most visited areas in historic downtown, these improvements will make a noticeable difference for both residents and visitors.*



## Donnelly Park Restrooms Refreshed

# Parks and Recreation



## New Restroom at Lincoln Avenue Park

A brand-new restroom is now open right next to the Little Free Library. The facility includes a water fountain with a bottle refill station and even a pet bowl, making it a convenient stop for both people and pets.

With its central location, this restroom will serve visitors enjoying the baseball and softball fields, mountain bike trail, dog park, disc golf course, tennis courts, and more.



Did you know the Mount Dora Music Hall at the Community Building hosts plays, concerts, stand-up comedy, and more all year long right here in historic Mount Dora?

New shows are added to the schedule regularly, so there is always something coming up.



520 N. Baker Street  
Mount Dora, FL



## A Gift That Rocks

Take a look at the guitar gifted to the City from WJRR Radio Station, now on display in the lobby at the Mount Dora Community Building. It features signatures from the bands that performed at this year's Earth Day Birthday celebration, making it a unique piece that captures the energy of the event and the artists who made it one to remember.



## Art on Display at the Community Building

A beautiful new piece of artwork has been donated by a Mount Dora patron of the Community Building and is now on display in the lobby.

Created by Lionel Montells, the piece features the quote, "Music is the universal language of mankind" by Longfellow. It is a meaningful addition to the space and a great reflection of the role music continues to play in bringing people together in our community.



# CITY OF MOUNT DORA

Leisure Services  
900 N. Donnelly St.  
Mount Dora, FL 32757  
352-735-7183  
Fax: 352-735-3681

E-mail: [parksandrec@cityofmoundora.com](mailto:parksandrec@cityofmoundora.com)

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**DATE:** May 18, 2026

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Members

**FROM:** Troy Shonk, Director of Parks and Recreation

**SUBJECT:** Cultural and Special Events Update

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## **Introduction:**

### Recent Special Events:

Mount Dora Blueberry Festival - April 25, 2026

Mount Dora Taste - May 2, 2026

### Upcoming Events:

Juneteenth Festival - June 20, 2026 @ Cauley Lott Park

Freedom on the Waterfront - July 3, 2026 @ the lakefront parks of Simpson Cove and Elizabeth Evans Park

Independence Day Parade - July 4, 2026 along Donnelly Street, throughout downtown

## **Discussion:**

Special events continue to play an important role in the City of Mount Dora's community identity, quality of life, and economic vitality. The City's events create opportunities for residents and visitors to gather, engage, and experience the unique character of Mount Dora through civic, cultural, educational, recreational, and entertainment activities. These events help strengthen community pride while also supporting local businesses, restaurants, lodging establishments, and the downtown economy.

The Parks & Recreation Department, through its oversight of Special Events and downtown operations, continues to support and coordinate events that contribute to the City's vision of maintaining a vibrant and welcoming community atmosphere. Mount Dora's events and festivals have become a significant tourism driver, attracting visitors year-round and generating positive economic activity within the downtown district and surrounding business community.

**Budget Impact:**

**Strategic Impact:**

This effort aligns with the City of Mount Dora Strategic Plan 2025–2030, including Strategic Initiative 1: Promote Economic Development and Strategic Initiative 4: Provide High-Quality Services, specifically the objectives to “Develop premier festivals that drive tourism” and “cultivate community spirit by partnering with event sponsors to deliver cost-effective City services while safeguarding the public.

**Recommendation**

**Attachment(s):**

Prepared by: Jennifer Schwarz, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation

Reviewed by: carsonc carsonc, Special Events Manager  
Troy Shonk, Parks & Recreation Director

Approved - 5/5/2026

Final Approval - 5/6/2026