



CITY OF GRAND PRAIRIE

Meeting Minutes

Botanical Gardens and Public Artwork Ad Hoc Committee

Thursday, September 10, 2026

6:00 PM

Betty Warmack Library
760 Bardin Rd.
Grand Prairie, TX

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Adams called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Chairwoman Bessye Adams
Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Jacquin Headen
Council Member Jorja Clemson
Committee Member Don Meiners
Committee Member Dr. Benita Reed
Committee Member Mal Earl
Committee Member Ray Cerda

ABSENT

Committee Member Lindsay Reeves

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

1. Recap and Follow-Up Items from Meeting 2

Deputy City Manager Mahan provided a recap of the Committee's August 27, 2026, meeting and reviewed the direction established for the Botanical Garden and Public Artwork projects. Ms. Mahan noted that the Committee's primary focus for the Botanical Garden was serving a broad mix of Grand Prairie residents, with an emphasis on families and children. Community gathering and programming, relaxation and wellness, education, family experiences, and beautiful spaces were identified as key needs. Community + Education was identified as the primary role of the garden, with the potential to become a destination without destination tourism being the primary driver.

Ms. Mahan presented a draft Botanical Garden vision statement describing a beautiful, welcoming garden where Grand Prairie residents can connect with nature, relax, learn, gather, and make memories. She noted that the statement was developed from the Committee's previous discussion and was presented as a starting point for further consideration.

Ms. Mahan also reviewed the Committee's previous direction for Public Artwork, noting a focus on serving residents, creating memorable places, bringing art into everyday life, beautifying public spaces, and incorporating elements of surprise and delight. She presented a draft Public Artwork vision statement describing public art that enriches everyday experiences for a broad mix of Grand Prairie residents by creating memorable, interactive, and unexpected moments that

foster pride, belonging, and connection to the community. Ms. Mahan noted that the statement was presented as a starting point for further consideration.

Staff presented additional Botanical Garden and Public Artwork inspiration examples in response to requests from the previous meeting. The Committee discussed elements including water features, varied topography, educational and event spaces, architectural features, interpretive signage, natural landscaping, interactive and functional public art, temporary and rotating installations, and photo opportunities. Mr. Meiners also discussed the cultural and educational components of his Japanese garden in Grand Prairie.

2. Botanical Gardens and Public Artwork Project Characteristics for Evaluation and Costing

Deputy City Manager Mahan explained that staff had translated the Committee's previous feedback into characteristics for evaluation and future costing. For the Botanical Garden, Ms. Mahan identified three primary areas: everyday access to nature and wellness; hands-on, nature-based education; and opportunities for community gathering and making memories. Potential characteristics included beautiful garden environments, accessible walking paths, shade and restorative areas, seasonal interest, interactive and demonstration gardens, interpretive elements, flexible learning spaces, gathering areas, photo opportunities, programming, and special occasions. Staff noted that accessibility, operating impacts, heat comfort, conservation and stewardship, water sustainability, and flexibility over time would be considered throughout the evaluation.

Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Headen requested that misters be included as a heat-comfort feature. Chair Adams requested that conservation be specifically included among the identified needs.

The Committee discussed additional characteristics for consideration, including an indoor educational and gathering space that could incorporate restrooms, retail or plant sales, light refreshments, merchandise, and other revenue-generating opportunities. Councilmember Clemson discussed incorporating arbors, tree tunnels, and living plant canopies to provide shade and enhance the garden experience. The Committee also expressed support for mature trees and water features as characteristics for consideration.

The Committee discussed the potential for special occasions, including weddings and photography, while maintaining the garden's primary community purpose. Ms. Mahan noted that the Committee's work was similar to master planning and could establish a vision that may be developed in phases over time.

For Public Artwork, Ms. Mahan explained that the purpose of the discussion was to identify characteristics for evaluation rather than select specific artwork or rank projects by cost. Staff presented five characteristics for consideration: enriching the existing experience, interactive and engaging, photo-worthy and memorable, Grand Prairie pride and a sense of belonging, and surprise and discovery. Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Headen expressed support for the proposed characteristics and the draft vision statements. Chair Adams requested that staff bring back examples from the upcoming public art conference that align with each of the five characteristics.

Ms. Mahan further explained that the characteristics could include functional artwork that enhances ordinary spaces; interactive artwork that residents can walk through, sit on, touch, hear, or experience through movement; memorable photo opportunities; elements that reinforce Grand Prairie pride; and unique pieces that create moments of surprise and discovery. The

Committee agreed that the characteristics presented captured the direction of its previous discussions.

{Council Member Jorja Clemson left the meeting at 7:04 p.m.}

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Citizens may sign up to speak for up to three (3) minutes. For multiple agenda items, a citizen may speak for up to five (5) minutes total for all items. All speakers must complete a comment card prior to the meeting being called to order. The views expressed during public comments are the views of the speaker and not the City of Grand Prairie or the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee. Committee members are not able to respond to comments related to any item not on the agenda. The full meeting agenda packet and supporting documents are available online on the City's website at www.gptx.org.

- Therez Dart, 2005 Wildwood Drive - addressed the Committee regarding the long-term sustainability of the Botanical Garden. Ms. Dart encouraged consideration of drought-tolerant and native landscaping and infrastructure that would support sustainable plant life over time.*
- Barry Sanders, 2126 Westfield - took no position on the item and will comment neutrally.*

ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

3. Minutes of the August 27, 2026 Botanical Gardens and Public Artwork Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Meeting

Dr. Benita Reed made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2026, Botanical Gardens and Public Artwork Ad Hoc Committee meeting as presented. Committee Member Ray Cerda seconded the motion. The motion carried 6-0 (Councilmember Jorja Clemson and Committee Member Lindsey Reeves absent).

4. Action out of Staff Presentations

Chair Adams asked whether the Committee had any additional direction or requests for staff for the next meeting. She requested that staff explore the potential use of alternative energy features, including solar and geothermal energy, as part of the Botanical Garden's infrastructure and sustainability planning.

5. Future Meeting Dates and Locations

Chair Adams confirmed that the Committee's next meeting will be held on September 24, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. at the Betty Warmack Library. She also confirmed the final scheduled meeting for October 15, 2026. Committee members were encouraged to submit any additional ideas or suggestions to staff for consideration at an upcoming meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairwoman Adams adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

The foregoing minutes were approved at the September 24, 2026, Botanical Gardens and Public Artwork Ad Hoc Advisory Committee meeting.



Kristin Downs, TRMC
Deputy City Secretary