

Keep Conyers–Rockdale Beautiful (KCRB) Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes – May 11, 2026

Location: C.E. Steele Community Center

Time: 6:06 PM – 7:45 PM

Members Present

- Darlisssha Tillman-Sadler (Chair)
- Commissioner Tuwanya Smith
- Kurt Peters
- Deidre Somdah (online)
- Anthony Pacheco (online)
- Amanda Newcomb
- Marilyn Cooke

Staff Present:

- Christopher Causey, Staff Liaison

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 PM. A quorum was confirmed.

II. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuwanya Smith to approve the agenda as presented. Marilyn Cooke seconded. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuwanya Smith to approve the minutes from the April 13, 2026 regular meeting and the April 27, 2026 special called meeting. Amanda Newcomb seconded. Motion passed.

IV. Unfinished Business

A. Grant Update

- The \$5,000 Great American Cleanup grant is pending. The document has been sent to the Chair for signature. The Chair is waiting on Austin to return the signed document.

B. Great American Cleanup – May 31, 2026

- Event date: Sunday, May 31, 2026 | Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Volunteers can register online. The volunteer title has been updated so that the registration option is clearly visible on the website.
- Three cleanup locations confirmed: Earl O'Neal Park (central hub), Bonner Park (City side), and Pine Log Park. Each location will have two greeters, a table, tent,

chair, and first aid kit. Greeters will count bags and items collected and maintain volunteer tallies.

- Earl O'Neal Park will serve as the central hub for supply distribution and lunch.
- Bonner Park: City contact Matt McLaughlin confirmed that city employees are unavailable on Sundays. A trash drop location has been identified; the city will pick up trash the following business day. There are no restrooms at Bonner Park. Volunteers should use restrooms at Pine Log before departing. Anthony Pacheco has volunteered to take on Bonner Park outreach and greeter duties and will push event information through city social media channels.
- Pine Log Park has a trail and is suitable for scouts and youth groups. The Chair emailed the scouts to inform them of the event.
- Volunteer goal: 50 community volunteers. Stormwater has been asked to provide 25; the remaining 25 will be covered through sponsorships or community outreach.
- RWR will provide lunch, contingent on sponsorship. Jessica Paulette has been added to the Rivers Alive mini-committee and has possible sponsors for food and tents.
- Stormwater will provide breakfast. A roll-off has been offered; the Chair will confirm whether a smaller roll-off is sufficient based on last year's usage.
- Parks and Recreation Director Wilson will ensure no conflicting activities are scheduled at Pine Log on event day.
- Volunteer check-in process: Court-assigned volunteers will use a separate paper sign-in/sign-out sheet. All other volunteers will check in and out via QR code barcode system using a Google Form. Separate barcodes will be used for sign-in and sign-out. Volunteers must bring their ID and their phone for QR scanning. Those without phones will be accommodated on paper. Volunteers must return all equipment (vest, picker) before scanning out.
- Court volunteers will receive a Publix lunch box in exchange for returning their equipment at the end of the event.
- A release form will be created by adapting the Rivers Alive waiver. Anyone under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult.
- T-shirts: Old Rivers Alive shirts will be distributed first come, first served. Janetta may have a small number of Great American Cleanup shirts. The Chair will confirm available inventory.
- Storage: KCRB lacks dedicated storage space. The Chair will explore options including space at Code Enforcement, Stormwater, or on the City side. A KCRB-branded trailer remains a future goal. Commissioner Smith will confirm if there is space in the new administration building once it is completed.
- Current confirmed volunteer count: approximately 6–7. Additional court-referred volunteers are anticipated. Some judges are offering two-for-one community service credit for KCRB cleanup participation.

C. Branded Merchandise

- The council previously approved 100 branded water bottles (50 per event) and hand sanitizer. The Chair reported that branded drawstring backpacks can be sourced for approximately \$2.00 each — comparable in cost to the water bottles.
- Proposal approved: Purchase 100 drawstring backpacks with the KCRB logo — 50 for the Great American Cleanup (May 31) and 50 for the Back to School Bash (July 25, 2026). Each backpack will include a pen and a clear KCRB water bottle. Departments may contribute swag items to fill the bags.
- Clear water bottles with a colored logo top are available through Clear Impact for \$1.87–\$3.15 each for orders of 100. The Chair will confirm final pricing and delivery timeline before the May 31 event.
- The Chair will email photos and pricing for both items to council members for review prior to purchase. Purchases will be made within the approved 2026 KCRB budget, specifically the Volunteer Engagement, Swag & Recognition line (\$537) and the Outreach & Education line (\$600), both of which were approved by the council at the January 12, 2026 meeting.

V. New Business

A. Big Rock Project – Tree Removal and Garden Restoration

- Three quotes were presented for tree removal, stump grinding, and site cleanup. Finance requires a minimum of three quotes.
- **Above All Tree Service – \$2,400:** Trim crepe myrtles, clear vines and underbrush, remove marked dead/sick trees, spray mulch on the bank, trim cedar trees behind the rock, grind all stumps at no additional charge (including existing stumps). One crepe myrtle has a fungal illness; affected limbs will be cut and the tree allowed to regrow next season.
- **Williamson Tree Service (County contractor) – \$2,000:** Remove elm trees and pivot bushes, trim cedar trees, leave mulch, grind stumps, spread mulch across the slope bank.
- **Excellent Tree Service – Quote 1: \$3,600 / Quote 2: \$4,000:** The \$3,600 quote covers cutting minimum-size and small trees, stump grinding, trimming and pruning crepe myrtles, and chipping/mulching all cut material on site. The \$4,000 quote adds clearing and treating overgrowth, weeds, and thorns on the embankment — the slope area that Parks and Rec does not maintain.
- The 811 utility line check was completed. A water interconnect is present but will not affect the project.
- The Chair will submit the two preferred quotes — Above All Tree Service (\$2,400) and Williamson (\$2,000) — to Finance for review and final selection.
- UGA Extension will test the soil once trees are cleared and will provide pollinator grass and flower seeds at no cost.
- Stormwater and Parks and Recreation have both committed manpower support. Parks and Rec will maintain the top of the rock and the perimeter but not the garden itself.

- Pro Cutters will assist with beautification and will manage crepe myrtle preparation each winter. Master Gardeners and UGA will assist with planting.
- Goal: Work completed by summer so tree planting can begin. A community planting event is planned as a future engagement opportunity.

B. Cultivate Festival – June 28, 2026

- Event confirmed for Sunday, June 28, 2026 at Wheeler Park. 24 vendors are currently registered.
- Layout: Vendors on one side of the parking lot; Touch-a-Truck area and bouncy houses on the other side as a kids zone. Food trucks along the front of the park.
- Touch-a-Truck participants being pursued: SWAT, Fire, Animal Services, Stormwater (excavator/back truck), and DOT. Sunday availability may require comp time approval from department directors.
- Drippy (Water Department mascot) will be invited to attend.
- Confirmed and planned demonstration tables:
- Craft/Recycled Art Table – Amanda Newcomb (two large tables; recycled materials, macaroni, and other craft supplies)
- Compost Demonstration Table – Kurt Peters will facilitate using Mr. Keller's composter. UGA presentation materials will serve as talking points. UGA flyers will be available. A compost sorting game using fake fruits and vegetables is being explored as an interactive activity.
- Rain Barrel demonstration table
- UGA Extension Table – Director Eugene confirmed; will determine his own activity. Butterfly/pollinator displays and other environmental demonstrations are possibilities.
- Master Gardeners table is being pursued.
- USGS kinetic sand table is being pursued; Kyle must receive travel authorization.
- Miss Janie is being contacted for an additional activity.
- Parks and Recreation Wrecking Crew activities team will be asked to participate.
- Rockdale Farmers Market will be present.
- Vendor flyer will be distributed. Educational/non-selling vendors may participate at no cost. No items may be sold on county property.
- The Chair will confirm trash and waste coordination logistics with the appropriate department.

C. Back to School Bash – July 25, 2026

- KCRB will have a vendor table at the Back to School Bash on July 25, 2026. Attendance is estimated at 2,000 participants.
- The event is transitioning to a new supply donation model this year. An Amazon registry link will be used to collect supply donations from the public. Parks and Recreation will coordinate the overall supply distribution.
- KCRB's role at the event will focus on organizational promotion rather than general supply distribution. The council discussed options for what to give away at the KCRB table.

- Decision: KCRB will give away 50 branded drawstring backpacks (with pen and water bottle inside) at the Back to School Bash. This serves as both a giveaway and a branding opportunity. The backpacks reinforce KCRB's community clean environment message.
- The council noted that the backpacks can be used by families throughout the year, keeping the KCRB logo visible in the community.
- KCRB will not be responsible for providing school supplies for all 2,000 attendees. The focus is on organizational visibility and community engagement.

D. Rain Barrel Initiative

- The Chair has been in contact with the Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, who offered to provide rain barrels. The Chair will confirm participation.
- The Alcovy Riverkeeper is willing to facilitate a rain barrel workshop at no cost. He is currently on vacation; the Chair will follow up.
- The workshop will be moved to June. Kits may need to be purchased; Home Depot has been identified as a possible source.
- The workshop may be held outdoors to reduce costs. JB High School was suggested as a possible venue.
- Council members are asked to suggest a suitable Friday date in June.

E. Gardening 101 Workshop

- A Gardening 101 workshop will be planned in collaboration with UGA Extension and Master Gardeners on a Friday in June or July.
- The Chair will obtain available dates from UGA Extension and report back to the council.

F. Drought Awareness – EPD Phase 1

- EPD has placed Rockdale County in Phase 1 drought awareness. No mandatory restrictions are in effect; the emphasis is on public education and conservation.
- Phase 1 actions include: social media posts, newspaper notices, online ads, building inserts, public library notices, and a public information campaign.
- Outdoor watering is restricted to 4:00 PM – 10:00 AM to reduce evaporation. This rule has been in place for years but is now being actively communicated and enforced.
- Burn pit use may continue. The no-burning ordinance does not take effect until October 1.
- The Chair posted drought awareness content on LinkedIn and submitted information to the Water Department social media contact for the county website.
- KCRB will create conservation flyers using the organization's branding. The Chair will email the EPD Phase 1 guidance document to the council.
- Anthony Pacheco will amplify drought awareness messaging through city social media channels.

G. Library / Literacy Collaboration

- The Rockdale County Public Library expressed interest in partnering with KCRB on a literacy initiative, possibly including read-alouds for children during the summer.
- The Chair proposed a classroom adoption program for the 2026–2027 school year: select a grade level and teacher, identify the teacher's most-needed classroom supplies throughout the year, and provide sustained support — going beyond the standard backpack drive model.
- Discussion noted that transitional grade levels (pre-K to K, 5th to 6th, 8th to 9th) and older students are often underserved by traditional supply drives. The grade level to adopt will be determined at a future meeting.
- The Chair will follow up with the library contact to explore specific programming opportunities.

VI. Officer Elections – 2026–2027 Term

Elections were held for the 2026–2027 officer term. The following officers were nominated and elected:

- **Chair:** Darlisssha Tillman-Sadler. Nominated by Marilyn Cooke; seconded by Amanda Newcomb. Motion passed.
- **Vice Chair:** Marilyn Cooke. Nominated and seconded. Motion passed.
- **Secretary:** Amanda Newcomb. Nominated and seconded. Motion passed.

VII. Administrative Items

- **Great American Cleanup Proclamation:** The Board of Commissioners will read the Great American Cleanup Proclamation at the BOC meeting on Tuesday, May 12, 2026 at 10:00 AM. Council members who are available are encouraged to attend wearing KCRB shirts. The meeting will be available via live stream.
- **Compost Workshop Recap:** The April 24, 2026 Compost Workshop facilitated by UGA Extension was well-attended. The Chair will send a follow-up email to all participants. UGA collected attendee names for future outreach.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Next Scheduled Meeting: Monday, June 8, 2026 – 6:00 PM (Regular Meeting)