Keep Conyers–Rockdale Beautiful (KCRB) Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes – June 8, 2026
Location: C.E. Steele Community Center
Time: 6:01 PM – 7:39 PM

Members Present

- Darlissha Tillman-Sadler, Chair
- Marilyn Cooke, Vice-Chair (online)
- Amanda Newcomb, Secretary
- Commissioner Tuwanya Smith, Executive Director
- Kurt Peters
- Deidre Somdah (online)
- Anthony Pacheco
- Tommy Plummer (absent)
- Alvenease Jackson (absent)

Staff Present

- Christopher Causey, Staff Liaison

I. Call to Order

Chair Darlissha Tillman-Sadler called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM. A quorum was confirmed.

II. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuwanya Smith to approve the agenda as presented. Kurt Peters seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuwanya Smith to approve the minutes from the May 11, 2026 regular meeting. Kurt Peters seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Unfinished Business

A. Great American Cleanup Recap

- The Chair provided a recap of the 2026 Great American Cleanup event and thanked council members, volunteers, county departments, and community partners for their support.
- Approximately 25 volunteers participated in the cleanup despite rainy weather conditions and power outages affecting portions of the county.

- Volunteers collected approximately four tires and twenty-five bags of litter during the event.
- Members discussed the continued growth of KCRB's partnerships with county departments and noted significant improvement in interdepartmental collaboration compared to previous years.
- Several departments assisted through social media promotion, logistical support, event planning, vendor referrals, and volunteer recruitment efforts.
- Planning and Development participated in event planning discussions for the first time and offered assistance with vendor resources and sponsorship opportunities for future events.
- Rockdale Water Resources and Stormwater Management were recognized for providing event support, refreshments, and volunteer assistance.
- Members discussed the importance of continuing to strengthen relationships with civic organizations, schools, volunteer groups, and community partners to increase participation in future cleanup events.
- The Chair reported making new connections with community organizations and volunteer groups through outreach efforts associated with the cleanup event.
- Members agreed that continued collaboration and community engagement remain critical to the long-term success of KCRB programs.

B. Cultivate Fest – June 28, 2026

- The Chair reported that planning for Cultivate Fest continues to progress and expressed appreciation to Parks and Recreation staff for providing guidance on event planning and coordination.
- Members discussed opportunities to develop sponsorships for future Cultivate Fest events and increase participation from local businesses and community organizations.
- Kurt Peters will continue coordinating the composting demonstration area and will provide staff with a list of equipment and table needs.
- Amanda Newcomb will coordinate the arts and crafts area and will provide staff with a list of table, tent, and supply needs.
- UGA Extension and the Master Gardeners will participate in the event.
- The Big Haynes Creek Nature Center is scheduled to participate.
- Additional educational activities will include gardening demonstrations and salad-growing presentations.
- Parks and Recreation is coordinating children's activities, bounce houses, a petting zoo, entertainment, and event logistics.

- Members discussed the importance of creating a family-friendly atmosphere that combines environmental education, recreation, and community engagement.
- The council expressed support for continuing to grow Cultivate Fest as a signature community event.

C. Big Rock Project – Tree Removal and Garden Restoration

- The Chair reported on procurement requirements associated with the project and reviewed the county's purchasing thresholds.
- The two preferred contractors remain Above All Tree Service and Williamson Tree Service.
- Both contractors currently perform work for Rockdale County and are already established vendors within the county system.
- Members were asked to review the submitted proposals and provide feedback prior to a final recommendation being submitted for approval.
- The council discussed scheduling a site visit to collect soil samples for testing.
- Soil samples will be submitted through UGA Extension for analysis and planting recommendations.
- UGA Extension provided information regarding native grasses and pollinator-friendly plant species suitable for the site.
- Additional guidance has been received from native plant nurseries and gardening experts regarding plant selection and site design.
- Members discussed coordinating a field visit to review site conditions, collect soil samples, and evaluate future beautification opportunities.
- One crepe myrtle requires pruning to remove diseased limbs and prevent further damage to the tree.
- Members expressed enthusiasm regarding the project's progress and the support being provided by UGA Extension, Master Gardeners, and community partners.

D. Rain Barrel Initiative

- The Chair reported ongoing discussions with regional Riverkeeper organizations regarding potential rain barrel donations.
- If donated rain barrels are unavailable, grant funds may be used to purchase barrels for the workshop.
- Members discussed pursuing in-kind donations from local businesses for workshop materials and supplies.
- Potential partners discussed included Ace Hardware, Home Depot, and other local businesses.

- The council discussed hosting the workshop outdoors at Wheeler Park to accommodate larger participation.
- Members also discussed using Conyers City Hall as an alternate indoor location in the event of inclement weather.
- Discussion included workshop capacity, material requirements, seating needs, and participant comfort.
- Members explored whether registration fees could be charged to offset material costs; however, concerns were raised regarding collection procedures and financial administration.
- The council agreed that sponsorships and donated materials remain the preferred approach.
- Members will continue evaluating dates and logistics for the workshop.

E. Gardening 101 Workshop

- The Chair reported that UGA Extension will be contacted regarding available instructors and workshop dates.
- The workshop will be coordinated around UGA Extension's existing programming schedule.
- Additional information will be provided once dates become available.

IV. New Business

A. Pop-the-Trunk Cleanup Initiative

- Members revisited the concept of conducting smaller, neighborhood-based cleanup events throughout the year.
- Potential locations discussed included the Big Rock area, Forest Villa, Ellington, and other litter-prone corridors throughout the county.
- Members emphasized the value of highly visible cleanup activities that demonstrate KCRB's commitment to both the city and county.
- Staff will verify property ownership, permissions, and any active investigations before selecting cleanup locations.
- Members expressed support for utilizing these events as opportunities for citizen engagement and volunteer recruitment.

B. Community Dog Waste Station Initiative

- Members discussed the possibility of installing pet waste stations along heavily traveled walking routes.

- Discussion focused on areas where residents frequently walk dogs, including corridors near Iris Drive and other high-use locations.
- Members agreed that pet waste stations could improve cleanliness and encourage responsible pet ownership.
- Grant opportunities and partnership options will be explored.
- Coordination with city officials will be necessary before implementation.

C. Grant Planning for 2027

- The Chair reported that KCRB likely left several grant opportunities unexplored during the current cycle.
- Beginning in September, the council will begin identifying potential projects and matching them with available grant opportunities.
- Potential projects discussed included pollinator gardens, Purple Heart beautification efforts, dog waste stations, environmental education initiatives, and other beautification projects.
- Members were encouraged to think creatively and develop preliminary project concepts and budget estimates.
- The council agreed that early planning will strengthen future grant applications and improve project readiness.

D. KCRB Member Spotlight and Board Recognition

- Members discussed conducting a board photo session to increase public awareness of KCRB and its activities.
- The council also discussed creating individual member spotlight features highlighting the contributions of each member.
- Public Relations assistance may be requested for photography and promotional materials.
- Amanda Newcomb agreed to assist in advancing this initiative.
- Members expressed support for increasing visibility of KCRB's accomplishments and volunteer service.

E. Back-to-School Bash – July 25, 2026

- Members reviewed plans for KCRB's participation in the Back-to-School Bash scheduled for July 25, 2026 at Johnson Park.
- KCRB will host a vendor table during the event.
- The council discussed distributing branded backpacks, water bottles, educational materials, and promotional items.

- Members discussed creating customized recycling-themed bags and giveaway items for parents and families.
- Educational materials, pencils, and other small promotional items were discussed as potential giveaways.
- The Chair proposed developing a KCRB-themed coloring book focused on environmental stewardship and litter prevention.
- Members agreed the event presents an important opportunity for volunteer recruitment and community outreach.
- The council emphasized the importance of maintaining visibility while supporting the broader goals of the Back-to-School Bash.

F. Stormwater Partnership Opportunities

- Members discussed opportunities to partner with Stormwater Management on educational initiatives.
- Stormwater staff have expressed interest in conducting storm drain stenciling projects and youth engagement activities.
- Additional discussions will be held to identify project opportunities and implementation strategies.

G. Adopt-a-Classroom Initiative

- The Chair reported discussions with school representatives regarding KCRB's proposed Adopt-a-Classroom initiative.
- Members agreed that the program should extend beyond school supply donations and focus on meaningful engagement with teachers and students.
- Potential activities include classroom volunteering, literacy support, teacher assistance, and enrichment activities.
- Members noted that many teachers personally purchase classroom supplies and could benefit from additional community support.
- The council agreed that the initiative aligns with KCRB's goal of community service and youth engagement.

H. Literacy Initiative

- Members discussed developing a literacy-focused service initiative in partnership with local educational organizations.
- The council explored opportunities to support reading programs and educational activities throughout the community.
- Members discussed the potential long-term impact of literacy-focused programming and community partnerships.

- Deidre Somdah agreed to champion future literacy-related initiatives and partnership discussions.

I. Little Free Library Initiative

- Members discussed establishing Little Free Libraries throughout the community.
- The initiative would provide additional access to reading materials while supporting broader literacy goals.
- Anthony Pacheco agreed to explore partnership opportunities and potential locations.
- Members discussed working collaboratively with library stakeholders and community organizations.

J. Budget Update

- Christopher Causey provided a budget update and reviewed account balances and expenditures.
- Discussion focused on reconciling differences between KCRB's records and county financial records.
- Staff reported that Finance is reviewing the discrepancy and working to identify the source of the variance.
- Members discussed the importance of maintaining accurate financial records and ensuring that all grant and budget expenditures are properly documented.
- Staff will continue working with Finance and provide updates as additional information becomes available.

K. Beautification Recognition Program

- Members discussed creating a beautification recognition program to acknowledge residents and organizations that contribute to community appearance and environmental stewardship.
- Potential recognition categories include homeowners, apartment communities, and neighborhood groups.
- Members emphasized the importance of creating a program that recognizes efforts across diverse housing types and community settings.

L. Shredding Event Planning

- Members discussed scheduling the next shredding event during National Recycling Month in November.
- Due to the popularity of previous events, the council discussed expanding capacity and exploring options for additional shredding trucks.

- Members agreed that shredding events remain one of KCRB's most visible and successful community programs.

VI. Announcements

- Celebration Park Grand Opening – June 24, 2026
- Members were encouraged to participate in the Juneteenth Parade and represent KCRB during community activities throughout the summer.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:39 PM.