

Park and Recreation Commission Meeting

September 29, 2025, at 7:00pm

Present: Christopher Gerstel (Chair), Michelle Geddes (Vice-Chair), Cynthia Chaston (Member), James Rosenbaum (Member), Stacey Mulroy (Director), Hannah Corrigan (Assistant Director) via Zoom, Grace Steeves (Administrative Assistant) via Zoom

Absent: Dina Hannigan (Member)

Call to Order

Mr. Gerstel called the meeting to order at 7:05pm, September 29, 2025

Open Forum Public Comment

None

Meeting Guests

None

Director's Report

Ms. Mulroy provided updates to the commission on numbers from fall program registration thus far. In less than two weeks time, fall program registration went up by 190 registrations, increasing revenue by more than \$20,000 for a total revenue of \$41,500 so far. While registration for fall events was still lower than usual, Ms. Mulroy expects registrations to increase as the events get closer, with events such as Spooky Walk being projected to reach 700 registrations. Ms. Mulroy also asked the Commission to attend the Spooky Walk at the department's Fall Family Day on October 25th and run their own table to hand out candy and goodies.

Updates were also shared on the Needham High School (NHS) tennis courts. Ms. Mulroy explained that the project is going very well, and the biggest focus for the department currently is making sure that there is signage on the courts, as according to their agreement with the planning board. All the signs need to be consistent across town and include the new town logo. The NHS courts and Claxton will be the first locations in town to have these new signs.

Ms. Mulroy also touched upon Eliot School, as it will be an upcoming capital project if it goes through. While it is a project under the Department of Public Works (DPW), Park and Recreation will be working closely with Parks and Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen on it. Ms. Mulroy and Mr. Olsen will be meeting on September 30, 2025, to discuss the rough budget of the project. If Eliot goes through, the project will take place over the summer and include new additions and construction of the playground, artificial turf on the baseball diamond, and a cleaned-up asphalt basketball court. Mr. Gerstel inquired how this construction, if it goes through, would affect the summer camps through Park and Recreation that take place at Eliot, as the construction would be slated to start in July. Ms. Mulroy explained that the camps that took

place at Eliot last year would move to another open school in town where construction would not be happening, which they will have to do regardless of whether this project passes or not as there is scheduled to be HVAC work done inside of Elliot over the summer.

Other information that Ms. Mulroy shared was important dates coming up. The October Special Town Meeting will be held on Monday, October 20, at 7:30pm, the capital budget is due on Friday October 10th, and the operating budget is due on Friday October 24th. As well, Ms. Mulroy shared an Employee Spotlight, which is a tradition she will begin for each Directors Report going forward, highlighting a different Park and Recreation department employee or a Commissioner each week. For the first spotlight, Ms. Mulroy highlighted Administrative Assistant Grace Steeves. Ms. Corrigan also shared that she is running a program this fall on resume building, professionalism, and mock interviewing. This program will take place on NHS half days and from October – December.

Discussion Items

In preparation for the capital budget due on October 10, 2025, the Commission spent time discussing their priority list of projects. Last year, they put in for the following projects: Action Park – Skate Park and Pickleball Courts, Needham High School – Tennis Courts, Claxton Field Renovations, Eliot School Ground Renovations, McLeod Field ADA Upgrades, and the Playground Project at DeFazio (currently on hold due to Pollard Project). Other projects coming up that were put in the Five-Year Plan last year are the following projects: Athletic Fields Master Study Plan, Carleton Pavillion Removal and Redesign, Cricket Field Building Removal and Redesign, and Disc Golf Course. Other projects on the list include the Playground Project (Perry), Recreation Facility, and Rosemary Pool Shade Improvements. Mr. Rosenbaum inquired about maintaining water fountains at fields and whether that may be a project for the capital plan. Ms. Mulroy explained that it is an ongoing project between Park and Recreation and DPW, however, it would not meet the cost mark for being on the capital or operating budget. The Commission decided to push the Athletics Field Master Study Plan, Carleton Pavillion Removal and Redesign, and Recreation Facility out as far as possible, whether that be to Fiscal Year (FY) 32, or on hold. The Rosemary Pool Shade Improvements were decided to be kept in FY28, as they are not urgent due to the tent they have now, however, down the line they may want to put in a more permanent solution to the shade with funding they received for it. The Commission talked about the pros and cons of moving the Disc Golf course up on the priority list. Ms. Mulroy also stated that although they have done a feasibility study for the course in the town forest, that may not be the best place, and another feasibility study may be needed. Mr. Gerstel brought up talking with user groups, the Conservation Department, and abutters of the town forest to see if this space would be the best option for the course, and if they disagree it is not the best space, doing a feasibility study elsewhere. The Commission decided to put the Disc Golf course feasibility in FY27, with design to come later after hearing from the public.

The next discussion items were goals and policies. The Commission looked over and discussed FY2026 Responsibilities and Liaisons Adopted, as well as the Commission Yearly and Ongoing Goals Adopted. Mr. Rosenbaum expressed interest in being the liaison to the Active Recreation Group, and Ms. Chaston proposed a swap with Mr. Rosenbaum. Mr. Rosenbaum will not be a liaison to the Active Recreation Group, and Ms. Chaston will be a liaison to the Commission Appointees: Youth & Family Services and Council on Aging. **Mr. Gerstel made a motion to accept with Park and Recreation Commission's FY26 responsibilities and liaisons adopted with the changes that they made at the September 29, 2025, meeting. Ms. Geddes seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

Mr. Gerstel made another motion to pass the Park and Recreation Commission's yearly and ongoing goals. Ms. Chaston seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

The Commission looked at policies for the multipurpose room. Ms. Mulroy updated the fee amount for the building monitor to reflect the current fee. She also inquired whether the Commission would like to charge a fee for the use of the multipurpose room. She explained that previously they had not charged as groups utilizing the space were non-profit or school groups. She also explained that each group is charged a building monitor fee and custodial fee, however, that is not a charge through Park & Recreation. Ms. Mulroy inquired if the Commission would like to make any changes to this policy. They decided to leave the fee structure up to decision of the Commission based on the event taking place. The commission also updated language on not authorizing use of the multipurpose room for commercial or private use. **Mr. Gerstel made a motion to approve the policy as amended by the Director and Assistant Director, and any changes made will be updated as of the September 29, 2025, meeting. Ms. Chaston seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

The Commission also discussed the Code of Conduct for field permit holders. Ms. Mulroy expressed that the troubles the department has faced with trash, equipment, and permit issues have been far greater than any trouble they have had in the past. Ms. Mulroy also shared that there is no retribution for breaking the Code of Conduct currently. Other issues being faced with field permits this year include blanket permitting, non-permit holders using the fields, groups being rude to Park Ranger Wu, a lack of enforcement on Sundays due to no one working, backdoor deals, and respect as a whole. The Commission will continue to discuss and find solutions to these issues, and Ms. Mulroy and Ms. Corrigan will continue to update the field manual. Another issue Ms. Mulroy also explained the department has faced at fields are AED's being taken and later being returned. There is also currently no AED at Memorial Park. They discussed ways to avoid people taking the AEDs such as special cases for them.

The Commission also discussed the Pollard Middle school Project, specifically the summit that occurred on September 25, 2025. Mr. Rosenbaum, Ms. Chaston, and Ms. Mulroy all attended the meeting. Ms. Chaston explained what was discussed at the summit, saying it largely revolved around the question of whether DeFazio should be removed from consideration of the new the

site for the Pollard Middle School. Ms. Chaston stated that many of the boards did not think that DeFazio was the best site for the school, while the School Committee stated that the policies in jurisdiction need to be rethought. Ms. Chaston explained that ultimately many people were torn on this decision, even people within different committees had differing opinions. The Commission talked about the long-term effects of this decision and how it impacts the town in many ways. They also discussed communication with user groups of DeFazio, as well as feedback and comments from the public.

Action Items

A) Special Event Approvals -

1. Adult Geo-Caching Group – Ms. Chaston made the motion to approve the Adult Geo-Caching Group use of the Horsford Pond Parking Lot on Saturday, November 1, 2025, from 6:30pm – 9:00pm. Mr. Gerstel seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously as follows: Chris Gerstel – yes, Cindy Chaston – yes, James Rosenbaum – yes, Michelle Geddes – yes.

B) Policy Approvals –

1. Mr. Gerstel made a motion to approve the Rosemary Recreation Complex Multipurpose Room policy as amended by the Director and Assistant Director, and any changes made will be updated as of the September 29, 2025, meeting. Ms. Chaston seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

C) Fee Approvals – None

D) Meeting Minute Approvals –

Meeting Minutes from August 11, 2025

Cindy Chaston made a motion to approve
Michelle Geddes seconded the motion
Passed unanimously

Meeting Minutes from August 25, 2025

Michelle Geddes made a motion to approve
Cindy Chaston seconded the motion
Passed unanimously

Meeting Minutes from September 9, 2025

James Rosenbaum made a motion to approve
Cindy Chaston seconded the motion
Passed unanimously

Michelle Geddes Abstained

Meeting Minutes from September 18, 2025

Cindy Chaston made a motion to approve
James Rosenbaum seconded the motion
Passed unanimously

Chairs Update and Issues Not Reasonably Anticipated by Chair within 48 Hours

None

Topics for Future Meetings

- Pollard Middle School Project
- Policies
- Goals

Next Meetings

October 22, 2025

October 27, 2025

Adjournment

Cindy Chaston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:26pm. Ms. Geddes seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Steeves

Administrative Assistant