

## Town of Groton

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## Meeting Minutes

**Date:** August 14, 2019  
**Time:** 7 p.m.  
**Location:** Town Hall First Floor Meeting Room  
**Commissioners Present:** Tim Siok, Donald Black, Anna Eliot, Kenneth Bushnell, Jon Strauss  
**Commissioners Absent:** None  
**Others present:** Robert O'Rourke, Justin Frazier, Nancy Sarlan, Danielle Blumsack, Jeffrey Ohringer, Judy Anderson, Maureen Adema, Admin. Asst.

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### 7:00pm Chair Tim Siok called the August 14, 2019 Park Commission Meeting

#### 7:00pm

#### **Groton School Community Service Days**

Robert O'Rourke met with the Commission to discuss the Groton School Community Days of Service. The partnership is greatly appreciated by both the Park Commission and The Groton School. The program has been very successful, with both the Town and The Groton School students benefiting from the program.

The fall dates are Monday, September 9, 2019, 1pm to 3pm and Tuesday, October 1, 2019, 9am to 1pm. Students in grades 11 and 12 are scheduled in September. There are 20 to 25 students taking part in this service event. Students in grade 8, 9 and 10 are scheduled in October. There about 20 students in this grouping.

After a discussion. The Park Commission decided to have a fall clean up at Town Field on September 9<sup>th</sup>. Tim Siok will be the Park Commission contact/coordinator for the work on this date. The work will consist of raking, cleaning up the wood chips, weeding and removal of debris. The school will provide the students with transportation to the property, along with work gloves, hats, bug spray, and sunscreen. The Park Commission will provide the tools and materials needed for the work.

The Park Commission decided to have the students work at one to three of the Town memorial locations on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Don Black will be the Park Commission contact/coordinator for the work. The work will consist of sprucing up the memorial locations. Don stated the memorial locations are in need of attention. Edging around the plaques and stones is needed, along with weeding, mulching and regular fall clean up. The Park Commission will provide the tools and materials needed for the work. The Groton School will provide the work gloves, hats, bug spray and sunscreen. Don Black and Rob O'Rourke will work together on the finalizing the locations for the work and the numbers of students signed to each location and the transportation to the properties.

Kenny Bushnell will assist in the Community Service Events on the actual work days.

Maureen will send out an email with Tim's and Don's contact information to Rob O'Rourke, Groton School.

**Anna Eliot made a motion for the Park Commission to support the Groton School on the Fall Community Service Days of September 9<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> as discussed and agreed upon. Kenny Bushnell seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 to 0.**

### **Cow Pond Field Signage**

Residents Justin Frazier and Nancy Sarlan were present to express their concerns about Cow Pond Brook Road's traffic issues that they believe are caused by the Cow Pond Field Use ineffective signage. Don Black informed the Commissioners he has gone out to Cow Pond Brook Road on the weekends. He stated that the cars are going fast and there is traffic from field use and the Transfer Station. He met with Justin Frazier to discuss a possible plan to install new signage on Cow Pond Brook Road. Don met with the Town's Sign Committee to discuss new signs to direct traffic to the fields. He learned that signs are required to be 2x3 in size. Mr. Frazier informed the Commission he is a two-year resident of Groton and lives in the first house after the 4 way stop. He believes the road is dangerous and the Town could do better. He thinks the current sign has too much copy to read and does not give logical directions. Cars enter the wrong field, backout, and then stop to read the sign. He stated he thinks two signs, one for each entrance would work better. The DWP did move a sign back 100feet off of Rt 40. Mr. Frazier and Ms. Sarlan stated little improvement with in location of the sign. Kenny Bushnell stated he did not think new signage would correct traffic issues on Cow Pond Brook Road. The road is busy on the weekends for sports and the transfer station, the area will remain busy. Jon Strauss stated players/families coming to the field for the first time can be lost at first but figure it out where they need to be. This happens at many sport fields with players playing at away fields. Anna Eliot thought the field use groups should communicate better about field locations and give better directions. Mr. Frazier and Ms. Sarlan asked if the fields are labeled by numbers because there are no signs indicating what field is what field. The fields have signed numbers. Looking into signs is something that should be done. The Commission and residents discussed a number of ideas for signage. The Director of DPW would need to review and have input. A permanent plan would be worked on in the upcoming months. A permanent solution would not be in place by the start of the fall sports season. Mr. Frazier offered to put up temporary signs for the fall field use season. Don Black will assist Mr. Frazier with the temporary signs.

Maureen A. will contact Tom Delaney, DPW director to inform him of tonight's discussion.

### **Cow Pond Field Discussion**

#### **Dog Policy for Parks**

Jeffrey Ohringer was present to ask what the Dog Policy on Town fields was. He was especially interested in the policy for Cow Pond Field. Mr. Ohringer has concerns about the safety and damage dogs do when the dogs owners allow their dogs to run free on the field. He stated he does not believe dogs should be allowed on the fields because their waste damages the grass. And if waste is not picked up, athletes end up "in it". He would like to see a solid dog policy in place for the fields.

The Park Properties follow the Town policy for dogs in public. The bylaw is available on the Town website under Groton By-laws, Chapter 128. The Commissioners had a copy of the by-law in their meeting packets. A copy was provided to Mr. Ohringer. The by-law was reviewed.

Anna Eliot researched the issue of park dog policies a couple of months back. She spoke with the Police Chief and looked at other towns policies. She thought the Commission could post signs indicating the Town policy as other towns do. She said it would be helpful to communicate the expectations on how the fields should be used regarding dogs. The signs cannot state no dogs allowed. Kenny Bushnell stated he has done site visits after receiving complaints in the past about dog waste on the fields and found there to be no major issue. Jon Strauss said there really is not anything that can be enforced by the Park Commission. Chapter 128 – Public Nuisance C. states the physical control of a dog is determined by the Animal Control Officer.

Mr. Ohringer told the Commission he provides poop bags to Cow Pond Field users.

Kenny Bushnell say he would look into the cost and installation of posts with poop bags dispensers. This project would be a nice Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Ohringer will post the Town By-laws for the visitors of Cow Ponds, and he will continue to provide poop bags. The discussion concluded that dogs need to be under control of their owners, on a leash is best at the fields.

#### **Unsecured Gate at Cow Pond Field**

Jeffrey Ohringer reported that there has been an ongoing issue with the double gate being left open at Cow Pond Field. He said the gate is open right now. The DPW mowing crew leaves the chain and lock off the gate, leaving it on the ground after mowing. The gate not being secured potentially opens the field to being damaged by vehicles driving on the field. This kind of damage can result in the field not being useable and/or unsafe.

Maureen will email Tom Delaney, Director of DPW about the report from Jeff Ohringer regarding the gate being left open.

### ***Dead Trees at Cow Pond***

Jeffrey Ohringer informed the Commission that Cow Pond has dead trees on the property that are possibly dangerous. There is a down tree on the parking lot fence, that needs to be cut up and removed. The fence is damaged. There are dead trees along the fence line and three trees by the pump are dead. All should be removed. Tim Siok stated he has seen the trees; Tim agrees the trees should be removed and that the Park Commission is responsible for removing them. Tim Siok stated the Invasive Species Committee has grant money for tree work. The Park Commission hopes to reschedule the meeting canceled by the Invasive Species Committee to discuss Park Property trees.

Don Black contacted Dave Mead to get a quote for all tree work the Park Commission has discussed in the last couple of months. The locations include Carol Wheeler Park, Woitowicz Field and Town Field. He will contact Dave Mead to add the tree work at Cow Pond. Don will work with Dave Mead to schedule the best work times, paying strong attention to the least interference to field use and not damaging the fields. He will also request that each location be priced individually. Jeff Ohringer stated he would like to have the trees removed from Cow Pond by Labor Weekend.

It was suggested that the trees that are removed be replaced with new trees. The Friends of the Tree Warden might have replacement trees.

### ***Aerator***

A discussion about the aerator purchased by the Park Commission in 2017 occurred. Currently, there is no one employed by the Town who has the skill set to use the aerator. Mr. Ohringer stated he would be willing to cut Cow Pond Field with the aerator if the Town would allow. Tim Siok said that he thought Mr. Ohringer would be allowed because there is no special license required to operate an aerator. Cutting of the fields with the aerator should be done this fall. Tim thought the fields could be done in one day. Anna Eliot said she would contact Mark Haddad, Town Manager to see if a volunteer could run Town owned equipment to do maintenance on Town/Park property.

### **Field Use Request Applications**

- ***Birthday Party – Cow Pond/Parking Lot***  
Tim Siok made a motion to approve the field use request for use of Cow Pond Field and Parking Lot for a birthday party and Game Truck (MindCraft) on Friday, September 13, 2019 from 12pm to 4pm pending receipt of an insurance certificate from Game Truck Vendor. Jon Strauss seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- ***GD Soccer – Cow Pond Fields 1, 2, 3, 4, 5***  
Don Black made a motion to approve the Groton Dunstable Soccer Program field use requests for the Fall 2019 season, August 26, 2019 – November 6, 2019 at Cow Pond Fields 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 pending receipt for an insurance certificate. Anna Eliot seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- ***Groton Fest -Legion Hall / Legion Common***  
Kenny Bushnell made a motion to approve the field use request submitted for GrotonFest pending insurance certificate for Legion Hall/Legion Common on Friday September 27<sup>th</sup> at 7pm to Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup> at 7pm pending receipt of insurance certificate. Kenny Bushnell seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.
- ***Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Days Saints Picnic – Woitowicz Field***  
Tim Siok made a motion to approve the field use request for use of Woitowicz Field on Saturday, August 24<sup>th</sup> from 2pm to 9pm for church picnic and games pending receipt of certificate of insurance. Anna Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 to 0.

Maureen will request certificates of insurance via email from applications requiring insurance.

Maureen provided the Commissioner with the fall field use log sheet commenting the only sport organization that submitted field use requests is soccer. Kenny Bushnell stated baseball has a new president, he will contact him and ask that the fall 2019 field use applications be submitted.

### **25 Bayberry Road/Woitowicz Tree Removal/ Fallen Tree Law**

Tim Siok, Chair sent a letter via email on behalf of the Park Commission to Tim Ross, 25 Bayberry Rd informing him that after additional fact finding and discussion the Park Commission is unable to offer any additional assistance in the removal of tree(s) per his request.

Tim stated Mr. Ross responded with an email requesting to coordinate at his expense the removal of the "dead" tree on the field and the one next to it. He believes the tree he is concern and does pose a safety issue to his family and property.

Don Black shared a photo of the tree, and stated that it does appear to be dying. He believes it is reasonable to let Mr. Ross remove the tree his own expense. Don said he is working with Mead Tree Services to have work done on other Park properties and could add this tree to the list of work. Don would have the quote call out the indivual trees, separate line items, in order to know what Mr. Ross's bill/payment would be. Don stated he thinks if Tim Ross removes the trees at his own expense, the Park Commission should forgo the drainage pipe concern. Jon Strauss stated we can't unknow what we know about the pipe. Anne Eliot stated the pipe is not the issue at hand the tree is. She would be willing to let it go pipe issue go. Tim Siok stated he thought allowing to let Mr. Ross remove the tree at his expense is okay, sounds like he is having work done anyway. Although the ground would have to be frozen if equipment was going to be on the field and not from his property. The work should be done after fall sports. Kenny Bushnell stated let him take the tree down if he wants to.

**Anna Eliot made a motion to approve the request from Tim Ross, 25 Bayberry Road to remove the tree struck by lightning in Woitowicz Field at his expense with the coordination of a Park Commission designee from his side of the property not to interrupt Town work or Field Use, and/or if necessary from the field when the ground is frozen requiring tree removal equipment on the field understanding that any damage to the field will be repaired and/or replaced to the satisfaction of the Park Commission. Seconded by Kenny Bushnell. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

#### **Bat Boxes**

Diana Mendel, with the assistance from Don Black and GELD installed one bat box on Park Property. The bat box was installed on an unused GELD utility pole. Don Black reported that the timing of the project was interesting because GELD had recently had a bat fly into a transformer shutting down power in Town. Don told the Commission that Ms. Mendel provided much more knowledge about the benefits of bat boxes when he met with her during the Park Property site walks and install day.

#### **Vendor Review – Shared Expense Discussion – Postponed to next meeting**

#### **CPC Application**

Anna Eliot attend the first CPA meeting of the season. The Commissioners talked about seeking CPC funding to redo the Woitowicz Tennis Court for the upcoming award season. It currently is not useable and becoming a safety issue. It was intended for tennis, not did not receive a lot of use. There are other tennis courts available in Town stated Kenny Bushnell. Jon Strauss thought redoing court for as a Basketball Court would result in a lot of use for the property. Kenny Bushnell agreed. Jon Strauss commented that Pickle Ball is becoming popular, it would be nice to have a location to play. The Country Club should be looked at for Pickle Ball. Tim Siok thought perusing a dual use court would be best, basketball and tennis courts for the property would provide a great use for the site. A ball wall would be good too. The court is often used by siblings of players on the fields. Anna Eliot commented on the low attendance the January meeting for abutters and Town residents to discuss the redo of the property. Jon Strauss stated he would take the lead on pursuing a CPC application to redo the site as a Basketball Court.

**Don Black made a motion to have Jon Strauss pursue a CPC application to redo the Woitowicz Tennis Court into a new Basketball Court. Anna Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 to 0.**

Maureen will get the deadlines for the applications to Jon.

#### **Park Invoices**

Don Black reported to the Commissioners that he contacted Triangle Portable to discuss the July Fireworks Celebration invoice. He communicated to Triangle that the use of the porta potty was for one day, but the invoice was equal to a monthly charge. Triangle stated the charge was correct. There is no one day only payment plan. Triangle did not offer any relief on the invoice.

Maureen stated that G. Thompson filled out the required W9 form, so his invoice can be approved.

The August invoices were reviewed.

**Tim Siok made a motion to approve and sign the August 2019 Park Commission invoices in the amount of \$8,183.46. Kenny Bushnell seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 to 0.**

### **Commissioner's Updates**

#### **Tim Siok**

- Tim Siok told the Commission he received an inquiry asking if the Town had any plans to create a Dog Park. He will email the individual a dog park is not being considered at this time.

#### **Don Black**

- Don told the members that the Charles Gordon Square Memorial stone via a fund from the Groton School Memorial fund is being refurbished. Cost will be about \$750.00.
- Don will be taking an inventory of the flags and ordering new flags if needed for Veteran's Day.
- Don believes Michael Mac Donald repaired the Park Property shed. Jon Strauss said he will confirm the shed is repaired when at the field.
- Don will be sending a Thank you note to Karen Brackett to recognized her hard work at Veteran's Memorial Common.

#### **Kenny Bushnell**

- He would like to have the fence railings done; he thinks it would be a good Scout project. Don Black will contact a Scout that might be interested in the project and put him in contact with Kenny.
- Kenny had his boys finish spreading the wood chips at the Town Playground.

#### **Anna Eliot**

- Anna told the group that the Open Place and Recreation Plan is asking for the Park Commission to rate the Town's Park Properties. The data is required to be sent to the State as part of the OPRP report. Nik Gualco, OPRP committee would like to attend a Park Commission meeting to discuss the report after rates are assigned by the Commissioners.

#### **Admin. Updates**

- A replacement parts/kit for playground swings was received and given to Chair Tim Siok to install.
- A report was received that the Blue Seahorse rocking swing at the Town Playground was not working. Don Black made the necessary repairs.
- A report was received that a Porta Potty at Town Field was not useable. An emergency service call was ordered to right the issue.
- Don Black and Jon Strauss have been added as approved purchasers on the Moison Ace Park Commission Account. Evan Boucher has been removed from the account.
- Maureen provided the Commissioners with a spreadsheet with the FY19 payments by vendor. The spreadsheet will be utilized for budget prep.
- Have not had any communication from GD Scouts regarding finalizing the Camp Out.
- Invasive Species Committee has not rescheduled to meet.
- Maureen provided the Commissioners with a list of Park Properties that the OPRP would like the Commission to grade the condition of, *with Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good*. This grading exercise will be an agenda item for next meeting. The topic will also be discussed with members of the OPRP at a fall meeting.
- Meeting dates:
  - The September meeting will be schedule for Tuesday September 17<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm,
  - The October meeting will be scheduled for Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup> @ 7am
- Budget meeting dates:
  - Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup> @5pm at GELD Meeting room
  - Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup> @5pm at GELD Meeting room

**Approval of minutes moved to meeting of September 17, 2019.**

**Tim Siok moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:17 pm. Jon Strauss seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, September 17, 2019