

**TOWN OF GROTON**

Park Commission  
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**Park Commissioners**

Brenden Mahoney, Chair  
Anna Eliot, Vice Chair  
Gail Chalmers  
Mary Jennings  
Jeffrey Ohringer

**Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** Tuesday, August 1, 2023  
**Time:** 2:00 PM  
**Location:** Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room  
**Commissioners Present:** Brenden Mahoney, Anna Eliot, Gail Chalmers, Mary Jennings  
**Others Present:** Bruce Easom, Mark Haddad, Kara Cruikshank, Katie Berry, Brian Edmonds  
**Commissioners Absent:** Jeffrey Ohringer

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**2:00 PM** Brenden Mahoney calls meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

Mark Haddad gave a brief update on the Heritage Landing development. He said there are 3 parcels that are under consideration, Parcels 249-51, 249-57 and 248-39. Two of the parcels were donated to the town for municipal purposes. Parcel 248-39 was purchased and donated to Groton Conservation, which makes it an Article 97 issue. Parcel 248-39 is the portion of land with the hill. Mark said he going to do an RFP for parcels 249-51 & 249-57 and there are 2 place holder articles on the warrant that will allow for the lease and disposal of nitrogen loading on those properties. For parcel 248-39 we would need to go to the legislature, town meeting, then the legislature and find a like parcel. He said he will have an RFP within the next few weeks and will get it advertised; then people will be able to bid and then Town meeting will have the say whether or not they will be willing to do that. A. Eliot said if the parcel with the hill has value, we can put it out for bid and it will pay for the parking area. She said if the hill were removed that will cure the egress and the parking issues. M. Jennings said we are planning on spending \$7,000 for the plant study, is that still necessary? She said we should reconsider the vote we made at out last meeting on the plant study. A. Eliot said we still need additional parking and we need to have a meeting with the conservation commission. M. Jennings said we should put this on the agenda for our next meeting to look into this parcel for discussion and look at the maps. B. Mahoney asked if we can get the history on the parcel on when it was gifted because it may not be what the current day drawing is and if it is not then it might not apply. Bruce Easom recommended look at the GIS map and look at the topography and property boundaries. Bruce Easom said he would be very cautious on asking town meeting to consider trading its conservation land because the town has spent a lot of time and money to acquire it. M. Jenning would like someone to research this property and get information as we can and possible lots to trade.

M. Jennings motioned to put a hold on the botanical study with Oxbow Associates at the Cow Pond field parcels, whether they have started or not.

Upon a motion made by M. Jennings, seconded by G. Chalmers, it was:

Voted to put hold on the botanical study with Oxbow Associates at the Cow Pond field parcels, whether they have started or not.

*The motion passed by a roll call vote. (Yes: BM, AE, GC, MJ)*

**Legion Common sitting bench** – A. Eliot said she was informed the sitting park bench at Legion is broken and rotting. C. Chalmers will take a look at the bench and report back to the Commissioners.

**Update on Cutler field**- Brian Edmonds who is a resident of the town and lives near Cutler field asked for an update on the CPC for Cutler field. He also said the meeting times in the middle of the day are difficult for residents who work to attend. B. Mahoney said right now the CPC application for Cutler field is on hold. He said after the vote in June to withdraw the CPC application, he met with Lacrosse and softball user groups, the town manager and highway director. During that meeting, we came up with a solution to continue with the Cutler field softball diamonds project but put it on hold while highway does some work at Woitowicz field so Lacrosse is not displaced. He said highway has started work at Woitowicz so we can extend that field for Lacrosse. M. Jennings said we have not had a meeting to discuss the decision to move forward with the CPC Cutler field project and work being done at Woitowicz field. She said the last meeting we voted to withdraw the CPC application, which a letter was supposed to be delivered to the CPC and the letter did not go out as the Parks secretary was told to hold on the letter until a meeting took place with the Town manager, B. Mahoney, highway, softball and lacrosse user groups. A. Eliot said there are some corrective measures we need to take. One is to respond to G. Chalmers letter to rescind her vote taken at the previous meeting. A. Eliot would like to have a discussion to reconsider the previous vote taken to withdraw the Cutler field CPC application. M. Jennings said she has expressed to the Town Manager that she did not feel like it was his authority to intervene with the actions of a town committee and its staff just because he supervises that staff. Brian Edmonds said he was not aware of anything happening at Cutler field until Town Meeting. He also said at the last meeting he attended he left feeling things were going to start from scratch and start in the public as they should have the first time. He said the residents need to be included just like the user groups. He said the vote to start the process over should be followed through. Bruce said the CPC never received a letter that there was a vote to withdraw the application. He did see G. Chalmers letter for reconsideration of the vote on Cutler field CPC project but that did not change anything because they never received a letter to withdraw the application. A. Eliot said there is a corrective measure, but we don't have a full board. M. Jennings said we can vote if we have a quorum.

G. Chalmers made a motion to reconsider the vote on June 6<sup>th</sup> meeting to rescind the Cutler field CPC application.

M. Jennings asked G. Chalmers why she wanted to reconsider. G. Chalmers said when she went home, she misunderstood the discussion. She said we are here for the kids and she changed her mind because she didn't feel like we were making things better for the kids.

M. Jennings said she voted to withdraw the application because she felt the public and user groups had not been informed and had not been heard. B. Mahoney said we should have had a meeting when the new commissioners came on the board to inform them better on what projects were already taking place. He said we have since come to an agreement where both lacrosse and softball user groups can benefit from.

Upon a motion by G. Chalmer motioned to reconsider the vote on the June 6<sup>th</sup> meeting to rescind the Cutler field CPC application, seconded by A. Eliot

*The motion passed by a roll call vote. (Yes: BM, AE, GC; No: MJ)*

A. Eliot said we should have the full board here before we take another vote on the Cutler field CPC application. B. Mahoney said we need to continue moving forward with Woitowicz field. M. Jennings said the public may have some input on Cutler field and Woitowicz field projects. B. Mahoney said Woitowicz

has been a lacrosse field and the tennis court has not been in good condition. He informed Brian Edmonds the town has use of the H & V field on Townsend Rd. Brian Edmonds said there are things that were done on this project were not done in the light of day and he is not okay with that. He said it is incredibly inappropriate to move forward with a project that was not done in accordance with open meeting law. A. Eliot said we submitted the application last October to the CPC; we had several open meetings with CPC and discussed the project at Parks meetings. B. Mahoney said he appreciates the input from Brian Edmonds and we try to accommodate as much as we can when it comes to meeting times.

**Off Road Bike Park-** A. Eliot said the Stewardship Committee was approached by teenagers expressing their interest in finding suitable land for an off-road bike park in Groton. She said she would like them to attend a future meeting. She said a possible piece of land to consider is land located at the end of Cow Pond Brook Rd behind the transfer station. B. Mahoney asked if the land proposed is not overseen by Parks, why would they need to come to us? A. Eliot said she would like to add recreation to the properties the Parks oversees. Bruce Easom said there is a gifted parcel of land on Fox Run Rd. that states motor vehicles are permitted. B. Mahoney said he was concerned about the liability. He asked who would we direct them to talk to about the parcel on Fox Run Rd. Bruce Easom said Nikolis in Conservation should be able to help them. B. Mahoney asked A. Eliot to invite them to our next meeting to ask questions.

**Softball Fundraiser:** B. Mahoney said it has been brought to my attention by youth baseball, with the softball fundraiser which is held in September at Cow Pond field, due to the abundance of people attending the fundraiser, they asked if the dumpster can be picked up after the event and the porta potties be serviced. After a brief discussion, A. Eliot said we need to amend the permit to include the event holder to provide their own services and remove all trash from the fields. B. Mahoney said we should tell the user group they will need to pay for the additional services to service the porta potties and extra dumpster pick up or remove all trash from the fields.

#### **Fields Use Permits:**

- GD Youth Baseball – Cow Pond 1,2,3,4 and Town Field – 9/1/23 through 11/1/23; Monday through Friday from 3:00 PM – 8:30 PM; Saturdays from 8:00 AM – 8:30 PM
- Groton Fest – Legion Common – 9/30/23 & 10/1/23; All day
- COA Pickleball – Lost Lake basketball courts; 9/1/23 through October 27; Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Jarius Morrow – Adult Soccer– Woitowicz – August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 PM – 6:00 PM
- David Manugian – Adult Soccer – Cow Pond 2; 9/3/23 through 11/26/23; Sundays from 8:00AM – 10:00AM and Cow Pond Soccer field 9/6/23 through 9/29/23; Wednesdays from 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM
- Sunday Pick up Softball – Cow Pond Softball field 3; September through November; Sundays from 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
- Beverly Smith Pickleball – Lost Lake basketball courts – 9/1/23 through 11/30/23; Tuesday Thursday from 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM and Sundays from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- GD Lacrosse – Cutler field - September 10 through October 29; Sundays 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM
- GD Middle School Football – Cow Pond football field – 9/1/23 through 11-10-23; Wednesdays & Thursdays from 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Upon a motion made by A. Eliot, seconded by G. Chalmers, it was:

Voted approve the above field use permits

***The motion passed by a roll call vote. (Yes: BM, AE, GC, MJ)***

**CPC Update:** No updates

**Budget Report:** YTD in FY24, we have spent approx. \$5,633.11 or 10%, of our \$55,759 budget leaving about \$54,094.00 in our general expense account.

**Bills:** All invoices were reviewed:

Regional Restrooms	\$891.00
E.L. Harvey	\$234.00
GW Shaw	\$140.00
Lawn Solutions	\$2,703.11

YTD we have spent approx. \$0.00 of our \$25,000 capital improvements budget.

Upon a motion made by B. Mahoney seconded by A. Eliot it was:  
Voted to approve all invoices due.  
*The motion passed by a roll call vote. (Yes: BM, AE, GC, MJ)*

**Commissioner Updates:** G. Chalmers said she talked to Olin in regards to Carol Wheeler Memorial Park and he submitted an RFP to the state on the invasive species. She said the Garden club has been weeding the park. G. Chalmers said she would really like to get the parking lot removed. B. Mahoney said he will speak with highway to see if they can assist in any way. M. Jennings said if we are going to have the parking lot removed, we should have a public hearing.

**Meeting Minutes:** The minutes from the July 11, 2023 meetings as presented.  
Upon a motion made by M. Jennings, seconded by G. Chalmers, it was;  
Voted to approve the minutes from June 6, 2023 & June 27, 2023 as presented.  
*The motion passed by a roll call vote. (Yes: BM, AE, GC, MJ)*

**Adjourn:** Commissioner B. Mahoney calls to adjourn at 4:15 PM.

Upon a motion made by G. Chalmers seconded by A. Eliot, it was;  
Voted to adjourn the July 11, 2023 Parks Commission meeting.  
*The motion passed by a roll call vote. (Yes: BM, AE, GC, MJ)*

**Next Meeting: September 5, 2023 @ 5:00pm**  
**Meeting Minutes Respectfully Submitted by:**  
**Tammi Mickel, Parks Assistant**  
Date Approved: September 5, 2023