



TOWN OF GROTON
Park Commission
Town Hall
1st Floor Meeting Room

PARK COMMISSION
Mary Jennings, Chair
Anna Eliot, Vice-Chair
Mark Presti, Clerk
Rob Foley, CPC Representative
Jeffrey Ohringer, Member

Date: Monday September 8, 2025

Time: 5:00 PM

Location: 1st Floor Meeting Room

Members Present: Rob Foley, Anna Eliot, Mary Jennings, Mark Presti

Members Not Present: Jeffrey Ohringer

Others Present: Laura Fisher, Brian Callahan, Judy Anderson, Don Barry

Call to Order: 5:02 p.m.

Mary Jennings, Chair, called the meeting.

Public Comments –

Don Berry from Youth Softball provided an update on Cutler Field, noting improvements in its condition and plans to submit a proposal for CPC in the fall to complete fencing and other necessary pieces for long-term sustainability.

Minute Approvals –

Upon motion by Chair Mary Jennings, second by Vice-Chair Eliot, the meeting minutes for April 26, 2025 were approved 2:0 Rob Foley, Jeffrey Ohringer, Mark Presti Abstained.

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Eliot, second by Commissioner Ohringer, the meeting minutes for June 2, 2025 were unanimously approved 5:0

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Eliot, second by Commissioner Ohringer, the meeting minutes for June 23, 2025 were unanimously approved 5:0

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Eliot, second by Commissioner Ohringer, with the correction of Brian Callahan's last name being amended, the meeting minutes for July 14, 2025 were approved 4:0 Chair Jennings Abstained.

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Eliot, second by Commissioner Presti, the meeting minutes for July 28, 2025 were unanimously approved 4:0 Commissioner Ohringer Abstained.

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Eliot, second by Commissioner Ohringer, the meeting minutes for August 11, 2025 were unanimously approved 3:0 Commissioners Presti & Foley Abstained.

Chair Jennings would like recorded meetings to be sent to commissioners who could not make it to meetings so they are still current with discussions at the following meetings.

Reports –

Chair Report –

Chair Jennings outlined the process for agenda items, requiring requests to be submitted to her by Thursday of the previous week. Jennings also reminded the commission to speak through the chair or with the chair's consent and not directly to the public in order to keep the meeting moving.

Vice-Chair Eliot reported progress of the Nashoba shed for Cuttler Field. They are waiting on dig safe work before starting the excavation site of 20 X 12. A metal roof was decided due to its durability. Discussion was had on Nashoba needing a check upfront, but an invoice is needed before payment can be given.

CPC Rep –

Commissioner Foley reported that the CPC closed out some final reports, one being the old Town Field design for \$80,000. Commissioner Foley wanted to make the commissioners aware of the dates for CPC processes in the timeline for applications.

DPW –

DPW Director reported that the Town Field Project is underway. The diamond should be done next week and that there were a few drainage issues being addressed.

Upon motion by Commissioner Presti, second by Commissioner Ohringer, to request to move the Softball Permit and Memorandum of Understanding up in the agenda were unanimously approved 5:0.

Upon motion by Commissioner Ohringer, second by Vice-Chair Eliot, to approve the GDYSB permit Monday-Wednesday from 5pm-7pm and Saturday & Sunday 11am-6pm from September 6th through October 25th were unanimously approved 5:0

Old/New Business

Memorandum of Understanding DPW & Parks –

A discussion was had on refining the Memorandum of Understanding between the Groton Department of Public Works and the Parks Commission with joint bidding processes for services like fertilization and irrigation. Creating an annual and quarterly schedule to better coordinate maintenance activities and user group involvement, with a particular emphasis on clear communication to the public about field closures and maintenance activities was brought up. The group also agreed to revise the MOU to be more specific about the services covered, particularly breaking down "general maintenance" into more specific tasks like mowing, irrigation, and fertilization. After more revisions the Memorandum of Understanding will be revisited next meeting for another evaluation.

Commission Annual Goals –

Subcommittee Work: Chair Jennings went over the procedure for the posting of subcommittee meetings. Stating that the subcommittee groups need to post their own agendas directly through the town clerk and are also responsible for taking their minutes approving them and posting them to the town website.

Commissioner Presti would like to write up summaries of progress from the Cow Pond working group to share with the Parks Committee to keep them informed. Commissioner Eliot reported

that the Cow Pond working group meeting was supposed to be for today with Activitus. They have not completed that phase of what needs to be done, so therefore an email was sent that the meeting was cancelled and that they are working appropriately with Natural Heritage and the necessary people through an ongoing process. Once they get to where a meaningful meeting can be held together, they will schedule such a meeting. Chair Jennings requested a timeline for the Cow Pond project from the next meeting they have and to share any strategies that may surface. Commissioner Eliot let the Commission know that there will be a two-page submission request from Town Manager Mark Haddad in October to the CPC.

Goal #2 Report: Chair Jennings shared a timeline for strategies and due dates that she would like the commissioners to create for goals they would like to achieve by the next meeting. She also shared that they would like to come up with a user group permitting process by January 1st and finalized by February 15th and asked the liaisons to reach out to their respective user groups and get their feedback on what they would like to see in the permitting process going forward.

The Commissioners discussed revenue issues related to user fees for sports fields and facilities. Chair Jennings asked Admin Fisher to find options for managing and protecting funds from user groups, including creating dedicated accounts and researching other municipalities' practices. Laura will contact nearby towns to learn about their permitting processes and fee structures. The Committee agreed to discuss user group interviews and fee proposals at upcoming meetings, with a focus on balancing maintenance costs and fundraising opportunities and to research if Parks can retain funds from permit fees to use in the future without it going straight to town funds.

Strategy Development: The Parks Commission discussed their needs assessment timeline, which needs to be completed by October 15th for CPC funding applications. The group decided to postpone public forums until after October 15th, as they do not have enough time to gather public input before the CPC deadline, though they will still need to provide letters of support for CPC applications.

Commission Liaisons –

The Commissioners reorganized park field liaisons to better align user groups with their respective fields. Commissioner Foley is now Liaison for Cow Pond and soccer, Commissioner Ohringer is Liaison for Woitowicz Field and Lacrosse and Commissioner Presti is now Liaison of Town Field and Baseball and commissioner Eliot is Liaison for Cutler Field and softball.

By-Laws –

Still need to be worked through policies for the Liaisons.

User Group Survey Questions –

Chair Jennings confirmed that user group interviews would be conducted in-person rather than distributed as surveys. The commissioners went over key questions that should be asked to user groups.

Permits –

Upon motion by Commissioner Foley, seconded by Commissioner Presti to approve Soccer games 9-1 to 11.30, Wednesday 8 to 10 p.m, and Sundays from 8 to 10 a.m. was unanimously approved 5:0.

Upon motion by Commissioner Eliot, seconded by Commissioner Foley GD Lacrosse for use of Woitowicz field on September 7th to the 19th, Sundays, 8 a.m. to 12 was unanimously approved.

scheduling adjustments were needed to move the October 13th meeting to October 6th to avoid Columbus Day conflict.

Sign permits/ invoices-

Upon motion by Commissioner Foley, seconded by Commissioner Presti for Chair Mary to sign and approve all invoices, was unanimously approved 5:0.

Schedule Next Meeting and Adjourn- Monday, September 22, 2025 5:00pm

Rob Foley moved to adjourn at 6:50 pm, Mark Presti seconded, and the motion carried unanimously

Minutes by Laura Fisher, Administrative Assistant.

APPROVED: November 10, 2025
