



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 22, 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, Judy Anderson

Call to Order: 5:00 p.m.
Mary Jennings Chair, called the meeting.

Public Comments –
None

Reports

Chair Report –

The commission agreed to allow baseball to store nets in the town-owned shed at Cow Pond for the off-season storage and granted access to the football shed for retrieving a refrigerator. The commission also agreed to discuss shed storage at a future meeting. The construction of a shed pad at Cutler Field has been completed by DPW and are waiting for the school to send an invoice for materials. They noted that town policy requires payment for materials only after a project has started. Discussion of a few Sprinkler heads at Cow Pond that needed adjustments. DPW declined involvement in assisting with the irrigation on behalf of not agreeing with the improper bidding process that was done, suggesting it should be handled internally from the Parks department. Going forward, irrigation will need to be considered as another line item for budget requests in December.

CPC Rep –

Commissioner Foley reported that the CPC plan is going to be released September 26th. They have been working on redoing the main CPA application document that people have, making updates and improvements and picking out some of the information just to make it more concise. October 15th preliminary proposals are due.

Old/New Business

Reports: Annual Goal Subcommittees –

The Cow Pond working group update from Commissioner Presti stated that there was a meeting with the Natural Heritage Foundation to assess the current state of property assessments and determine if further investigative reporting is needed.

Commissioner Foley as the Parks CPC Rep informed the commission that the CPC wanted a summary of the plan for Cow Pond project. Foley reached out to Town Manager Mark Haddad who gave him a list of nine tasks and a summarized timeline for the four major tasks that needed to be completed by January 1, 2026. The tasks are as follows with 3 & 4 being ongoing:

- 1) Existing conditions review.
- 2) Design plan & opinion of cost.
- 3) Preliminary Schematic designs
- 4) 50% design development.

Chair Jennings requested the Town Managers report be attached to the minutes (see attached). A discussion followed the status of the Cow Pond project involving a \$100,000 field improvement plan and a previously rejected \$4 million design. Commissioner Eliot clarified that while the schematic design and opinion of cost was complete and presented last fall, it was not approved, and they are now exploring a new plan in a way that aligns with Natural Heritage's requirements. The team is working on updating the design to include the full 64 acres, with a focus on prioritizing non-field improvements, particularly parking, which is identified as a major engineering expense. The Commissioners expressed concerns about being asked to endorse a CPC proposal without full visibility, emphasizing the need for public involvement and a clear timeline. They discussed the working group's role and suggested reorganizing if necessary to ensure adequate time for public input and Commission review. The Commission also highlighted the importance of the town manager's upcoming meeting on October 6th to address these concerns and clarify the upcoming proposal's status.

Goal #2 Permitting Process

Commissioner Ohringer and Chair Jennings discussed plans to reach out to 10 communities about their permitting processes, town size, budgeting etc. aiming to have a new system in place for permitting by February 15th.

Goal #3 Needs Assessment

Commissioner Foley shared that the respective Liaisons will need to have their surveys sent to their user groups for completion and collect responses, which most have already been completed. Commissioners should do a walkthrough of the parks they represent and make observations to synthesize the data recorded. Chair Jennings requested to have all data sent to Commissioner Foley to create a synthesized report with all the fields recorded data by October 6th.

The Commissioners discussed the need for a comprehensive needs assessment and maintenance plan for park properties and user groups especially with upcoming CPC applications. Letters of recommendations for CPC applications will be due November 19th. The Commissioners would like to see a maintenance plan submitted with the application for Softball due in November. Commissioner Presti requested the inclusion of a seasonal calendar to coordinate various activities and prevent conflicts while incorporating the DPW department in calendar to work with user groups in scheduling maintenance. Chair Jennings requested Commissioner Eliot invite the Softball user group to the next meeting on October 6th to discuss their CPC application.

Memorandum of Understanding

The Commissioners reviewed and revised the Memorandum. Discussion of responsibilities and roles in maintaining parks and facilities ensued. Suggesting that DPW would handle irrigation, fertilization, mowing, trimming and general maintenance. The Parks Commission would manage communication with user groups and oversee project approvals beyond the annual budget. Another revised copy of the Memorandum will be presented at the next meeting on October 6th.

User Group Survey Reports by Liaisons

The Liaisons shared the survey responses from their respective user groups focusing on how many board members in league, number of players, league growth or decline, budgets, seasonal scheduling and care, recommendations on permitting processes, needs from Parks properties in the future and facility quality improvements.

Financial Report

Administrative Assistant Fisher gave an updated financial report mentioning the \$9000 encumbered for the Nashoba shed still in capital. Reporting that there is still \$35,000 in our expenses fund.

Schedule Next Meeting and Adjourn- Monday, October 6, 2025 5:00pm

Rob Foley moved to adjourn at 7:03 pm, Jeff Ohringer seconded, and the motion carried unanimously

Minutes by Laura Fisher, Administrative Assistant.

APPROVED: November 10, 2025

USER GROUP SURVEY QUESTIONS

GROTON PARK COMMISSION

User Group/Sports League _____

Parks Commissioner: _____

Purpose: These questions will guide interviews between Parks Liaisons with their User Group contacts with the understanding that data collected will be useful for planning by the Parks Commission.

Process: Parks liaison records User Group responses and shares written report.

GOVERNANCE:

1. What sports association is your league affiliated with?
2. How many board members are there?
3. In 2024, how many registrations/players were there per season, for the year?
4. Are your league registrations growing, staying constant, declining? (last year, this year, coming years)

BUDGET

1. What fees do you charge participants in your league?
2. What amount in your budget is dedicated to the operating costs of the field for your sport?
3. What capital investments have you made in the fields that benefit your group and the general public? (examples). Estimated costs?

SCHEDULE

1. What are the dates for each of your league seasons (beginning and end). Are there additional dates needed for playoffs/tournament play?
2. What days of the week and times of day do you typically use the fields each season—including games and practice sessions
3. What their calendar of field use for the next season(s) will be

GENERAL

1. For the Parks properties you use, what needs do you see over in the coming 3 years?
 - a. Facility Quality Improvements:
 - b. Capacity Increases for your sports league:
2. What type of permitting process do you recommend the Parks Commission use for the fields on which your league plays?
3. What would you think would be fair and reasonable field permit polices?
4. Other:

USER GROUP SURVEY QUESTIONS GROTON PARK COMMISSION

User Group/Sports League: Groton Dunstable Youth Softball League

Parks Commissioner: _____

Purpose: These questions will guide interviews between Parks Liaisons with their User Group contacts with the understanding that data collected will be useful for planning by the Parks Commission.

Process: Parks liaison records User Group responses and shares written report.

GOVERNANCE:

1. What sports association is your league affiliated with? USA Softball
2. How many board members are there? 6
3. In 2024, how many registrations/players were there per season, for the year? Fall = 21, Spring = 67, Summer = 28
4. Are your league registrations growing, staying constant, declining? (last year, this year, coming years). Staying constant

BUDGET

1. What fees do you charge participants in your league?
 - a. Spring
 - i. 6u and 8u: \$80
 - ii. 10u, 12u, 16u: \$130
 - b. Summer
 - i. \$75 all levels
 - c. Fall
 - i. \$75 all levels
2. What amount in your budget is dedicated to the operating costs of the field for your sport? 85-100%
3. What capital investments have you made in the fields that benefit your group and the general public? (examples). Estimated costs? We have only started to use Cutler field this season and have invested \$1000 for bases and \$500 in netting.

SCHEDULE

1. What are the dates for each of your league seasons (beginning and end). Are there additional dates needed for playoffs/tournament play? Approximate dates are, Spring: April 1 – June 20, Summer: July 5 – Aug 15, Fall: Sept 2 – Oct 25
2. What days of the week and times of day do you typically use the fields each season—including games and practice sessions
 - a. Spring: M-F nights, Sat/Sun afternoons
 - b. Summer: M-Th nights. Sometimes weekends for practices
 - c. Fall: practices on a few weekdays that change depending on coach schedules. Games are Sat all day and Sun afternoons
3. What their calendar of field use for the next season(s) will be

- a. Specific dates and times are scheduled by our cooperative league made up of surrounding towns. Exact schedules are not known until a few weeks before the season.

GENERAL

1. For the Parks properties you use, what needs do you see over in the coming 3 years?
 - a. Facility Quality Improvements: Most important is the completion of work at Cutler Field. Completion of the fencing, shed, clearing some trees/leveling, and a groomer are critical for use and maintenance of the fields.
 - b. Capacity Increases for your sports league: We the new addition of 2 fields at Cutler, we do not anticipate any additional capacity needs
2. What type of permitting process do you recommend the Parks Commission use for the fields on which your league plays? We believe that the sports fields in Groton should each have a steward organization that is one of the GD youth sports groups (soccer, baseball, softball, and lacrosse) that serve our community. These organizations contribute many hours of labor to maintain the fields and provide capital for improvement. It should be assumed that these organizations have full access to use their fields for their preferred schedules. If another user group would like to use those fields, a discussion with the steward organization should happen before an approval is made. This is only a high level suggestion and we should discuss more in person for more detail and consideration.
3. What would you think would be fair and reasonable field permit polices?
4. Other:

Laura Fisher

From: Jeffrey Ohringer <gdsoccer@verizon.net>
Sent: Thursday, September 18, 2025 9:18 PM
To: Mary Jennings; Laura Fisher
Subject: Lacrosse and Woitiwicz - Pat McAdams

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

In the order of our questionnaire, here are the responses from Pat McAdams from lacrosse.

1. This is the town lacrosse program
2. # of board members - 8
- 3.# of families in program - Approx. 180 kids this past season. The # has and is anticipated to rise with time and development of the program.
4. Cost per child is \$180. Uniforms are a separate family responsible expense
5. The only operating expense is for the lining paint,. That expense is approx. \$830.
6. There have been no dollars spent on fields or upkeep.
7. Season runs from 3/31 - 6/8. a 1 season sport. There are some summer leagues offered but no set dates or times are established.
8. Operating days and hours are as approved permits were requested. Generally daily Mon.-Fri evenings. Games are played at Cow Pond on Sundays. The season is 8 games, 4 home and 4 away but there are home games every Sunday as the boys and girl's programs alternate weekends.
- 9.Field needs are critical. Woitiwicz is totally unacceptable to attempt games or more than 1 team at a time for practice. The park does not have near ample parking for even 1 game with 2 teams and a large portion of the playing surface can not be used due to a sinkhole like disruption in a critical part of the park. Unacceptable, therefore the bulk of the program relies on Cow Pond from the shed area to the far goal post of what was the football field.
10. Permitting could be more accessible and simpler to submit if it as available on line. Also, to have to break down the field use is redundant. We need the field Mon to Fri each week for our 8 weeks therefore should be able to be generally stated as that. It would also be a good idea to have all approved permitted uses of all playing fields publicly available so any need for off normal schedule needs, are wanted to be requested, a published public ability to see openings on specific fields at specific time and then go to the online app and ask for that time would be much simpler then the present process.
11. Bottom line is the program will be stymied if numbers grow ,due to lack of functional field space into the future

USER GROUP SURVEY QUESTIONS

GROTON PARK COMMISSION

User Group/Sports League: Groton Dunstable Youth Baseball League (GDYBL)

Parks Commissioner: Mark Presti

Purpose: These questions will guide interviews between Parks Liaisons with their User Group contacts with the understanding that data collected will be useful for planning by the Parks Commission.

Process: Parks liaison records User Group responses and shares written report.

GOVERNANCE:

1. What sports association is your league affiliated with?

A: GDYBL is chartered by Babe Ruth League, Inc. – a non-profit educational organization. GDYBL is a member organization in the Macintosh League, and also participates in other regional leagues such as the Minuteman League and 495 League.

2. How many board members are there?

A: As of September 21st, 2025, there are 17 official board positions, with three current vacancies, including the facilities manager position.

3. In 2024, how many registrations/players were there per season, for the year?

4. Are your league registrations growing, staying constant, declining? (last year, this year, coming years)

Response to questions 3 & 4 above:

A: GDYBL transitioned between management systems in summer, 2023; the numbers below represent seasonal registration since that time. Our league registration numbers are growing, and we are expecting to continue this trend for the coming years.

We have a lot of new/first-time players at older levels, and are also offering an Introduction to Baseball program (31 players age 3-6) this fall, which accounts for the significant jump in participation between fall 2024 and 2025.

GDYBL League Registration:

Season	2023	2024	2025
Spring	-	253	265
Summer	-	105	105
Fall	88	98	150

BUDGET

1. What fees do you charge participants in your league?

A: Fees vary by age due to associated costs (e.g. catcher's equipment, umpire fees) and can drastically vary with tournament play. The numbers below represent our registration fee structure for spring, 2025*.

Season	Fee
T-Ball (6 & Under)	\$105
Rookies (7-8)	\$120
Minors (9-10)	\$160
Majors (11-12)	\$170
Babe Ruth (13-18)	\$180

*The numbers above do not include early-bird discounts, which generally provide families \$10/player savings and allow the league to plan and pre-purchase items that are critical for play, including balls, tees, uniforms and field needs such as chalk, game saver, paint and other maintenance needs.

2. What amount in your budget is dedicated to the operating costs of the field for your sport?

A: An estimated 15-20% of our annual budget is allocated to field maintenance, with some fields getting more attention to others.

Notes:

- Roughly 80% of our participation is at the Cow Pond Baseball Fields; capital expenditures and maintenance schedules are generally commensurate with league participation and field need.
- GDYBL pays a field use fee of \$1,000 to the town of Dunstable for the use of Larter Field during the spring season. Dunstable Park Commission in turn renovates the infield for our use annually.

3. What capital investments have you made in the fields that benefit your group and the general public? (examples). Estimated costs?

A: See table below.

Capital Expense Highlights Since Spring, 2023:

Item	Location	Cost
Mound Rebuild	Cow Pond 2	\$1,250
Mound Rebuild	Cow Pond 4	\$1,250
Breakaway Base System Installation	Cow Pond 1-4	\$3,500
Infield Sod Cut & Harley Rake	Cow Pond 1-4	\$4,800
Spread Field Conditioner	Cow Pond 1-4	\$9,000
Scoreboard	Cow Pond 2	\$15,700
Infield Sod Cut & Mound Rebuild	Town Field (Large)	\$1,450
Installed Permanent 50' Pitching Rubbers	Cow Pond 1, 2, 4	\$330
Installed Removable 46' Pitching Rubbers	Cow Pond 1, 2, 4	\$423
Installed New Home Plates	Cow Pond 1, 2, 4	\$375
Rebuilt Batter's Boxes	Cow Pond 1, 2, 4	\$975
Sod Cut Entire Infield, Including Basepaths & Home Plate Area	Alvin Sawyer Field	\$800
Rebuilt Third Base Line & Home Plate Area	Cow Pond 4	\$300
Expanded Infield to Support Majors Gameplay	Cow Pond 2	\$2,200
Purchased Tarps for Home Plate Areas	Cow Pond 1, 2, 4	\$3,225
Total		\$45,578

Important Notes:

- For internally sourced items above, the totals above are representative of capital costs, and are generally absent associated labor required to support implementation of the associated capital expense.
- The GDYBL Board of Directors is also currently reviewing proposed capital expenditures in excess of \$20,000 for the upcoming year.

SCHEDULE

1. What are the dates for each of your league seasons (beginning and end). Are there additional dates needed for playoffs/tournament play?

A: Leagues and seasons vary, but the timelines noted below generally support GDYBL, inclusive of playoffs and tournament play:

- Spring: Mid-March/April through the third week of June
- Summer: Fourth week of June through early-to-mid-August
- Fall: Late August through the end of October

2. What days of the week and times of day do you typically use the fields each season—including games and practice sessions

A: Generally:

- Spring: M-F: 5-8:30pm, Saturdays: 8am-8:30pm. There is potential for Sunday gameplay, with coaches opting to schedule for this day and/or makeup games
- Summer: M-F 5-9pm; tournaments vary and can span Saturdays and Sundays 8am-9pm
- Fall: M-F 5-8:30pm, Sundays 8am-6pm. There is potential for Saturday gameplay, with coaches opting to schedule for this day and/or makeup games

3. What their calendar of field use for the next season(s) will be

A: Generically:

- Spring: Mid-March/April through the third week of June
- Summer: Fourth week of June through early-to-mid-August
- Fall: Late August through the end of October

GENERAL

1. For the Parks properties you use, what needs do you see over in the coming 3 years?

- Facility Quality Improvements:

A: List, in no special order:

- Standard maintenance schedule inclusive of mowing, string trimming, fertilizer, weed preventive, grub control, sprinkler operations
- Seasonal care for infields, inclusive of infield weeding/harley rake, sod cutting and laydown of field conditioner
- Alvin Sawyer Field – Infield Renovation & field conditioner
- Infield seeding – Cow Pond
- Access Road Support
- 2nd field with lights at Cow Pond
- Cow Pond shed maintenance:
 - Cow Pond 4 - Ramp Rebuild
 - Cow Pond 1 – Water Damage
- Fix infield lips/transitions between infield and outfield grass
- Note: This does not include items approved to be funded by the Community Preservation Committee, including rebuilding all eight dugouts, rebuilding the mounds on Cow Pond Fields 1 and 3, and resurfacing the ground in the batting cages at Cow Pond

- Capacity Increases for your sports league:

A: 2nd 90's (Babe Ruth) field for spring baseball

2. What type of permitting process do you recommend the Parks Commission use for the fields on which your league plays?

- A:

- Registration window with exception process; evaluate all requests at the same time so user groups don't conflict with each other, and ensure equitable access to facilities.
- Provide a public calendar for review/consumption

3. What would you think would be fair and reasonable field permit polices?

- A:

- Be clear in what the permit supports – what the town will provide, versus what user groups are required to account for
- Set standards/responsibilities for field use, including tarp care, field raking/dragging, etc.

4. Other:

- A:

- The fields at Cow Pond need a lot of help **right now**. GDYBL was able to secure volunteers and equipment to support the renovation of the infields on fields 2 and 4 this fall, but the infields on fields 1 and 3 remain full of weeds, and we do not have funding, volunteers and equipment aligned to support this work.
- At its September 11th meeting, the GDYBL Board of Directors proposed request(s) for quote to professional field management companies this fall – in line with Groton Park Commission guidelines/guidance and processes and within the context of its operations and plans for its current fiscal year.
- GDYBL believes that an ongoing relationship with a vendor who can support larger field maintenance initiatives is required to support safe game play and positive experiences at Groton Park facilities. This includes Alvin Sawyer and Town Field, in addition to the Cow Pond fields.
- We (Parks and GDYBL) have discussed process changes this year (both verbally, and clearly in line with the information being gathered as a part of this exercise), and **urgently** appeal for your help with addressing field conditions this fall to support our growing community and help plan GDYBL's fiscal 2026 budget.

- For transparency, GDYBL's current (2025) priorities, in order:

Description	\$ Estimate	Rank
Capital Expenditure Priorities		
Purchase home plate field tarps for all CP Fields	\$3,500	1
Field Lighting on CP2	\$180,000	2
Purchase mound covers for all CP fields	\$1,800	3
Scoreboard for CP1	\$20,000	T-4
Base anchors and bases for Larter Field	\$800	T-4
Base anchors and bases for Alvin Sawyer Field	\$800	5
Shed at Larter Field	\$500	6
Batting cage(s) for Town Field	\$15,000	7
Shed at Alvin Sawyer Field	\$500	8
Clear out and create seating area behind CP4	\$30,000	9
Build/Purchase new/larger maintenance equipment shed (Connex)	\$15,000	T-10
Bleachers for Cow Pond Fields	\$15,000	T-10
Renovate Dunstable 90s Field	\$350,000	11
Equipment Priorities		
Town Field Pitching Machine Balls	\$210	1
Cow Pond Pitching Machine Wheels	\$800	2
New Catcher's Gear for Rookies & Minors	\$3,000	3
Cow Pond Additional pitching machine	\$3,000	4
9-hole Pitching Targets for Cow Pond	\$1,000	5
Hitting Screen for Cow Pond 1	\$600	6
Swing Trainers for Cow Pond	\$600	7
Maintenance Priorities		
CP1, CP4, CP2 Infield Lip Removal; renovate home plate area at CP4 to ensure proper drainage	\$1,500	1
Fix ramp to CP4 shed	\$150 & volunteers	2
camera system on cell service	\$400 + \$60 recurring	3
Fix CP1 shed Water Damage	\$200 & volunteers	4