



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

PARK COMMISSION
Mary Jennings, Chair
Anna Eliot, Vice-Chair
Mark Presti, Clerk
Jeffrey Ohringer, Member
Jack Petropoulos, Member

Date: Monday March 9, 2026

Time: 5:00 PM

Location: 1st Floor Meeting Room

Members Present: Mary Jennings, Anna Eliot, Mark Presti, & Jack Petropoulos

Others Present: Laura Fisher, Judy Anderson, Jamie King, Jeff Dries & Sherry Kersey

Call to Order: 5:01 p.m.

Mary Jennings, Chair, called the meeting.

Public Comments – None

Chair Report –

Chair Jennings postponed the approval of minutes till the next meeting due to emailing issues. The Parks Commission meeting began with welcoming new appointed member Jack Petropoulos and discussing meeting procedures, including public comment periods and minute approval processes. Jennings explained the meetings followed Robert's Rules of Order, emphasizing that members should be recognized by the chair before speaking and that discussions should be directed through the chair. Jennings, who recently returned from a month-long absence, thanked Anna for her service as vice chair and Laura for maintaining operations.

The Commission discussed scheduling a public information session for the Cow Pond project and agreed on a Forum on April 15th, with Megan Buczynski as the consultant. They also addressed three vacancies on the commission, with a March 31st deadline for nominations. Jennings opened a discussion on ways to generate interest and attract candidates. Petropoulos suggested using edgy messaging to spark interest, with others suggesting social media or writing a letter to the paper. The commission agreed to consider Jack's proposal for additional messaging to attract candidates. Commissioner Petropoulos was appointed to take over former Commissioner Foley's liaison duties, including responsibilities for Cow Pond Field and youth soccer.

The Commissioners reviewed two upcoming warrant articles that were being shared at the select board meeting following the Parks meeting tonight. One for \$25,000 in property improvements, which has been the annual budget since 2015 and the other being the Parks proposed revolving fund. They discussed the need to better communicate to the community that funding for park improvements has been steadily decreasing over time, though they decided to address this through the revolving fund discussion rather than the warrant article itself. The group also discussed Article 22, which establishes limits for various revolving funds, including a \$100,000 allocation for the Park Commission.

Permits –

Jeff Dries came in to discuss the permit issues for softball games at Cow Pond Field 3, where they face conflicts with Lacrosse's blanket permit on Sundays. They agreed to continue using field 3 while accommodating Lacrosse's schedule and field 2 when there is a Lacrosse game. Dries also voiced concerned as to where to play if the Cow Pond Project is approved. The Commissioners suggested potential backup locations including Cutler Field, which is available for practices but not tournaments, and was encouraged to coordinate with GD Baseball regarding alternative baseball field locations.

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Eliot, seconded by Commissioner Presti to approve pick up softball May 3rd-June 15 9am-11am, Sundays for Cow Pond field 3 was unanimously approved in a 4:0.

Upon motion by Commissioner Presti, seconded by Vice-Chair Eliot, to approve Polar Crush on Cutler Field from April 1-June 15, 11am-4pm was unanimously approved in a 4:0.

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Eliot, seconded by Commissioner Presti to approve pickleball Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Friday April 1-June 15, 11am-12pm at the Lost Lake Courts was unanimously approved in a 4:0.

Chair Jennings would like to reach out to the COA and Residents that use the Lost Lake Courts to see if they would be interested in helping reline the pickleball courts.

CPC Rep –

The CPC will be reviewing grant requests and ranking them tonight; including the Cow Pond Project and Cutler Field improvements for softball, with funding decisions to be made based on scoring and available budget allocations. Parks funding comes from the unallocated, open space and recreation projects, though exact figures are still being calculated.

Budget –

A permitting discussion was had for the maintenance and funding of public parks and playing fields, with particular attention to how these facilities are managed and maintained. The town has been funding improvements but lacks a structured plan for growth and development, leading to haphazard maintenance practices. Conversations about the need for implementing fees for user groups to ensure sustainable maintenance of parks, as current funding is insufficient to maintain recently renovated areas was discussed. The town's current setup lacks full-time staff and administrators compared to other communities, which impacts the ability to manage and maintain public spaces effectively.

Administrative Assistant Fisher reviewed their \$25,000 capital budget and operating budget. The no hunting signs have come in, with invoices for the signs, G.W. Shaw and GELD. There is roughly \$17,000 left in the expense budget till year end to cover field expenses. It is projected Parks will need to transfer money from their capital budget to compensate the overflow of the field expenses. Commissioner Presti would be interested in getting operating costs changes for the electric use over the past few years to maybe get more efficient and lower costs. Portable restroom bids were discussed with Throne Depo honoring their rate of the past two years of \$660 a month and Clean Rest rooms bid at \$600 a month. The commissioners requested for Admin Assist. Fisher to reach out to Thrown Depo and see if they will price match the lower cost since their services have been very good the past few years. Trash bids will be discussed at the next meeting as the deadline for bids is March 15 and Parks is still waiting on bids to come in.

Upon motion by Commissioner Presti, seconded by Commissioner Petropoulos to approve Throne Depot with the request to price match the lowest bid of \$600 from Clean Restrooms was unanimously approved in a 4:0.

DPW –

DPW director was unable to attend, but will present irrigation and fertilizing bids at the next meeting.

New Business –

- Cow Pond info session will be April 15.
- Summarize the January 12, 2026 public hearing presentation to send out to the public
- Write a letter to the Groton Herald for Parks vacancies & Cow Pond awareness.
- Request the Senior Center to help with refreshing the Pickleball lines at Lost Lake Courts.

Commissioner Petropoulos discussed revising a letter to inform the public that the Cow Pond Project will not be affecting the tax dollars. Chair Mary touched on key points that should also be in the letter.

Upon motion by Commissioner Presti, seconded by Commissioner Petropoulos for Mary to write a letter to the Groton Herald for vacancies and Cow Pond Awareness.

Schedule Next Meeting and Adjourn- Monday, March 23, 2026 5:00pm

Commissioner Presti moved to adjourn at 6:55 pm, Commissioner Petropoulos seconded. The motion carried unanimously in a 4:0

Minutes by Laura Fisher, Administrative Assistant.

APPROVED: 4/13/26
