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

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

Date:	Monday June 22, 2026
Time:	5:00 PM
Location:	1st Floor Meeting Room
Members Present:	Anna Eliot, Mary Jennings, Mark Presti, Jeffrey Ohringer, Jack Petropoulos
Members Not Present:	
Others Present:	Laura Fisher, Judy Anderson, Mike Johnson

Call to Order: 5:03 p.m.
Mary Jennings, Chair, called the meeting.

Public Comments –
None.

<u>Reports</u> –

Chair Report
Reorganization of Commissioners and a discussion of their responsibilities and organizational structure ensued. Jennings provided documentation outlining the Park Commission's duties as defined by state law. The Commissioners also raised concerns about updating properties that do not exist anymore or have been renamed.

Reorganization: Mary Jennings, Chair, Mark Presti, Vice-Chair, Jack Petropoulos, CPC Representative & Clerk, Jeff Ohringer & Anna Eliot, members.

Upon motion by Commissioner Petropoulos, seconded by Commissioner Presti, to elect Mary Jennings as chair was unanimously approved 5:0.

Upon motion by Commissioner Presti, seconded by Commissioner Petropoulos, to elect Jack Petropulos as CPC Rep was approved 4:1.

Upon motion by Commissioner Eliot, seconded by Commissioner Ohringer, to elect Jack Petropulos as Clerk was unanimously approved 5:0.

Upon motion by Commissioner Eliot, seconded by Commissioner Petropoulos, to elect Mark Presti as Vice-Chair was unanimously approved 5:0.

All Commissioners expressed interest in being on the Cow Pond working group. There was debate about whether to maintain the current representatives or introduce new voices, with concerns raised about communication between the working group and the Park Commission. Commissioners highlighted a need for better bidirectional communication and clarity on responsibilities of the working group, with some expressing the need for more control over the working group itself. No agreement could be made as to who should be assigned to it. Commissioners Presti and Eliot will remain on the working group for the time being.

Upon motion by Commissioner Presti, seconded by Commissioner Ohringer, to table the discussion regarding the working group to a later time, was unanimously approved 5:0.

The Commissioners all agreed to maintain current liaison assignments without changes.

Upon motion by Commissioner Ohringer, seconded by Commissioner Petropoulos, to continue to meet every second and fourth Monday of the month was unanimously approved 5:0.

Chair Jennings informed the Commissioners that she met with the Accessibility Committee, with feedback expressed favorably in regards to the trail project, including recommendations for an all-perimeter trail with stone dust, Cape Cod berms, a phased approach and striped parking lots.

Working Group Report

Town Manager Mark Haddad sent a packet to the Park Commission going over the working group progress, see attached. Commissioners agreed to adopt option 3 of the working groups recommendations which would reduce the project by an estimated one million dollars, but still qualify for the full million-dollar grant and include lights for the baseball field 2.

Upon motion by Commissioner Eliot, seconded by Commissioner Jennings, to accept recommendations of the working group to adopt option #3, to reduce the project to a level that would be able to receive the full $1 million grant was approved 4:1 Petropoulos abstaining.

The Commissioners focused on concerns about inflation and rising costs, with Jennings noting that without being part of the project the parking lot by itself would be roughly $2 million. That it is more cost effective to be part of the project.

Commissioner Ohringer expressed deep concerns about the need for safety improvements for children in the current parking lot situation along with strong support for the project. Highlighting safety concerns along Cow Pond Brook Rd and the need for better parking accessibility with the access road needing to be closed indefinitely, effective next year.

Commissioner Presti emphasized the multi-faceted nature of the project, involving public safety, accessibility, and conservation aspects. Believing that a few other organizations should be involved and step up in support of this project as well as it impacts them just as much.

Commissioner Petropoulos does not believe he has enough information to merit a vote at this time on the Cow Pond project.

Commissioner Ohringer stated that all Commissioners need to be on the same page for this project and find a way where everyone is satisfied. Chair Jennings suggested that maybe we need to have a more in-depth conversation to get all the ins and outs answered.

Access Road Enforcement Order
Chair Jennings addressed the June 6, 2026 enforcement order from the Conservation Commission regarding the closure of a road access to a baseball field. The Parks Commission voted unanimously to request a delay in compliance with the enforcement order until after the fall town meeting where a revised CBA cow pond field project will be voted on.

Upon motion by Commissioner Eliot, seconded by Commissioner Presti, for the Park Commission to send a request to the Conservation Committee to delay compliance with the enforcement order regarding Cow Pond Field received June 8 until after a decision is made at the Groton Fall Town Meeting for a revised CPA Cow Pond Field project. The Parks Commission will propose a solution to Conservation by that Town Meeting vote, was unanimously approved 5:0.

Budget –
Chair Jennings asked the Commissioners permission to expend money with Admin Assistant Fisher on all the priorities previously discussed with remaining funds. With roughly $10,000 left in capital, there were still a few invoices the Commission was waiting on to come in, Chair Jennings proposed we use the remaining funds to go towards a new mower for DPW to help with the fields.

Upon motion by Commissioner Eliot, seconded by Commissioner Ohringer, to contribute the remaining funds in the budget towards DPW for a new mower, not to exceed $9,600, was unanimously approved 5:0.

Permits –
Upon motion by Commissioner Presti, seconded by Commissioner Petropoulos, to designate Commissioner Ohringer to sign remaining invoices and permits, was unanimously approved 5:0.

Approval of Minutes –
Due to time constraints Minutes the April 27 were not approved.

Old/New Business

Sign permits/ invoices-

Schedule Next Meeting and Adjourn- Monday, July 13, 2026 5:00pm

Anna Eliot moved to adjourn at 6:50 pm, Jeff Ohringer seconded, and the motion carried unanimously

Minutes by Laura Fisher, Administrative Assistant.

APPROVED: 8/10/2026

Good Morning Members of the Park Commission:

It is my understanding that your next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 22, 2026. Unfortunately, I will be away on vacation and unable to attend. That said, I wanted to update you on action I have taken based on your last meeting which I attended, and we discussed the future of the Cow Pond Brook Project.

First, with regard to the Enforcement Order issued by the Conservation Commission ordering the Park Commission to close the entrance to the Little League Fields/Parking area, I discussed the matter with Town Counsel. Unfortunately, Town Counsel cannot provide any advice at this time due to the potential conflict should the Park Commission choose to appeal the Conservation Commission Order. Should this go to court, Town Counsel would have to either issue the appeal or defend the order. Another Attorney would have to be retained to defend/issue the appeal. Therefore, he cannot get involved at this time. That said, I have scheduled a meeting on Thursday with the Chair of the Park Commission and the Chair of the Conservation Commission. It will be my recommendation to both Chairs that the Conservation Commission take no action on enforcement of the order until such time as the Park Commission makes a final determination on the Cow Pond Brook Fields Project. Should the Park Commission decide to bring the project back to the Fall Town Meeting, the Commission can await the outcome of that vote before taking action. Should the project be approved, the Roadway will be closed as part of the project. Should the project fail again at Town Meeting, the Park Commission would have to take action and either close the Road or appeal the Order. Should the Park Commission decide not to bring the project forward, or the Community Preservation Committee not support bringing the project to the Fall Town Meeting, the Park Commission would need to take action on adhering to the Enforcement Oreder. I believe this course of action is in the best interest of the Park Commission and the users of the Cow Pond Brook Fields.

With regard to the Cow Pond Brook Project and whether or not to bring the Project back to the Fall Town Meeting, please note that the Community Preservation Committee did vote unanimously to allow me and the Park Commission to submit an out-of-cycle application for the Cow Pond Brook Fields Project so that it can be brought back to the Fall Town Meeting. We would need to file the application and receive their support and approval. To make a recommendation to the Park Commission on how to proceed, I had a meeting of the Cow Pond Brook Fields Working Group yesterday and we discussed the following options for the Park Commission to consider:

Option #1 – Do nothing.

Option #2 – Bring the original project back to Town Meeting and see if it will pass.

Option #3 – Reduce the project to a level to be able to receive the full $1 million Grant.

Option #4 – Develop a parking lot only project (obviously that would forgo the Grant and CPA funding)

The Working Group determined that doing nothing (Option #1) is not worthy of consideration. They believe something needs to be done and would urge the Park Commission to bring some form of the Project back to Town Meeting for consideration. With regard to bringing the same project back to Town Meeting, the Working Group was also not in favor of pursing that option. Town Meeting spoke loudly in their rejection of the original project.

The Working Group then focused on Options #3 and #4. With regard to Option #4 (Parking Lot Only Project), our consultant provided the Working Group with a cost estimate of the Parking Lot Only Project. The estimated cost for this option is $2.85 million. There would be no Grant to offset this cost, and it would not be CPA funding eligible. The Working Group is not in favor of this option either. That leaves Option #3 (reduced project, still Grant eligible). Attached to this email is a summary of Options #2, #3 and #4. The first set of numbers is the original project costs that shows the original low bid, including soft costs and contingency (total cost $5,045,400). The second set of numbers shows proposed reductions to the project that would still keep the project both CPA and Grant funding eligible. These reductions (plus adding the Lights to the Field #2) would reduce the project by $1 million and bring a project to Town Meeting with an estimated cost of $4,048,255 (based on the bid received last spring). We would still need to go back out to bid, but we are extremely confident with this estimate. When taking into consideration the Grant offset, the total CPA Funds needed would be $3,048,255, which is about $800,000 less that the project we brought to the Spring Town Meeting. It would also enhance the project by adding lights to Field #2.

The Working Group members in attendance at yesterday's meeting are in unanimous support of pursuing this option. We believe it is in the best interest of the Town, Park Commission and User Groups to bring this project to the CPC and Town Meeting.

I would respectfully request that the Park Commission consider voting to support moving forward with Option #3 at your next meeting so that we can start working immediately developing the CPA Out-Of-Cycle Application and bid specifications. Our Activitas Consultant is willing to work with us on developing this plans/application. I have asked her to track her time and expenses so that we can reimburse her later this Fall at Town Meeting.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mark W. Haddad

Town Manager

BID RESULTS & BUDGET

Low Bid	$ 4,835,400	
Alt 1 - Soccer F3 Improvements)	~~$ 18,000~~	
Alt 2 - YB F2 Lighting	~~$ 208,000.00~~	
Contingency	$ 100,000	
Soft Costs	$ 110,000	CA, added permitting, escrow
TOTAL	$ 5,045,400	Base + Contingency+Soft Costs

VALUE ENGINEERING (REDUCED PROJECT, MAINTAIN CPC FUNDS AND GRANT)

ORIGINAL VE ITEMS

	Item	Cost	Notes
1	Granite Curbing Savings	$ 70,140.00	Can further reduce to all asphalt berm curb
2	Reduced Perimeter Path	$ 58,088.64	Removed northern loop
3	YB Structures	$ 46,000.00	Can further adjust to simplify rather than remove
4	Parking Surface Course	$ 49,000.00	Have Town do under paving contract
5	Sidewalks to asphalt	$ 43,619.50	Can further adjust to make all concrete except curb cuts to be asphalt
6	Sod to Seed	$ 12,294.10	Grow in will be much longer
7	Sheds	$ 40,490.67	Will adjust design to maintain existing
8	Electrical	$ 80,000.00	This is an item we will review to try and realize more savings
	Lax Throw Wall	$ 27,025.00	Removed amenity
	Ballnetting & Concrete Mow Strip	$ 243,139.90	Removed amenity
	Playground Reduction	$ 88,007.25	Reduced amenity
	Remove site benches	$ 12,400.00	Benches were around perimeter walkway
	Gravel Lot at BB	$ 150,076.25	Leave BB parking as gravel (but in new layout)
	BB Parking Drainage	$ 101,460.00	Assumption on likely drainage reduction with keeping gravel at BB
	Remove Turtle Nesting	$ 57,750.00	Assumes reach a deal with NHESP to not pave BB parking
	Vehicular Gates	$ 28,500.00	Go back to placing boulders at top of drives
	BB F3 Fence	$ 23,600.00	F3 doesn't have fencing now, remove so it's a truly in kind replacement?
	Savings Subtotal	$ 1,131,591.31	
	Savings Total (6.5% OH&P)	$ 1,205,144.74	
	Revised TOTAL	$ 3,840,255.26	
	REVISED TOTAL W/ ALT 2	$ 4,048,255.26	

This value engineering effort reduces some scope of amenities, but also reduces quality of materials in consideration of long term site use and maintenance.

PARKING LOT PROJECT ONLY (NO CPC, NO GRANT)

Gravel Lot at BB	$ 150,076.25

BB Parking Drainage	$ 101,460.00
Turtle Nesting	$ 57,750.00
YBB Drainage	$ 101,460.00
Assumed Elec. Reduction	$ 415,150.00
Lax Throw Wall	$ 27,025.00
Amenities	$ 313,667.40
Playground	$ 189,714.50
YBB F3 Outfield Fence	$ 23,600.00
Accessible & Perimeter Pathways	$ 294,975.00
Sidewalks at Parking	$ 225,895.00
Reduced Area	$ 161,198.33
Savings Subtotal	$ 2,061,971.48
Savings Total (6.5% OH&P)	$ 2,195,999.63
Revised TOTAL	$ 2,849,400.37


IMPROVEMENTS AT
COW POND BROOK FIELDS
WETLAND EDGE
100' RIVERFRONT
200' RIVERFRONT
APPROXIMATE PROPERTY LINE
BVW FLAGGED AUG. 2025
RELOCATED FIELD AND BATTING CAGES (YB3)
NEWLY EXTENDED FIELD
VALUE ENGINEERING ITEMS
1 GRANITE CURBING SAVINGS
2 REDUCED PERIMETER PATHWAY (LOOP STILL PROVIDED)
3 NO STRUCTURES AT TEAM AREAS
4 TOWN TO PROVIDE PARKING SURFACE COARSE AND STRIPING
5 ASPHALT SIDEWALK
6 SEED AREAS
7 MAINTAIN EXISTING SHED LOCATION
8 ELECTRICAL REDUCTION (NOT SHOWN)
IMPROVED SOUTHERN PARKING AND ACCESSIBLE CIRCULATION
EXISTING FIELD W/NEW ATHLETIC LIGHTING
NEW PARKING LOT CONNECTION
RELOCATED SHEDS & UTILITIES
NEW PLAYGROUND
NEW ACCESSIBLE ACCESS AND PERIMETER PATHWAYS
IMPROVED NORTHERN PARKING AND ACCESSIBLE CIRCULATION
NEW ACCESS DRIVE
NEW HABITAT MANAGEMENT AREA
NATURALIZED DRIVE FOR HABITAT AREA
NEW HABITAT MANAGEMENT AREA
ACTIVITAS
GROTON MASSACHUSETTS FAITH LABOR 1655