



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 July 13, 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, Mark Haddad, Kara Cruikshank, Peter Cunningham, Charlotte Steeves, Josh Pollock, Judy Anderson

Call to Order: 5:02 p.m.

Mary Jennings, Chair, called the meeting. Commissioner Ohringer not present till 5:11pm and Commissioner Presti not present till 5:16pm.

The Groton Park Commission met to discuss the revised CPA Town Field proposal, focusing on cost reductions and value engineering changes to keep the project eligible for federal and state grants. Members reviewed questions about the scope, materials, and maintenance implications of the revised plan, including adjustments to parking lots, walkways, playgrounds, and field relocation. The group debated the financial and practical trade-offs of different project options, with some members expressing concerns about the quality of materials and long-term maintenance costs. The discussion also covered the ongoing challenges with the access road, turtle monitoring, and safety issues, as well as the feasibility of a temporary connecting road as a potential solution. The commission voted to work with the baseball league to request a stay from the Conservation Commission regarding the access road, with an update on a temporary connecting road to be provided within three weeks. The conversation ended with budget updates, approval of meeting minutes, and permit requests.

CPA Town Field Proposal Review

The Commissions focused on reviewing a CPA town field proposal and Q & A sheet from the working group meeting. The town manager explained that value engineering efforts would reduce costs by modifying scope and materials, including changing concrete sidewalks to asphalt and reducing accessible walkways to save \$25,000. Haddad covered detailed cost breakdowns estimates for different project options, ranging from \$1.6 million to \$2.85 million depending on whether youth baseball facilities, field relocations, and parking lots are included. The full youth baseball field relocation costing \$2.85 million, a new gravel parking lot and road connections costing \$1.9 million, and a reduced project without field relocation costing \$1.6 million.

Recreational Project Funding Options

Funding options for a recreational project were looked at, with a total estimated cost of \$4.1 million, reduced to \$3.1 million with a \$1 million federal grant. Two funding scenarios were

either involving a \$2.85 million grant with 30% state funding and 70% local funding, and another with reduced scope at \$1.9 million or \$1.6 million for basic elements like parking lots and a baseball field. The discussion concluded with questions about material quality differences between options, particularly regarding granite versus asphalt curbing and stone dust paths, with concerns raised about potential long-term maintenance implications.

Recreational Project Modifications Discussion

Commissioners discussed modifications to a recreational project, focusing on cost savings and maintenance considerations. They explored options to address the turtle habitat concerns, which were identified as potentially costing \$2 million, and debated whether to maintain the access road between parking lots. Safety was the primary concern, with increased parking spaces being seen as crucial to addressing this issue. A temporary solution was considered involving Brian Callahan, DPW director installing a road while finding alternative locations for some baseball activities during the interim period.

Parking Lots Connection Project Discussion

Commissioners went over a potential road connection between the soccer and baseball parking lots and the relocation of baseball field 3 as a possible alternative to the original \$4.1 million project. Conversation was had about the feasibility of connecting the lots without moving the baseball field, with concerns raised about safety and traffic flow. The commission also addressed challenges with turtle monitoring for the road access, determining it was not sustainable due to lack of volunteer monitors. The Commissioners agreed to submit an application to the CPC for a reduced project and will vote on the proposal at the next meeting on July 20th, with no meeting scheduled for July 27th at this time.

Baseball League Road Closure Cooperation

The Park Commission discussed cooperation with the Baseball League regarding the Conservation Commission's proposed road closure. The Commissioners agreed to work together to present a joint request to the Conservation Commission, including a proposal for a temporary connecting road as an interim solution while exploring longer-term options like the CPC project. Chair Mary Jennings will bring approved proposal to the Conservation meeting tomorrow night July 14th, 2026.

Upon motion by Commissioner Petropoulos, seconded by Vice-Chair Presti, to cooperate with Groton Dunstable Youth Baseball League and bring a joint agreement in support of the "stay request" to the Conservation Committee was unanimously approved 5:0.

Upon motion by Commissioner Petropoulos, seconded by Commissioner Ohringer, to add to the motion above that the Park Commission will return to the Conservation Commission within 3 weeks with an update on the implementation of a temporary access road over a temporary connection road that would remove reliance of the access road as amended was approved 3:2 access road.

Jennings: No

Presti: No

Eliot: Yes

Petropoulos: Yes

Ohringer: Yes

Recognition of Park Commission

Chair Jennings designated to keep the current working group members; Mark Presti & Anna Eliot, on the working group. Jennings reminded members that the reorganization also includes goal setting.

Budget

Administrative Assistant Fisher gave a recap of previous expenses reviewed their budget, noting they had approximately \$2,937 remaining after the June invoices and encumbered amounts had gone through.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion by Commissioner Eliot, seconded by Commissioner Petropoulos, to approve minutes of April 29, 2026 was unanimously approved 5:0.

Upon motion by Commissioner Eliot, seconded by Commissioner Presti, to approve minutes of May 18, 2026 was unanimously approved 5:0.

Approved Permits

September 19, 2026, Non-profit cycling would like the approval of adding 2 additional portable restrooms and a hand washing station for their event. Commissioners agreed.

Girls' youth soccer July 13-September 2nd, Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Cow Pond soccer field. Commissioners agreed.

Invoices

Encumbrance for trash, Montachusett sprinklers, and estimate for the new mower.

Next steps

Brian Callahan

To see if DPW director can provide an estimate for the cost and feasibility of implementing a temporary connecting road between the soccer and baseball parking lots, to be available by the next meeting (July 20th). Also, provide information on the expected ongoing maintenance costs for the reduced quality materials (e.g., asphalt curbing, stone dust path) in the CPA project.

Town Manager Mark Haddad

-To submit the out-of-cycle CPA application to the CPC by the end of the month, incorporating any feedback from the Park Commission.

-Go out to bid for the reduced CPA project in mid-August, with bids due in mid-September for the October 3rd town meeting.

Collaboration

Park Commission

-Vote on the CPA project proposal, including any amendments, at the July 20th meeting.

-Work with Groton Dunstable Youth Baseball to bring a joint request to the Conservation Commission meeting on July 14th, in support of a stay on the current road closure order.

-Return to the Conservation Commission within three weeks with an update on the implementation of the temporary connecting road.

-Prepare for a joint meeting with the Conservation Commission, tentatively scheduled for July 28th.

-Discuss and plan for goal setting and next year's budget at a future meeting.

-Discuss strategies for gaining support and attendance at the October 3rd town meeting for the CPA project.

-Approve the permit for Groton Dunstable Youth Soccer for use of the field from July 13th to September 2nd.

Schedule Next Meeting and Adjourn- Monday, July 20, 2026 5:00pm

Adjourn at 6:50 pm

Minutes by Laura Fisher, Administrative Assistant.

APPROVED: 8/24/26
