



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 August 10, 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, Peter Cunningham, Kara Cruikshank, Mike Johnson

Call to Order: 5:02 p.m.

Mary Jennings, Chair, called the meeting. Jeff arrived at 5:09

Public Comments –

Mike Johnson inquired about the readiness of Town field for the fall season, with concerns raised about overgrown infields, short benches, and dugout space issues.

Approval of Minutes –

Upon motion by Commissioner Eliot, seconded by Commissioner Petropoulos, to approve minutes from June 22, 2026 was unanimously approved 4:0.

Upon motion by Commissioner Presti, seconded by Commissioner Petropoulos, to approve minutes from April 27, 2026 was unanimously approved 4:0.

Upon motion by Commissioner Eliot, seconded by Commissioner Petropoulos, to approve minutes from July, 2026 was approved as amended to reflect July 27, 2026 at the top of the page 3:0, Chair Jennings abstained due to absence from that meeting.

Reports –

Commissioner Jennings reported that the Town Manager will fund a portable restroom for Lost Lake for the rest of the season. A new sign will be installed at the baseball access road to direct traffic safely when the gate is closed. Town Field was reported as completed and set to open in two weeks on September 1st, though concerns were raised about the field's condition and the need for a formal handoff process between the contractor and DPW. Commissioner Jennings will be working with the working group and putting together publicity for the Cow Pond proposal. She designated Commissioner Presti to work with her.

CPC Report

Commissioner Petropoulos brought up the CPC's consideration of an out-of-cycle application for the Cow Pond Field proposal, with Commissioner Eliot clarifying that while the CPC agreed to

accept an out-of-cycle application due to urgency concerns including a \$1 million grant deadline and parking issues, they have not yet voted on accepting the specific application as written.

DPW

Cutler Field is still having water and well issues, but fertilization can proceed without immediate watering.

Field Permits and Scheduling Conflicts

Permits and scheduling conflicts for various sports groups including lacrosse, soccer, and baseball in regards to the limited parking and field availability for the fall season.

Upon motion by Commissioner Ohringer, seconded by Commissioner Presti to approve soccer permits for September 5th through November 15th from 9 AM to 8 PM, was unanimously passed 5:0.

The Commissioners agreed to postpone approving lacrosse permits for the Cow Pond Fields until resolving parking concerns, though they approved the lacrosse permit for November 11th from 9 AM to 5 PM.

Upon motion by Commissioner Ohringer, seconded by Commissioner Eliot to approve lacrosse permit for November 11th from 9 AM to 5 PM was unanimously passed 5:0.

Upon motion by Commissioner Petropoulos, seconded by Commissioner Presti, to approve boys' soccer fundraiser permit at Cow Pond Field from August 10 through August 13th 3PM to 8 PM, COA Pickleball at the Lost Lake Courts September 1 through November 30 on Tuesdays & Thursdays 9AM-12PM, GDY Lacrosse at Woitowicz Field Saturday & Sunday 4PM-8PM, and GDY Soccer at Cow Pond from 9AM to 8PM Monday through Saturday, Men's Soccer at Cow Pond on Saturday & Sunday 8AM to 10:30PM was unanimously passed 5:0.

Old/New Business

Access Road Update

Jack provided an update on turtle monitoring, reporting 60 hours spent with no turtles sighted during games at Cow Pond fields. Commissioners discussed the ongoing challenge of finding volunteers for turtle monitoring, with only three willing participants identified so far. Commissioner Petropoulos emphasized that providing safe access to town fields is the board's responsibility, not others', and expressed concern about delays in addressing this issue since 2009. Commissioners expressed ideas to make parking more accessible, options including temporary signage, potential speed bumps, and the use of the DPW parking lot as a safe alternative, though concerns were raised about the safety of children crossing Cow Pond Road. Turtle monitoring restrictions end on October 1st, providing a window of approximately one and a half months (August through October 1st) when alternative parking solutions can be implemented.

Issues were addressed with the access gate being left unlocked on certain days, with the conclusion of the combination lock number being changed and request that vendors provide advance notice of their scheduled visits so monitors can verify the gate is properly secured afterward. Road safety concerns were discussed, including removing overhanging branches and potentially adding gravel to fill large potholes, while maintaining traffic cones to control speed on the narrow road.

Commissioner Jennings expressed that she would like DPW director Brian Callahan to put up a snow fence around field 3 for safety when Baseball needs to park in the soccer parking lot and walk to their fields. Commissioner Ohringer was designated to communicate with GD Soccer and GD Baseball to coordinate the flexibility of their schedules to help with the shared parking lot issues.

Chair Jennings began reviewing and updating commission general operational policies from a previous meeting on May 12, 2025, though this review was deferred to the next meeting on August 24th due to time constraints.

Schedule Next Meeting - Monday, August 24, 2026 5:00pm

Adjourn at 6:50 pm

Minutes by Laura Fisher, Administrative Assistant.

APPROVED: 8/24/26
