



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 September 14, 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, Brian Callahan; DPW Director, Megan Buczynski; Activitas, Michelle Collette; ADA & Storm water, Judy Anderson, Leslie Lathrop, Jon Strauss, Rob Foley, Anthony Lopez GD baseball rep via zoom.

Call to Order: 5:02 p.m.

Mary Jennings, Chair, called the meeting.

Public Comments –

None.

CPA Application Public Hearing

Chair Jennings conducted a public hearing for the Cow Pond CPA application regarding compound growth, explaining the purpose and structure of the hearing, outlining that the highest priority for the project is safety and access, and mentioned observing some safety issues during a recent visit to Cow Pond Field.

Cow Pond Project Revision Proposal

Jennings presented visual evidence of parking and access issues at Cow Pond, showing full parking lots and safety concerns with a single entrance and exit route. Megan Buczynski from Activitas explained that after the original proposal was defeated at town meeting, the working group revised the plan to achieve \$900,000 in cost savings, bringing the total project cost to \$3.9 million. The revised proposal includes recreation components like a playground and walking path, environmental compliance with natural heritage requirements, and safety and access improvements for the three sports leagues that use the facility.

Mrs. Buczynski went over the details requiring natural heritages' approval for capital improvements, with drainage and stormwater management being key environmental considerations. The project's cost decreased from \$4.8 to \$3.9 due to various cost-saving measures including changes to surface materials, stormwater modifications, and electrical infrastructure improvements. A significant access road closure requirement was mentioned, with the road needing to be shut down as of November 1st, necessitating a new access drive design to support baseball field access while meeting environmental obligations. The project remains funded through CPA funds and includes a \$20,000 contribution from GD Youth Baseball for

lighting and a \$1 million federal grant that must be spent by December 2027, with all original project elements being maintained to ensure grant compliance.

The project has already received approvals from the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Earth Removal and Stormwater boards, with accessibility approvals expected on September 23rd. The project will create 295 parking spots and is expected to move forward with natural heritage approvals pending.

Sports Facility Parking and Safety

Parking capacity and safety features were further discussed. Mrs. Buczynski explained that current parking is informal with limited capacity around 250 vehicles under optimal conditions, though actual capacity is lower due to improper parking. The discussion covered safety features including 30-foot netting and fencing around the baseball field, with multiple access points being maintained for different areas including emergency access for ambulances. Michelle Collette, representing the Accessibility Commission and Stormwater Committee, spoke in support of the universal accessibility improvements and confirmed that stormwater permit modifications were approved as minor changes with reduced environmental impact.

Resident Leslie Lathrop voiced a few concerns with the potential project, starting with if Dunstable will be contributing to the project since it is used by Groton & Dunstable children. Chair Jennings clarified that while Dunstable children use the fields and pay user fees, Dunstable itself is not contributing to the tax-funded project, though Dunstable parents do contribute to maintenance through league fees. Ms. Lathrop also asked how construction of the fields would take place if the user groups needed them? how much would be left over in the CPC bucket for other applications? And why are we adding a walking path and playground to the project? Resident Rob Foley asked how much would we save with this proposal.

Mrs. Buczynski explained, the project costs \$3.9 million before grants, with a potential reduction to \$2.9 million after grants. Construction is planned to start between October 15th and November 1st, with work continuing through the spring to coordinate with baseball and soccer seasons and working while the endangered turtles are dormant as not to disturb them. The parking area will be designed as a gravel lot to save costs, and while natural heritage preferred pavement over gravel for stormwater management, the project includes necessary environmental infrastructure including a donation to protect parcel 51 as traditional protection.

CPA funding for the Cow Pond project will use all available recreational funds and some unallocated unreserved money, but there will still be the housing and conservation buckets for respective applications. Mrs. Buczynski clarified that the project includes recreational elements like walking paths and playgrounds to qualify for CPA and federal grants, which are required for the overall project funding. Commissioner Eliot mentioned that a survey was sent out a few years ago to residents and a walking path and playground were requested as additions to the Cow Pond Fields. The discussion clarified that many amenities would be funded by state grants and do not represent additional costs to taxpayers.

The hearing concluded with information about a separate Parks Commission meeting scheduled for 6 PM

Upon motion by Commissioner Petropoulos, seconded by Commissioner Ohringer, to move the new business CPA Parking lot proposal to a higher priority on the agenda was unanimously approved 5:0.

Upon motion by Commissioner Eliot, seconded by Chair Jennings, to move the new business Preparation for town meeting to a higher priority on the agenda was unanimously approved 5:0.

DPW director Brian Callahan shared with the Parks Commission that he would like to do asphalt regreting at Cutler Field to which they accepted.

Commissioner Petropoulos reached out to the Community Preservation Coalition to confirm that the parking lots and access roads would qualify for CPA funds. The Commissioners debated whether to submit a preliminary application by October 1st, with concerns raised about the feasibility of a three-phase proposal approach and the need for accurate cost estimates.

After extensive discussion about technical details, field relocation requirements, and potential cost increases from phasing the project, the commission decided to table the decision until their September 28th meeting to allow time to gather more information from the CPC and address outstanding questions about the proposal structure and costs. The meeting also covered routine business items including approval of meeting minutes and authority for the chair to sign existing budget commitments.

Upon motion by Commissioner Petropoulos, seconded by Commissioner Presti, to submit a CPA proposal or an amended proposal for a Parking lot application, was declined.

Upon motion by Chair Jennings, seconded by Commissioner Eliot, to table the discussion on the Parking lot CPA application till next meeting was approved 3:2

Approval of Minutes –

Upon motion by Commissioner Presti, seconded by Commissioner Ohringer, to approve minutes from August 24, 2026 was unanimously approved.

Upon Motion by Commissioner Presti, seconded by Commissioner Ohringer, to allow Chair, Mary Jennings to sign all open invoices for the Parks Department was unanimously approved 5:0.

Old/New Business

Schedule Next Meeting and Adjourn- Monday, September 28, 2026 5:00pm

Adjourned at 6:55pm

Minutes by Laura Fisher, Administrative Assistant.

APPROVED: 9/28/26
