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 October 5, 2026
Time:	5:00 PM
Location:	1st Floor Meeting Room
Members Present:	Mary Jennings, Mark Presti, Jack Petropoulos, Anna Eliot arriving at 5:13pm, Jeffrey Ohringer arriving at 6:08pm
Members Not Present:	
Others Present:	Laura Fisher, Judy Anderson, Mark Haddad, Kara Cruikshank

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Call to Order: 5:05 p.m.
Mary Jennings, Chair, called the meeting.

Public Comments –
None.

Reports –

Amendment of minute approval –
Minutes for April 15, 2026 were mistakenly approved as May 15 instead of April 15. Amended and approved as corrected date of April 15, 2026 minutes. Amendment of the minutes for August 24, 2026 to include representatives for GD baseball as present in meeting.

Approval of Minutes –
Upon motion by Commissioner Petropoulos, seconded by Commissioner Presti, to approve minutes from April 15, 2026 was unanimously approved 3:0.
Jennings Aye
Presti Aye
Petropoulos Aye

Upon motion by Commissioner Petropoulos, seconded by Commissioner Presti, to amend the minutes of August 24, 2026 to include GD baseball representatives into the minutes was unanimously approved 3:0.
Jennings Aye
Presti Aye
Petropoulos Aye

Chair Jennings announced that she would be meeting with DPW director Brian Callahan to go over the MOU and get feedback if he had anything he would like to change to the current understanding.

CPC Representative
Commissioner Petropoulos reported that the CPC accepted the three applications that were approved and sent in at the previous parks meeting.

Upon motion by Commissioner Presti, seconded by Commissioner Petropolous to approved permits for fall baseball field use from October 2nd to November 6th by the GD baseball league was unanimously approved 4:0.

Upon motion by Commissioner Petropoulos, seconded by Commissioner Eliot to resend the three CPA proposals to the CPC was unanimously approved 4:0.

Town Manager, Mark Haddad reported that the Cow Pond Project was approved at town meeting and that the project received overwhelming support with approximately 300 voters in attendance. He also outlined next steps for the Cow Pond project, including signing state contracts, meeting with the state, negotiating with contractor MJ Cataldo, and setting up project meetings with user groups and contractor. A starting date will need to be determined with construction potentially starting November 1st and completion targeted for November 30th 2027 with Mark taking responsibility for coordinating with Megan and Joe Cataldo. Haddad asked the Parks Commission to appoint a member to attend the project meetings that will be held monthly. The commission discussed designating a representative to attend project meetings, though they decided to further consider the communication process between the Parks Commission and project management team at their next meeting.

The commissioners discussed plans for a groundbreaking ceremony for a project involving the Park Commission and user groups. They reviewed the contract timeline requiring completion by November 30th, 2027, and discussed potential damages if the project is delayed, though specific financial liability details would need to be negotiated. Commissioners agreed that project manager/town manager Mark Haddad should lead the contract negotiations with Cataldo rather than the board being directly involved, while expressing confidence in Mark's ability to manage the process and protect the town's interests regarding the $1 million reimbursement obligation.

The commissioners discussed concerns about public perception regarding project management and debated a motion to request indemnification from the town manager regarding state grant funds. Petropoulos asked what would happen if the contractor did not complete the project in time to qualify for the federal grant reimbursement of $1m. Haddad said we would figure it out.

Petropoulos stated that he believed that the town saw assuring receipt of the federal grant as the Commission's responsibility, Jennings felt that the Commission should not inject itself into negotiations at this late date. Elliot called the question. No vote was taken on the call of the question.

Upon Motion by Commissioner Petropoulos, seconded by Commissioner Presti, that we request the town manager to assure that the town is fully indemnified for the amount in the state grant in the case that the contractor is at fault for not meeting the deadline specified in the state grant. Motion Defeated.

Jennings	**No**
Eliot	**No**
Presti	**Abstain**
Petropoulos	**Aye**

The motion was defeated after concerns were raised about the board's role in contract negotiations. Commissioners also addressed facility contracts and services that would need to be moved or discontinued due to construction starting around December 1st, including porta potties and a dumpster. They decided to consult with user groups about continuing these services into November.

Park Commission Meeting Updates

The Park Commission discussed several key topics including gate closure for baseball access, field fertilization decisions, and a new conservation restriction proposal for Shepley Hill. The commission decided to wait for Brian's input on whether to proceed with October fertilization due to pending construction, with the DPW director authorized to make the decision and report back. Regarding the Shepley Hill conservation restriction, the commission agreed to gather more information from the Conservation Commission about their rejection of the proposal before the next meeting where the developer's representative will present. The commission also addressed budget planning for FY27, acknowledging the need to establish clear goals and review actual spending patterns before determining capital and operating budgets. This discussion will be continued at the next meeting.

Upon motion by Commissioner Eliot, seconded by Commissioner Presti, to request DPW director Brian Callahan to make the decision if the fields need to be fertilized for October and report back to the commission was unanimously approved 4:0.

Jennings	**Aye**
Presti	**Aye**
Petropoulos	**Aye**
Eliot	**Aye**

Schedule Next Meeting and Adjourn- Monday, October 26, 2026 4:00pm

Adjourn at 6:51 pm

Minutes by Laura Fisher, Administrative Assistant.

APPROVED: 10/26/26