Town of Bloomfield
Parks and Recreation Committee
Special Meeting Minutes

Meeting Details

- **Date:** August 25, 2026
- **Time:** Call to order time 5:32 PM
- **Location:** Alvin and Beatrice Wood Human Services Center, Bloomfield, CT 06002

Attendance

- **Committee Members Present:** Matthew Mace (Assistant Director) Louis Blumenfeld (Chair) Paula Jones (Vice Chair), Nazy Fayaz-Shoucair
- **Committee Members Absent:** Shenda James
- **Others Present:** Peter Russell

I. Call to Order

The special meeting was called to order by Matthew Mace. It was noted that because this was a special meeting, the committee could strictly act only on items explicitly listed on the agenda.

II. New Business

A. Arbor Day Foundation Application & Funding (LaSalette Park)

- **Discussion:** Matthew Mace provided context regarding a recurring tree-related program at LaSalette Park supported by local corporate partner Cummins. Over the past two years, Cummins has sent volunteers for spring workdays targeting invasive plant removal. For the upcoming fall cycle, the Arbor Day Foundation reached out to town staff (Sharon) proposing a **$15,000 grant** for a specialized project combining invasive species management with the active planting of native trees, shrubs, and pollinators. The initiative aligns directly with the town's Forest Stewardship Plan and counts toward volunteer hours for the town's Tree City designation. Local arborist Ron Pitz will provide professional field supervision for teams of 5 to 6 volunteers. Materials will be sourced from long-time vendor Pride's Corner nursery. The targeted project dates are **October 22nd** (with a rain date of October 23rd). Town staff (Glenn Gairrty, Nick Gabuzda, and Dave Melesko) have vetted the concept.
- **Action Taken:** A motion was made to endorse the concept of the town's application to the Arbor Day Foundation for continued invasive plant clearing and the planting of native trees and shrubs at LaSalette Park utilizing the requested $15,000 in funding.
    - **Motion by:** Nazy Fayaz-Shoucair
    - **Seconded by:** Paula Jones
    - **Vote:** Unanimous in favor (**Passed**).

B. Wilcox Park Forest Resiliency Grant Application

- **Discussion:** The committee reviewed a funding opportunity from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for a **Forest Resiliency Grant** . This program utilizes federal National Forest Service funds allocated to rural sections of towns with under 50,000 residents, matching parts of Bloomfield near Wilcox Park. Staff members Glenn Garrity and Nick Gabuzda surveyed Wilcox Park and proposed a project near the main entry field off Hoskins Road, an area heavily choked by invasive species. The grant parameters require actions that improve structural diversity rather than simple invasive removal. The approved plan involves thinning out dense pole stands of unhealthy red maple trees to allow light penetration, clearing invasives, and letting the native seed bank naturally regenerate. General

structural benefits of active forest editing for bird and wildlife habitats were highlighted. The final application and budget must be uploaded before the end of August.

- **Action Taken:** A motion was made to formally endorse the town's application through DEEP for the Forest Resiliency Grant to execute forest management activities at Wilcox Park.
    - **Motion by:** Nazy Fayaz-Shoucair
    - **Seconded by:** Paula Jones
    - **Vote:** Unanimous in favor (**Passed**).

III. Committee Updates & General Discussion

- **Farmington River Park Wild and Scenic Grant:** The committee briefly discussed the status of a separate **$12,960 Wild and Scenic Committee grant** for invasive pooling and volunteer management at Farmington River Park. Dave Melesko is working to finalize the funding, and obligate the payments before his upcoming departure. While the physical field labor is scheduled for October, the town must compile project invoices and photos to submit a final report to the National Park Service by the end of the calendar year, following the federal fiscal year close on September 30th.

IV. Public Comment

- Peter Russell was present and thanked the committee, offering no further comments.

V. Adjournment

- **Action Taken:** Motion made to adjourn the meeting.
    - **Motion by:** Nazy Fayaz-Shoucair
    - **Seconded by:** Paula Jones
    - **Vote:** Unanimous in favor (**Passed**).
- The special meeting was officially adjourned at **6:14 PM**.
