Town of Bloomfield

Parks and Recreation Committee

Special Meeting Minutes

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OCT 07 2026
4:54pm
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
BLOOMFIELD, CT

Meeting Details

- **Date:** October 6, 2026
- **Time:** Call to order approximately 5:07 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:** Nick Gabuzda, Environmental Planner; Michelle Kraczkowski

I. Old Business

A. Maplewood Park Riparian Area / Research Project

• **Discussion:** Michelle Kraczkowski provided an update on the Maplewood Park riparian-area research project. Students have been collecting weekly data throughout the summer, including habitat observations, plant species, and bird use. The field-data collection phase is nearing completion, with recommendations for potential tree planting expected this fall. The recommendations will be conservative and will take into account feedback from the Wetlands Commission. No tree planting is anticipated this fall. Soil analysis will also be conducted as part of the next phase of the project. Michelle reported that the river remained within its banks during periods of substantial rainfall and that the area showed significant habitat diversity, including crayfish, frogs, native and invasive plant species, and bird activity. The committee discussed the value of documenting the project for Tree City USA work plans and future planning. Michelle requested permission to deploy two to three trail cameras as part of the research project. The cameras would be placed toward the far end of the site, away from the road and areas of greater public activity, and would remain in place for approximately one to two weeks. Each camera would include a notice identifying the research project and contact information. The committee discussed potential vandalism, departmental awareness, and the need to review applicable Town ordinances regarding recording in public areas. Staff will also notify Public Works and Police Department personnel so that any cameras encountered in the field can be identified as part of the research project.

Action Taken: A motion to recommend deployment of two to three trail cameras for the research project being conducted in Maplewood Park.
Motion by: Paula Jones
Seconded by: Nazy Fayaz-Shoucair
Vote: Unanimous in favor (Passed).

B. Rockwell Park

• **Discussion:** Matt reported that the 8-24 referral for the Rockwell Park project remains pending adoption by the Town Council. Glenn is expected to spearhead the project, with Parks and Recreation

staff continuing to be involved. Staff are also reviewing plans for community-garden composting bins and noted the importance of securing the bins because of the level of activity at the site.

C. Farmington River Park

• **Discussion:** Matt informed committee reviewed the ongoing invasive species removal project at Farmington River Park. Staff reported that approximately 50% of the work has been completed and that additional conversations with Colin are needed to clarify the remaining scope of work. Nick discussed the extent of the area being cleared and expressed concern about bare soil, erosion, and the potential for new invasive growth. Vegetation remains along portions of the riverbank, which may help stabilize the bank.

Volunteer Coordination and Documentation

• **Discussion:** The committee discussed the need for clear oversight and documentation of volunteer activity. Members agreed that the project should track who participates, the number of volunteers, dates worked, and volunteer hours. The committee also discussed the importance of identifying the organizations involved and maintaining documentation for reporting requirements associated with Wild and Scenic Committee funding. Matt will continue coordinating with Colin and volunteers regarding work dates and project activities.

Funding and Final Report

• **Discussion:** The committee discussed the project's reimbursement and reporting requirements. A final report should include invoices, payment information, documentation of volunteer activity, and staff time associated with the project. The committee discussed completing the final reporting by the end of calendar year 2026 in order to support reimbursement of the grant funds.

D. LaSalette Park / Pollinator Pathways Garden

• **Discussion:** Matt reported that the Bloomfield Pollinator Pathways Group and Bloomfield Beautification Group are planning a native planting garden at LaSalette Park, including a family planting workshop. The project was reviewed with appropriate Town staff and received approval from the Town Manager. The event is scheduled for Saturday, October 17, 2026, from 10:30 AM to 1:00 PM. Town assistance will include registration and promotion through the recreation system and approximately two yards of wood chips. Ron Pitz is expected to prepare the planting area.

Ryefield Hollow / Ryefield Village Drive Discussion: Nick Gabuzda provided an update on the process for Town acceptance of the applicable improvements associated with the Right Field Hollow/Right Field Village development. The request must first go before the Planning and Zoning Commission for a recommendation before proceeding to the Town Council. The documentation package for Town Council is substantially prepared, and a similar package is being prepared for Planning and Zoning. The committee discussed the relationship between the approvals, required improvements, and funding or work to be provided by the developer.

Arbor Day Foundation / Tree Planting

• **Discussion:** Nick reported that the anticipated matching funds from the Arbor Day Foundation for tree planting will not be available for a project this year because the funds were directed to another project. Arbor Day indicated that it may be possible to explore a spring planting opportunity. The committee discussed continuing to pursue the opportunity.

E. Wilcox Park / Trail Markings

• **Discussion:** The committee discussed trail conditions and markings in the Wilcox Park area,

including difficulty locating portions of the trail system and the need for fresh trail paint or other markings. Nick noted that a map prepared for the Wilcox grant identifies trails located in the area. The committee discussed existing trail connections and the possibility of improving trail markings.

F. Filley Park

• **Discussion:** The committee discussed the replacement of the Washington Oak that was removed because of disease. Staff and volunteers have visited a nursery to consider replacement-tree options, including Japanese Maple and Pin Oak.

Scott Trail Signage and Access

• **Discussion:** The committee discussed an existing sign on the Scott Trail that references access toward Brewer Drive and the Mountain View Cemetery area. The trail connection is currently affected by access and right-of-way considerations. The committee discussed whether the former connection could be restored and agreed that additional information regarding access and cooperation from the cemetery would be necessary.

G. Seabury Conservation Area Signage

• **Discussion:** Nick Gabuzda reviewed the Town Council resolution concerning the Seabury property and the proposed recognition sign. The committee discussed the wording of the proposed sign and the importance of accurately indicating that the land is associated with the Town of Bloomfield. Members also discussed consistency with other Town park and open-space signage and expressed concern that the proposed wording could imply ownership by Seabury rather than the Town.

Action Taken: A motion was made to recommend revised wording for the Seabury recognition signage, identifying the area as the Seabury Conservation Area and stating that approximately 70 acres were donated to the Town of Bloomfield through the generosity of the donor, with wording consistent with other Town signage.
Motion by: Paula Jones
Seconded by: Nazy Fayaz-Shoucair
Vote: Unanimous in favor (Passed).

II. Parks and Recreation Department Report

Discussion: Matt provided a general department update. The committee discussed the success of the recent food festival, ongoing efforts to retool the after-school program, and plans to develop a middle-school/teen-center-style program with a target of beginning in November. The department is preparing to winterize facilities, and the indoor recreation season began October 1, with the building again open seven days per week. Upcoming activities include Trunk or Treat and continued basketball registration.

III. Prior Minutes Approval

Action Taken: A motion was made to approve the September special meeting minutes with the following corrections:

- Page 1 Add III before Old Business
- Page 1 A. Rockwell Park - line 1 – update add from Matt
- Page 1 Farmington River Park – line 2 - add Matt Reported that Approximately
- Page 1 C Arbor Day Foundation – line 1 - Discussion add Nick informed
- Page 2 Remove yellow highlighted section

- Page 2 Remove lines1-5 replace with Nick provided information about developments affecting LaSalette Park and the adjacent Ryefield Hollow / Ryefield Village [note corrected name spelling] area. He spoke of a planned arrangement with the owner of the Ryefield properties, approved by DEEP, to exchange an easement for funding of improvements at LaSallette Park – increasing parking from approximately two spaces to ten and installing an information kiosk. He also advised that the Ryefield owner would be dedicating approximately 24 acres for open space with a conservation / recreation easement. The committee discussed the developments and the use of funding.
- Page 2 E Wilcox Park – Line 1 - add Nick Advised
- Page 2 F Filley Park – Line 1 - add Nick reported
- Page 2 F Filley Park – Line 5 - add discussion of potential Town survey
- Page 2 New Business remove IV
- Page 2 Line 1 – add 1) Action Taken
- Page 2 Line 6 – add 2) Action Taken
- Page 3 Line 3 – Maplewood Park - add from Nick
- Page 3 Removed IV in front of Parks and Recreation Department Report
- Page 3 Parks and Recreation Department Report – line 1 update add from Matt
- Page 3 Add VIII Prior Minutes Approval
- Page 3 Add IX Adjournment

Motion by: Paula Jones
Seconded by: Louis Blumenfeld
Vote: Passed - Unanimous

IV. Adjournment

Action Taken: Motion made to adjourn the meeting at 6:52 PM.
Motion by: Paula Jones V
Seconded by: Nazy Fayaz-Shoucair
Vote: Passed – Unanimous