PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
EAST GRANBY, CONNECTICUT
MINUTES
April 3, 2025, 6:30pm

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

   A regular meeting of the East Granby Parks & Recreation Commission was held Thursday, April 3, 2025, in the Town Hall Large Conference Room. Chairperson Morgan Bengel called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Members also present were Leona Bevins, Robert Ravens-Seger, Ella DeSimone, Carly McKenney and Chloe Rapose. Amanda Mele, Marc Dlugolenski and Nicole Sokolowski were absent. Alicia Van Neil, Program Director, was also present.

2. **DISCUSSION WITH THE PUBLIC**
   Wayne and Jason Hayes attended the meeting to learn about the Parks and Recreation Commission.

3. **APPROVE MINUTES**
   R Ravens-Seger made a motion to approve the minutes as presented for March 6, 2025. L Bevins seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

4. **CORRESPONDENCE**
   The Commission received email notification that Karen Hines has stepped down from the Parks and Recreation Board. She will be missed.

   There was an e-mail vote to appoint two new members to the commission:

Motion: Carly McKenney made a motion to appoint Jim Lindberg and Jennifer Derleth to the Parks and Recreation Commission. Leona Bevins seconded the motion. The six members who voted were all in favor. Motion carried.

5. **PROGRAM REPORT**
   A Van Neil reported that most of the spring programming is up and running. The Wicked Workshop was cancelled due to low enrollment. The Let's Talk Turkey mailing included all the spring and summer programs available. There will be no spring tennis due to the coach will be away. She will be back and will have summer tennis. There is one more session of Art Ventures. The running programs are getting going.

6. **TREASURERS REPORT**
   A Van Neil gave a report in N Sokolowski's absence. Nicole will be presenting this report in a new format starting at the next meeting. The budget is on track. There is a larger bill coming up for tree removal at EG Farms for around $4,000.

7. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**
   A. **Cowles Park** – C McKenney talked about updating the facebook page. A Van Neil mentioned there is a different facebook page that is currently active. A Van Neil mentioned some bridges behind the Cedar Ridge area need boards repaired. Perhaps some scouts or members of the mountain bikers will be able to do the work.
      a. **Emergency Management Markers**- C McKenney mentioned working on this project again now that the fire danger and winter weather has passed.

A Van Neil mentioned the fire department talked about sending info about marker tips. She will help get that information.

B. Farmington Valley Heritage Trail – R Ravens-Seger reported he walked the trail north from Copper Hill this time. The trail is in much better shape than the other part of the trail since it is 10-12 years newer, but it still has some divots and heaves that could be problematic. The fences are in great shape. The deck on the bridge needs repair. A Van Neil will talk to DPW. A Van Neil mentioned Marc reported the crosswalk markings have been repainted on the road.

a. Emergency Management Markers – Same as for Cowles Park.

b. **CT Rec Trails Grant Update**- A Van Neil mentioned this project is moving forward. Paving will be done from the Granby line to Rt. 189. The solar project work hasn't even started. Ed from DPW is looking for three new quotes. We have three years from the date signed on the grant, so there is plenty of time to complete the project.

C. **Granbrook Park** – M Bengel shared a schedule for opening the gate at the entrance to the park for the weekends and holidays this summer. A Van Neil confirmed that the same plan as last year is in place. J Lindberg noted that the playground will be assessed, and they are considering adding 2-3 additional small pieces to the area. He also mentioned he hopes to have some plants ready for the Middle School Youth Action Council to plant during their Earth Day celebration on Earth Day. A Van Neil mentioned considering putting soccer fields or adding a dog park and there will be future discussions for feasibility. A Van Neil mentioned there is a shorter rock in the parking lot that is a hazard to taller vehicles. She will ask DPW to switch it with a taller rock.

a. Softball Field – A Van Neil mentioned work on the field is underway. She asked if anyone would like to help research batting cages, dugouts and scoreboards.

D. East Granby Farms –

a. STEAP Grant updates- The RFP was submitted back to the state. The state did receive it, and A Van Neil hopes to hear back from them within a week. Then the committee can be brought together to learn about the next steps.

E. EG Farms Playscape Fundraising/Update – A Van Neil reported the area for the playscape has been cleared and is fenced off. The installation company for the playscape will start on the 14th, and the installation should take about a week to complete. Tony will act as a project manager because he is a playscape inspector. He will meet with the company as they put the larger pieces in. Final fundraising for additional pieces is underway. Riverside Reptiles will be holding a fundraising event on 4/13, and the Dance instructor, Cindy Williams, will be holding a Dance-a-Thon on 4/27 for fundraising as well. Another grant application has been submitted to the East Granby Greater Together Community Fund Committee. Becky Hayes has started working on recognizing donors in publications. Jason Hayes is excited for the playscape coming to fruition. He contacted 181 businesses in East Granby either in person or through a handwritten letter. He took the time to discuss information about the playscape and the different parks in town. He also revisited businesses who made donations to thank them in-person.

F. **Sports Programs/Coaching/Training/Policies –** A Van Neil mentioned parks and rec will continue to pay for background checks. At the last meeting she mentioned that DCFS was going to start offering free background checks, but the process seems slow so until it is more established, we will continue outsourcing them.

G. Program Committee –

a. Easter- L Bevins mentioned the two events on Thursday evening and Saturday morning are planned. More help is still needed for the Saturday morning event. All the eggs will be stuffed by the end of the weekend. A Van Neil mentioned the Scouts may help with parking.

b. Summer Concert- August 26th. A Van Neil and L Bevins chose a band- Boot Leg Harmony. One food truck has been secured, and they hope for another. A photo booth has also been scheduled, as well as an inflatable and a face painter. A popular country group books a year out, so they are looking to book them for the summer of 2026. A Van Neil mentioned they hope to get fiscal sponsors to hold a 3-concert series in the summer of 2026.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Planning and Zoning PoCD Worksheet- The Planning and Zoning Department of East Granby has asked the Parks and Rec Commission for a Plan of Conservation and Development Update (PoCD) by completing a Goals and Concerns Worksheet about the town's parks and recreational facilities. C McKenney talked about some concerns of funding more/new programs with more houses being built in town. She also suggested polling residents in town more; not only to see what programs they would like offered, but also to see what they would like to see at each of our parks. Another concern is making sure there are plans in place to maintain our current parks and facilities. A Van Neil mentioned she believes we have a good amount of open space and instead of acquiring more land we need to focus on maintaining what we have. East Granby relies on our DPW to maintain Parks and Rec properties as well as all the other town properties. Other towns have people who only work on parks and rec properties. M Bengel agreed that there is no need to acquire more properties right now. A Van Neil also mentioned the lack of connectivity between town and parks and rec properties and wished to correct it. Jason Hayes mentioned as he talked with local businesses and residents they many people do not know what our parks have to offer. He suggested helping define the properties. A Van Neil suggested creating a master plan for field and building maintenance. M Bengel summarized the conversation by noting the following points: Relevance, Connectivity, Definition, and Strategic Planning are areas to focus on. Jason Hayes also suggested each person fill out the PoCD as a parks and rec member, but also as a resident and/or parent.

B. America 250th Planning- M Bengel mentioned she and R Ravens-Seger are on another committee in town planning this celebration for the summer of 2026. She hopes Parks and Rec can collaborate and offer some ideas and support.

C. **Other-** Jason Hayes mentioned he has a tree guy that could possibly give a lower quote for the tree work at EG Farms. He also has suggestions about connecting people that are helping with Earth Day to help maintain trails.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**
   A motion was made by R Ravens-Seger and seconded by L Bevins to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 pm. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Kovaleski
Commission Clerk