PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
EAST GRANBY, CONNECTICUT
MINUTES
October 2, 2025, 6:30pm

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
   A regular meeting of the East Granby Parks & Recreation Commission was held Thursday, October 2, 2025, in the Town Hall Large Conference Room. Chairperson Morgan Bengel called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Members also present were Ken Kovaleski, Leona Bevins, Amanda Mele, Robert Ravens-Seger, Jennifer Derleth, Jim Lindberg, Alexa Bednarz, Nicole Sokolowski, and Marc Dlugolenski. Ella DeSimone was absent. Alicia Van Neil, Program Director, was also present. Jennifer Frank and Dana Zalenski were present in the audience.

2. **DISCUSSION WITH THE PUBLIC**
   Jennifer Frank introduced herself as a resident of East Granby who will talk about poison ivy control later in the meeting. Dana Zalenski has been a resident of East Granby for 6 years and would like to be involved in the Programs Committee.

3. **APPROVE MINUTES**
   R Ravens-Seger made a motion to approve the minutes as presented for September 4, 2025. N Sokolowski seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

4. **CORRESPONDENCE**
   A Van Neil received emails from Jennifer Derleth and Marc Dlugolenski about serving another term on the Parks and Recreation Commission. Their current terms are up on 10/30/25.

5. **PROGRAM REPORT**
   A Van Neil reported that flag football and the after-school programs are going well. They are also getting ready for basketball. There has been a girls basketball clinic, and adult drop-in basketball started this week as well. A Van Neil had a space conflict for Yoga, but the Congregational Church has agreed to allow the use of their space for the program. Matisse Madden will be putting together an East Granby version of the Nutcracker. The location and date are not yet confirmed.

6. **TREASURERS REPORT**
   N. Sokolowski shared a budget report printout. She reported that everything is still on track. A Van Neil did have to buy a new laptop, and it came out of the new equipment budget line.

7. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**
   A. **Cowles Park** – J Derleth reported that she and J Lindberg have been talking with Tommy Pavalchek about what work needs to be done on the trails to repair and clean them up.
      a. **Emergency Management Markers**- L Bevins walked the main trail with Ken Believue. The markers are still relevant, and they discussed putting them where the trails split.
      b. **Trails Day**- J Derleth and J Lindberg are organizing a day for Scouts, students and public to help clean up the trails. They are looking at possible dates in October or early November.

B. **Farmington Valley Heritage Trail** – R Ravens-Seger walked the trail from Copper Hill to Rt. 20. Lots of leaves are on the trail today and could be slippery. The trail was being heavily used on a weekday, though the group noted it was a Jewish holiday so schools and some workplaces had the day off. Jennifer Frank spoke about alternative ways to control poison ivy. She asked the Commission to stop chemical spraying. She instead proposed a volunteer effort of mowing and non-chemical spraying. Jennifer has 6-8 people willing to help. She is asking for the chance to try for a few months next year to see if they can control the poison ivy. If they can't keep up with it, then the Commission can decide what to do next.

Motion: R Ravens-Seger made a motion to pause chemical spraying in the spring of 2026 to try volunteer efforts to control the poison ivy instead. A Mele seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

a. **Emergency Management Markers** – L Bevins led a discussion on where to put the markers along the trail. The decision is to put our signs on the half-mile markers that already exist. Members need to get the GPS coordinates for each of these markers.

b. **CT Rec Trails Grant Update-** A Van Neil reported that she is working with DPW to finish the necessary paperwork for the town match for hours spent. Signage that is required by the grant will be going up soon.

C. **Granbrook Park** – M Bengel mentioned the park looks good. The river is low, but people are using the park. A Van Neil reported that the water system will be put on the town's capital plan.

a. **Insurance Report** – In order to update the playscape to make it safer, $50,000 will be requested from town capital funds. Smaller, lower structures will be looked at to replace some pieces of the current structure. They will also look at different mulch options to absorb falls. Commission members are encouraged to go to the next Board of Finance meeting on Oct. 21 to show support for Parks and Rec capital requests.

b. **Softball Field –** J. Lindberg reported that all the bids are in for a scoreboard and dugout. They may have to wait until spring to install them.

D. **East Granby Farms –**

a. **STEAP Grant updates-** M Dlugolenski reported that the project is going well. The pavement is down, and fencing is being installed around the courts. The pickleball and basketball courts are being completed.

E. **Sports Programs/Coaching/Training/Policies –** J Derleth has been working on putting together a Google survey for different groups to give their input as to what they want in a coach. There will be a survey for Parks and Rec Commission board members, one for public who have registered for Parks and Rec programs in the past, and one for students. She has been working on the verbiage of coach training and of the mission statement. She is hoping for survey results before the next meeting or soon after.

F. **Program Committee –**

a. **Halloween-** L Bevins reported that donation boxes for candy have been placed around the town. Becky Hayes will be sending out an email blast requestion donations as well. Commission members are requested to help on 10/20 with the Middle School students 2:05-4:00, and on 10/25 during the night of the event. NHS will be hosting their Trunk-or-Treat, or something similar. The Lions Club will cosponsor the event again and be on-site collecting food donations for the pantry.

b. **Tree Lighting-** The event will be on Dec. 5th. The committee has a meeting on Monday to discuss more details. A Van Neil discussed possibly changing the event a bit to focus on celebrating the holiday season and less on the Memorial piece. The group still plans on using the luminaries. A Van Neil asked for input on how the event can draw more people. J Derleth suggested a contest between elementary grades for caroling. A Van Neil also mentioned asking if the essays for "What Community Means to Me" contest could be written during the school day.

c. **250th Celebration-** No new update.

d. **Dance Recital-** The date of the event is December 14th, 11:00am. More details TBD.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Vote on Reappointments:**

Motion: R Ravens-Seger made a motion to appoint Jennifer Derleth and Marc Dlugolenski for another full 4-year term. N Sokolowski seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried. Their terms will now carry through 10/30/2029.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by M Bengel and seconded by M Dlugolenski to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 pm. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Kovaleski
Commission Clerk