

02.09.2026
Commission Meeting
Recreation and Parks

Present: Seth Levine (Chair), Barbara Sanchez (Vice Chair), Dave Hiller, Wayne Szretter, Kenneth Van Blarcom, David Ordway, Oliver Rick, Lauren Meurer, Deputy Director of Recreation and Parks, and Andrea Verdelli and Diane Lebo, Recording secretaries

Absent: Joe Ziano, Angela Snell (Community Services Director), Jessica Ordway

Meeting called to order: 6:01 pm

Motion to approve the minutes by Mr. Levine, seconded by Ms. Sanchez. Motion passed unanimously.

Citizens concern: None

Directors/Staff Reports

Summer registration 2/11 at 12:00pm, Employment and Volunteer Opportunities, Events and New Initiatives:

Summer camp registration starts this Wednesday at 12PM. Additional summer programming will also be released starting on Wednesday with volunteer and job opportunities being advertised at a later date. Some new programs are being presented this summer including the STEM Program - Wicked cool med school. We have also partnered with the Natick Board of Health for an outdoor fitness series that will include Yoga, High Intensity Fitness and Meditation.

Mr. Hiller asks what limitations the department faces with summer registration. Ms. Meurer states the major limitations regarding capacity is early registration, taking place over 4 months in advance, and facility space. Staff has not been determined at the time of registration, once staff is hired the department has the ability to expand capacity accordingly. Sargent Center specifically is designed to be a smaller sized program. If there is a possibility to open up a second location that could expand registration capacity while still keeping the objective of the program intact.

Cole, Future Recreation & Parks Fields Presentation from 2/4

The Johnson project has been on hold since the select board meeting in October 2025. They must decide how the property will be used. Several committees (including the Recreation and Parks Commission) presented letters to the board requesting that Johnson not be sold and that open space be preserved. The Johnson property presents several opportunities for the development of additional field space, office space, and shared use space that can be used by the town or rented by 3rd parties. There is no anticipated date of decisions.

The Cole Center Project hasn't started. Recreation and Parks has been at Cole Center since 1993 without any updates. The department is compiling data about space usage and identifying trends. Ms. Snell and

Ms. Meurer are point people for pulling together the data. The human services survey results showed that residents want more open space and after school care. We will be hiring a consultant to perform a feasibility study in the second half of 2026. Additional information will also come from the Master Plan. The previous master plan was developed in 2016. An update is anticipated for the 2027 fiscal year using the same company as the 2016 plan. Results of the master plan will be reviewed in context of department data compiled by Ms. Meurer and Ms. Snell.

Donation Report

Motion to approve Ms. Sanchez, seconded by Mr. Levine. Motion passed unanimously.

Member Announcements/Concerns

PATH for Adaptive Opportunities:

PATH obtained a bib for the Boston Marathon. Their runner is nearly done with their fundraising with 2 events remaining.

Open Space:

There was no January meeting. During the December meeting, the Johnson property and the need for open space was discussed. At the next town hall meeting, Claire Rendell will be requesting \$20,000 (\$100,000 over 5 years) for invasive species management in the town forest. The Affordable housing trust wants to use Henry Wilson House for veterans housing, but it's on restricted land. Martin Kessler was reelected as the Chair.

Community Preservation Act (CPA):

The last meeting was canceled. The CPA requires a public hearing every year, but it has not been scheduled yet. The commission is reviewing the decision-making process. Both the historical society and Recreation and Parks department came in under budget for their projects. The Recreation and Parks department will be replacing the shade structure for the beach this spring. The Recreation and Parks department is planning to submit an application for the design and build of Murphy in late spring and potentially another application for the South Natick Parks Dam Project depending on other funding opportunities.

Additional Updates?

New Recording Secretary

Ms. Verdelli has been promoted to executive assistant for the Community Services Department. Ms. Lebo is starting as the new Administrative Assistant for the Recreation and Parks Department and recording secretary. Mr. Hiller has requested that we post minutes online.

Next Meeting Date:

Monday, March 16, 2026 at 6:00pm.

Mr. Levine moves to adjourn at 6:50. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion unanimously approved.