

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2025, AT 7:00 P.M. AT THE HARMON LEONARD YOUTH CENTER, SOUTH MAIN STREET - CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

Dr. Patrick Duffy, MD, Chairman

Commissioners: Heather Fitzgerald, Paul Fracasse, Michael O'Donnell, John Perosino,
Steve Trifone

Absent: Karen Berton

John Gawlak, Director, Park & Rec

Staff: Mark Cunningham, Highway Superintendent

Elizabeth Mayne, Program Supervisor

Fiona Pearson, Council Liaison

Brendan Moran, Program Coordinator

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order.

2. ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

- a. Ray Stewart, 826 Moss Lane, addressed the Commission regarding Summer Concerts. He stated that he has attended concerts on Tuesday nights in North Haven and enjoyed them. North Haven sponsors about 15 concerts each summer. Mr. Stewart inquired about adding more concerts in Cheshire and possibly changing the day for the concerts to Thursdays. He will reach out to North Haven First Selectman, Mike Freda, to gather data on costs, permits and contacts; and he will report his findings back to the Commission.

5. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES – July 2, 2025

MOTION by Mr. O'Donnell, seconded by Mr. Trifone

MOVED to approve the minutes of the meeting of July 2, 2025

VOTED The motion passed unanimously by those present

6. PARKS UPDATE – MARK CUNNINGHAM, PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Cunningham stated that work is proceeding as normal. The past couple of months have been busy with paving and seeding among other projects.

The Chairman inquired about the trash bags he observed at the Fenn Road Property. Karen Schnitzer, Chair, Environment Commission, explained that members of the Environment Commission have been cleaning the open space parks in order to eradicate invasive plants and filling trash bags that are then picked up by Public Works.

7. TOWN COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

Ms. Pearson reported that the capital budget has been approved.

- Various pool improvements, \$115,000
- Yankee Expressway Property Access Study, \$20,000
- Community Pool Boiler and Roof Replacement, \$120,000
- Open Space Land Acquisition, \$1.5 million (will go to referendum)
- Splash Pad, allocated \$585,000 (will go to referendum)
- Turf fields at high school, allocated \$800,000 (will go to for referendum)

Mr. O'Donnell asked if there is currently any money in the Open Space fund.

Ms. Pearson replied there is less than \$100,000

8. COMMUNICATIONS

- a. Town Resident Nina Purslow who lives near Mixville, was upset because of a downed tree and that the property has fallen in disrepair. Public Works was contacted to take care of these issues and Nina Purslow wrote expressing her gratitude. The Chairman thanked Mr. Cunningham and his staff.
- b. A letter from Phil Atiyeh, Cheshire resident and a member of the Orchard Hill Band, asking to perform with his band next year in town.

9. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- a. Eagle Scout, Eric Downy, finished the Gaga pit. The Chairman shared pictures of the completed project.
- b. HoneyPot Disc Golf Course - The Chairman shared pictures of the disc golf baskets.
- c. Eagle Scout, Jehan Moody, submitted a preliminary proposal to build two bridges at Cheshire Park. He did not attend this meeting. The members will visit the site and the Eagle Scout will have to attend a Park & Rec meeting and make his presentation.

- d. The Chairman wished to recognize Liz Mayne for all her hard work for the Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, Liz is the Chairperson of the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association, as well as Chairperson of the Legislative Committee. The Legislative Committee works from January 8 till May 4 during the budget season; and is a voice and advocate of park and recreation programs throughout the state. This year the Legislative Committee has been instrumental during the legislation to Attempt to apply camp licensure to municipal programs. The members expressed their appreciation to Ms. Mayne for all her efforts.
- e. The Chairman discussed the new Code of Ordinance, Supplement number 6, Section 2-66, "There will be a Parks & Recreation Commission composed of 6 electors of the town and the Athletic Director for the Cheshire Public Schools or their designee to serve as adviser to the Commission". The Chairman expressed his support with this ordinance.

f. E-Bikes

The Chairman asked the Police Department to come to our next meeting since the new laws will take effect in October 1.

Input from the Police Department is necessary to see how we will deal with these E-bikes on our trails and sidewalks

Originally there were three classes of E-bikes:

- Peddle assist only, 20 miles per hour
- Peddle assist with a motor, 20 miles per hour
- Peddle assist only – up to 28 miles per hour

Now these bikes can go up to 70 miles an hour, without pedals, much like a motorcycle, with no age restrictions, no license or helmet required

These bikes come without peddles, and they are classified as follows:

- If the battery is over 750 watts, it's called a motor-driven cycle and it requires a license
- If the battery is over 3,500 watts, it's called a motor-driven vehicle and it requires a License
- If the battery is over 3,700 watts it's called a motorcycle and you need an endorsement on the driver's license

10. NEW BUSINESS

A. Permanent Charcoal Grills in Parks

Ms. Mayne stated that these grills are in need of being replaced.

The Commission discussed eliminating these grills in the parks.

MOTION by Mr. O'Donnell, seconded by Ms. Fitzgerald

MOVED to eliminate charcoal grills in all Cheshire parks

VOTED The motion passed unanimously by those present

11. OLD BUSINESS

- A. **2025 Small Town Economic Assistance Program** - \$1,000,000 Grant Award, Mixville Park Improvements Phase II

The Chairman acknowledged the award of this grant.

- B. **Bartlem South - Project Status**

The Skate Park is completed; one of the ramps has a separation and this is being addressed.

The skate group expressed an interest in getting a half pipe, but after getting prices, it was determined that it is too costly.

A control box has been donated by Nick Graikoski, a Cheshire High School Graduate of the Class of 2013 and the business owner of Amplified Custom Fabrication.

The Chairman would like a letter of thanks sent out to Mr. Graikoski.

- C. **Disc Golf Course - Cheshire Park**

Discussed under Chairman's Report.

Ms. Mayne reported that caution signs are being installed over the weekend warning people of being on disc golf course.

- D. **Band Shell/Turf Field Fees/Staff Needed**

The band shell is moving along; the walls have been framed. The parking lot is done.

The turf field fees will be discussed at a future meeting.

The Chairman reported that he and Mr. Gawlak have been attending the Adaptive Field Meetings, May 16, June 6 and July 23. Mr. Gawlak has compiled an RFP for the adaptive fields.

- D. Farmington Canal Linear Trail Moratorium - **Discuss Undedicated Benches**

Members discussed whether it is feasible to take the moratorium off.

Mr. Cunningham reported that there were pictures taken of all the benches.

MOTION by Mr. O'Donnell, seconded by Ms. Fitzgerald

MOVED to continue moratorium on new benches and replace unnamed benches with dedicated benches

VOTED The motion passed unanimously by those present

12. DIRECTOR'S DEPARTMENT REPORT

The Chairman distributed to the members a copy of the DeDominicus Property plan that Mr. Gawlak reviewed with the state.

Ms. Mayne reported there was a power outage at the pool this past Saturday and the pool

was closed for the day. Refunds will be given for paid events for that day. The power outage caused the timers to be off for the tennis courts. They have been reset. There will be work done for the boilers at the pool; and Sheila Adams, Aquatic Director, has reached out to the patrons about the pool temperature during this work. Ms. Mayne attended the September 2 Inland Wetlands meeting and reported that the Permit for the Yankee Highlands Mountain Bike trail was approved. The Chairman referred to the Director's Report, Item #24 – regarding the CITY DATA.AI software. The Chairman reported that he attended one of those meetings and was impressed by how this software is able to monitor in real time our 15 parks and open spaces as to number of people being there.

Mr. Gawlak's full report is attached to the minutes. Red line items are new submissions.

Mr. O'Donnell asked Ms. Mayne since the fees were raised at the pool, are they day pass changes. Ms. Mayne reported no big changes were noted. Changes were noted for fees for birthday parties and pavilion fees; residents are not happy with the new fees. Ms. Mayne stated the free stickers for seniors are being requested more this period and asked the members to consider charging the seniors a minimal fee. The members will address this at the next meeting after all the reports are in for this period.

Ms. Mayne discussed with the members about having a future meeting at the Community Pool.

MOTION by Mr. O'Donnell, seconded by Mr. Trifone

MOVED to move the November 5 meeting from the Youth Center to the Cheshire Community Pool

VOTED The motion passed unanimously by those present

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Trifone, seconded by Mr. Perosino

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

VOTED the motion passed unanimously by those present.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Angela Izzo".

Angela Izzo