

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2026, AT 7:00 P.M. AT THE HARMON LEONARD YOUTH CENTER, SOUTH MAIN STREET - CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

Dr. Patrick Duffy, MD, Chairman

Commissioners: Paul Fracasse, Michael O'Donnell, Ray Stewart, Steve Trifone

Absent

Erin Mutty, John Perosino

Fiona Pearson, Council Liaison

John Gawlak, Director of Parks and Recreation

Staff: Mark Cunningham, Highway Superintendent
Elizabeth Mayne, Program Supervisor
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. Jehan Mody, 28 Applewood Drive, and Colin Dyer, 1015 Amherst Place, presented their proposed Eagle Scout Project
This project involves installing 18 holes tee boxes at the Honeypot Disc Golf Course; scheduled to be completed by the end of June.
The members asked questions and the Scouts addressed them.
- b. Aaron Buhrer, 1399 Mount Carmel Ave, North Haven
This project involves new signage at Lock 12 entrance into a kiosk as well as a new walkway. The sign will be eco-friendly and it would have space for community notices. The new walkway would be gravel or concrete and would serve as a shortcut to be able to enter the easier access to the trail. Aaron presented illustrations of the final project. The members asked questions and Aaron addressed them.

- c. Chris Marini, 182 Patten Drive, CYB/CYS President, addressed the Commission regarding Fields usage. Mr. Marini is advocating making all the available fields viable for little league use. Cheshire Park needs some attention; as well as McNamara, all the bases there are not breakaway bases and the fields need to have fences to block the dugouts. His organization is willing to contribute funds to buy new bases for fields. The Chairman asked Mr. Marini to provide his contact information that he will forward to a former member of the Commission who is now a member of the Board of Education.

5. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES – March 11, 2026

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

MOVED to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 11, 2026

VOTED The motion passed unanimously by those present

6. PARKS UPDATE - PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Cunningham stated that work is proceeding as normal.

7. TOWN COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

Ms. Pearson was not in attendance.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

- a. Ms. Mayne read into record three letters by residents. These are attached to the minutes.
- b. Ms. Mayne discussed with the members a request made by the CCAP 2026 Mixville Cyclocross Race bike race at Mixville.
- c. Also, a correspondence from Joanne DeBears requesting Public Works assistance to start phase 2 of the Mixville Pollinator project.

9. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- a. The Chairman welcomed new member Ray Stewart.
- b. The Chairman congratulated the Cheshire High School Hockey Team on winning the SCC Division Semifinals

10. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Bartlem Park Great Lawn - Fee Schedule Creation
Ms. Mayne asked the members to address the use of the Great Lawn/ Band Shell and fee structure. Should it be a single fee for the lawn and the stage?

Discussion ensued; there should be no sports on the Great Lawn.

Mr. Gawlak will send an email to all sports coaches advising that the lawn is not to be used for sports activities.

Also, a note about this will be added to the website.

It was decided that the band shell would require a permit that would include the use of the great lawn. No separate permit would be issued for the great lawn only.

It was suggested that the existing signs be updated with all the rules and only have two signs placed in areas where people can read them.

- c. Kate Glendon, MPH, Director of Health, Chesprocott Health District was not in attendance.
- d. Adaptive Field Project Cheshire Park 1 –
This is covered in the Director's Department Report.

11. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Stewart asked about some updates:

- a. Inquired about the ice chopping at the pickleball court leaving sizable gashes in the surface of the court.
- b. Potential utility of the Dodd course. Mr. O'Donnell stated that this was looked into and it would have to be a total rebuilt.
- c. He inquired about the genre of bands at Bartlem Beats. Mr. Moran answered.

12. DIRECTOR'S DEPARTMENT REPORT

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

Ms. Mayne reported that the Muck Run had 145 participants. Revenue generated was \$1,190. We had two sponsors:

- Big Y sent us their volunteer squads to man all the obstacles. This saved funds since we did not have to hire part-time staff
- D'Amico Pettinicchi Law Firm sponsored the t-shirts.

The Commission members expressed their gratitude for the sponsors.

Touch-A-Truck event is scheduled for April 9, 10 a.m.

13. ADJOURNMENT

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

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 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

John Gawlak

From: Maria Mazzacane <mariaperez8214@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 6:35 PM
To: John Gawlak
Subject: Dog Park

Warning: Unusual sender <mariaperez8214@gmail.com>

You don't usually receive emails from this address. Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

Hello Sir. I am a resident that uses the dog park every morning at 7 a.m. because I live in a condo and my German Shepherd needs to run. There are several of us who go early so we can avoid our dogs being in contact with other dogs, but mostly other dog owners. Lol. The "regulars" are all very polite and considerate of each other and will shuffle around our dogs to the 3 different areas to accommodate each other. There is a slight design glitch. And that is that you can only enter the third area in the back by cutting through the large dog area. It would make much more sense and make things way easier if that third park was moved to the side area and could be accessed without having to cut through the larger area. That way three separate dogs could all get their exercise without the hassle of cutting through and disturbing the dog that's in there. My dog has been attacked several times and I have been bitten. So I go when it's not crowded and I can let my dog run and chase her ball without any risk or without confrontation by its human. I understand it's a public park. And I always will leave to accommodate others. But it would be a huge benefit to have access to three separate areas instead of the way it is set up now. Thank you for your consideration. And thank you for providing a safe place for my dog to get her exercise.

Respectfully,

Maria Mazzacane
(203) 600-1123

Read into
Record

Rec Comm

Thoughts

John Gawlak

From: Kiki <timmarymargsmom@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 12:44 PM
To: John Gawlak
Subject: Leashed dogs at town parks

Warning: Unusual sender <timmarymargsmom@gmail.com>

You don't usually receive emails from this address. Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

My name is Catherine "Kiki" Nugent and I have been a resident of Cheshire since July of 2002.

The recent addition of the walking paths and bandshell at Bartlem Park, have been such gifts to residents !

In addition to going to the town dog park a few mornings a week, my dog, Hazy, and I walk anywhere from 6 to 10 miles a day, and anywhere from 5:30 AM to 9PM at night. The walking paths at Bartlem are the antithesis to the linear trail. The park is wide open, giving me a sightline as to who is there - people jogging, walking their dogs, parents with little kids on bikes and the like. Bartlem has lights! The other huge appeal is the design of the paths and cut-offs. I add to my walk by going up and around the playground and following the walkway up to RT 10, then back down onto the path, by the Midstate Medical building. If my back is bothering me at any particular point, the pathways offer the option to hop off and back into the car to head out.

Last Fall, a woman was walking 2 "active" dogs. I chose to go in the other direction. Unfortunately when I was coming back around, on the sidewalk alongside the turf, the woman and dogs started walking up.

One dog broke free of it's collar and attacked my dog. As she tried to get her dog, her second dog broke free and also attacked

my dog. End result was an \$600 vet bill and my dog was on restricted movement for 4 weeks.

When the restrictions were lifted for Hazy, we resumed our walking at Bartlem. Of course, my senses are heightened anytime we are passing people with dogs. I have found people to be very respectful, keeping their dogs at a safe distance. Monday, 3/30/26, I went to Bartlem at 6AM. It was beautiful out and we had time to get 3 miles in. As I came around by the new bathrooms, heading on the path towards RT 10, I realized there was a large brown dog, loose, about 20 feet away. I stopped and held my dog. I saw a man on the OTHER side of the field, nowhere near what I assumed was his dog. I called out "heads up !". He called his dog, but it kept walking towards me. There was a second man with him, also with a loose dog. That dog started to head in our direction. I kept backing up. I yelled again, with a sense of urgency, for him to please come get his dog. He tried calling it again but eventually had to walk across the field to get it. The second dog had turned back towards it's owner.

I said to the owner of the large dog, "this is why dogs need to be on leashes". He called out to the dog, "Come on, (whatever the dog's name was), there is a crazy lady at park today"

I explained my dog had been attacked by two dogs last Fall and it is quite scary for me to have two loose dogs approaching me! I made my way around to the top of the path, to my car, which was parked in the Mid-State Medical Arts parking lot. I did not feel safe walking my dog there, nor did I want a confrontation with a grown man and his buddy.

I have a right to go walk at town parks, with my dog on a leash, and feel safe.

I am requesting signs be placed at the entrances of the pathways for the main trail;
and at each corner of the turf, on the end, near the old bathrooms. It would be 7 signs.

I thank you very much.
Kiki

091657

John Gawlak

Read into
Record

Rec Comm

From: Kiki <timmarymargsmom@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 12:51 PM
To: John Gawlak
Subject: Dog Park

Thoughts

Warning: Unusual sender <timmarymargsmom@gmail.com>

You don't usually receive emails from this address. Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

Good afternoon,

My name is Kiki Nugent.

I visit the dog park several times a week. I go in the early morning hours to avoid other dogs. There are several other dog owners who go at this time and we are very considerate of each other, giving each other a turn in the pens so their dog can run alone. But that only allows two owners at a time, to let their dogs run. There is a third pen, on the opposite end of the park, complete with a gate. There is no other access except to walk all the way through the big pen. It is not practical.

I am asking if there is any way to have that pen fencing moved down to the end, near the parking lot.

It would allow three dog owners to run their pets, independently of each other, at the same time.

I thank you for your consideration.

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Kiki Nugent

091657