

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, July 1, 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, Erin Muttu, Michael O'Donnell, John Perosino, Ray Stewart,
Steve Trifone

Absent: Brendan Moran, Program Coordinator
Fiona Pearson, Council Liaison

Staff: Elizabeth Mayne, Program Supervisor
John Gawlak, Director of Parks and Recreation
Mark Cunningham, Highway Superintendent

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

None

5. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES – June 3, 2026

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

MOVED to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 3, 2026 with the following
correction: Change the word **enquired** to **inquired** on page 1

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. Talbot was not in attendance.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

None

9. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- a. The Chairman congratulated the Park & Rec Department on their revenue increase for 2026 versus 2025. The report is part of the record.
- b. The Chairman acknowledged the Cheshire Girls Softball Team on winning the Class LL CIAC title. Janica Matos was nominated pitcher player of the year.
- c. The Chairman also congratulated Cheshire High School Girls Lacrosse for winning the SCC title and being a runner-up in Class L in the CIAC.

10. NEW BUSINESS**a. Bartlem Park, RWA Save the Sound Projects**

Karen Schnitzer, 18 Courier Place, Chair, Environment Commission, presented a plan for improvements at Bartlem Park. This plan would include members of Save the Sound, Regional Water, the Southwest District, the Conservation District as well as some town residents.

The funding is available thru the Mill River Watershed Association.

The plan has a three-prong project

- 1. Improve stormwater detention basin.
- 2. Creating a "soft" landing for caterpillars, butterflies and other insects around three native trees by planting native shrubs and perennials that will protect those creatures during the winter months and promote new life.
- 3. A Mill River survey for non-native invasive plants. Remove those and replace with native plants to restore natural habitat

The project would also include educational signage to explain the above.

Karen is asking for the Commission's support for this project.

11. OLD BUSINESS**a. 2025 Recreation Person of the Year**

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

MOVED to nominate Natale DiNatale and Sam Kaplowitz for Recreation Person of the Year and invite them to the September meeting to present them the award.

VOTED The motion passed unanimously by those present

b. E-Bike Concerns at Bartlem Park (Specifically Walking Trails) - Potential Ordinance Creation

Mr. Gawlak distributed a copy of the current Park & Rec town ordinances. These are attached for the record. Members discussed this issue

Mr. Gawlak reported many concerns with the E-bike riders causing damage and being unruly and causing safety issues. There have been several reports and complaints from the residents.

The Town Council would like to add an ordinance on this issue and is asking this Commission for suggestions.

Mr. Gawlak asked the members to review the ordinances and give feedback prior to the August 3 meeting of the Ordinance Review Committee.

c. Adaptive Field Project Cheshire Park 1

Mr. Gawlak reported having discussions with SLR International Design Firm for this project. They are trying to get a 200-foot field without adding more money to the project. There is currently a discussion to take the orientation and trying different views. The group is planning on attending the Planning & Zoning meeting on July 13 for site plan approval and on July 27 for the public hearing. If all approvals are secured, bids will go out in August or September and work will begin in October.

d. Yankee Highlands Project – Update

Mr. Gawlak reported that there have been 7 trail building days; a lot of participation from Cheshire residents including kids. Ms. Mayne and some members of the Environment Commission walked the area with NEMBA group. Things are progressing nicely.

e. Eagle Scout Projects

Jehan Mody and Colin Dyer are building the 18-hole course tee pads at the Honeypot Disc Golf Course.

f. Leashed Dogs in Parks – Ordinance Signage

Mr. Gawlak showed the members a mockup of the sign, made by Sign Pro, that will be installed at various areas.

The sign states: "Per Town Ordinance Section 11-14, dogs must be on a leash and restricted and all times".

12. DIRECTOR'S DEPARTMENT REPORT

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

The Chairman reported that the first concert on July 17, band Best of Times, will be dedicated to Special People. An area in the front of the stage will be sectioned off and the group all will be recognized.

The Chairman inquired about the status of advertising on fences at McNamara. Mr. Gawlak replied that the group was told they require Planning & Zoning approval.

The Chairman also asked about testing at Mixville Pond, after a rainstorm, and getting clearance to have our own Sanitation Department do the testing. Mr. Gawlak will talk to the Town Engineer who oversees the Town Treatment Plant to see if he is interested and then contact the Superintendent of the Health District.

Ms. Mayne reported that after discussion with the Health Department, it was determined, as done in the past, that testing will not be done after a rainstorm. Mr. Gawlak said this procedure is consistent with the all the state beaches.

The Chairman inquired about adding lighting at the volleyball courts. Mr. Gawlak replied the lighting will be done after the courts are moved.

13. CANCELLATION OF AUGUST MEETING

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

MOVED to cancel the August meeting

VOTED the motion passed unanimously by those present.

14. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

VOTED the motion passed unanimously by those present.

Respectfully submitted,



Angela Izzo