

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
EAST GRANBY, CONNECTICUT**

**MINUTES
May 4, 2023**

1. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the East Granby Parks & Recreation Commission was held Thursday, May 4, 2023, in the Town Hall Large Conference Room. Chairman Patrick Gill called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm. Members also present were Robert Ravens-Seger, Karen Hines, Christina Leadbeater, and Morgan Bengel. Program Director Alicia Van Neil was also present. Jim Gothers, Marc Dlugolenski, Nicole Sokolowski, and Carly McKenney were absent.

2. DISCUSSION WITH THE PUBLIC

Tom Pavelchak, Northwest Connecticut New England Mountain Biking Association representative, and Chris Cosma presented information for adding Adaptive Mountain Biking (aMTB) to Cowles Park. Tom and Chris would need approval from the Parks and Rec Commission to proceed. The benefits of adding aMTB are to make these trails more accessible, to support an underrepresented population, and East Granby would be the first to have this available in CT (the closest locations currently are in NJ and VT). Some possible concerns are opening the gate and trail areas risks giving ATVs access, and some adaptive bikes have electric components. Tom and Chris are brainstorming ways to deter ATV access. There are opportunities to receive money from grants to possibly cover costs. The bridges are already ADA compliant. Tom Pavelchak thanked the commission for the financial support for fixing the bridges.

Subsequent steps:

- Minor trail work that would have minimal, if any, environmental impact (\$0- volunteer work).
- Make the parking lot ADA compliant (possibly only needing to add handicap accessible spaces) (\$ TBD).
- Add signage to inform people which trails are aMTB accessible (less than \$1000).
- Change the portable toilet to one that is handicap accessible (\$ upcharge from regular one, but A Van Neil stated the company we use does not charge the Parks and Rec Commission more).
- Gate modification (\$ TBD but should be minimal if any).

3. APPROVE MINUTES

K Hines suggested a correction to the minutes from April 6, 2023, under **7.B. Student Representatives** to clarify the high school guidance counselors would not be choosing the student representatives. A motion was made by K Hines and

seconded by R Ravens-Seeger to approve the April 6, 2023, minutes with the proposed correction. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

P Gill read a letter of resignation from Jim Gothers.

5. PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director A Van Neil stated that all the spring programs are doing well. Some programs to highlight are preschool soccer, flag football (100+ participants), the dance program (125+ participants), Zumba is back, robotics afterschool program at Seymour and Allgrove, and the Stroller Strides Program. Registration for summer programs has been open. Hiring staff for the camps should be completed by the end of next week. There is a new Food Explorers program, and a new tennis person offering lessons this summer. Focus for the fall is going to be how to add more adult programming.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

N Sokolowski is absent. A Van Neil met with the new budget person yesterday and believes the commission is on track. She also mentioned that May is when the Parks and Rec Commission usually talks about any excess funds from the fiscal year and how to allocate it. It can be done at the June meeting.

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. Committee Reports

1. **Farmington Valley Heritage Trail** – R Ravens-Seeger stated that he walked the trail from the Suffield line halfway down to Rt. 20. The fences look good, and the surfaces need work. The bridge is the same- decking is abraded but structurally sound. R Ravens-Seeger emailed someone regarding the Emergency Management Plan (EMP) and is waiting to hear back from them. A discussion was held about how far apart trail markers should be, and the consensus is every ½ mile. A Van Neil stated that EG would be the first to have an EMP and other towns will hopefully follow suit. K Hines discussed how markers should be progressive for the entire length of the rails-to-trails and signs should include town abbreviations before the mile number (ex. EG 13.5).
2. **Cowles Park** – A Van Neil thanked Tom Pavelchak for collecting the wood from the deteriorated bridges and DPW for removing it. K Hines stated she and C McKenney will meet with Tom and DPW to form the EMP.

3. **Granbrook Park** – M Bengel thanked the DPW for moving the Granbrook Park sign from the bottom to the top of the road and removing some old metal features. A Van Neil mentioned Little League gave permission to remove the old sign, but since it was a donation from the Women’s Club, they suggested asking the Women’s Club if they want to save it. A Van Neil mentioned the water fountain was fixed, but it is anticipated that the whole underground piping for the water system may need to be worked on as early as the fall.
4. **East Granby Farms** – A Van Neil is waiting to hear from DPW about removing the playground structure.
5. **Sports Programs/Coaching/Training/Policies** – A Van Neil stated she went to an Emergency Management meeting with the superintendent and a couple other people. The Parks and Rec Commission may need to develop Emergency Protocols. There are new protocols the schools must follow, but A Van Neil is unsure how much applies to the Parks and Rec Commission.

6. **Program Committee** –

- a. **Barn Quilt Trail**- K Hines is waiting to hear from Polly Vouglas about the status of the quilt. A Van Neil shared an official approval from the EG Historical Society to mount the quilt on their barn at East Granby Farms. K Hines asked who would hang it, and A Van Neil said DPW could be asked.
- b. **Spring Concert**- To be held on 6/16. C Leadbeater mentioned she sent out the sign-up list for volunteers, and 9 out of 20 slots have been filled. C Leadbeater thanked the Allgrove/Seymour PTO for donating \$500 towards the concert.

- B. **Student Representatives** – C Leadbeater shared updated verbiage for the By-laws, and a discussion was held. It was mentioned that a sub-committee should be established to coordinate student representatives.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. **Adaptive Mountain Biking at Cowles Park** – R Ravens-Seger made a motion to approve the proposal for adding Adaptive Mountain Biking to Cowles Park. M Bengel seconded the motion. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.
- B. **Bench for Greenway** – A Van Neil discussed a request from the Historical Society to be allowed to put a bench on the greenway next to the approved canal marker they put up. They would like a plate identifying it as donated by

the Historical Society. M Bengel made a motion and R Ravens-Sege seconded it to approve the addition of the bench and plate. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

C. Logo - C Leadbeater shared the new Parks and Rec logo developed by Becky Hayes. It will be added to the back of the camp counselor's shirts.

D. List of events for 2023 – Tabled until next meeting.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by R Raven-Sege and seconded by K Hines to adjourn the meeting at 7:57pm. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Kovaleski
Commission Clerk