PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
EAST GRANBY, CONNECTICUT
MINUTES
August 7, 2025, 6:30pm

1. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the East Granby Parks & Recreation Commission was held Thursday, August 7, 2025, in the Town Hall Large Conference Room. Chairperson Morgan Bengel called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm. Members also present were Leona Bevins, Amanda Mele, Robert Ravens-Seger, Jim Lindberg. Nicole Sokolowski, Alicia Van Neil, Program Director, Ella DeSimone, Alexa Bednarz.
Absent Marc Dlugolenski, Jen Derleth, Carly McKenny.

Chairperson Bengel welcomed Alexa Bednarz, Youth Representative to the commission. Commission members went around and introduced themselves. Alexa shared her interests noting she is involved in Parks & Rec and enjoys playing sports. She is excited to be part of the new girl's golf team at the high school this year. M. Bengel also welcomed Donna Mattera as she will be clerking tonight's meeting.

2. DISCUSSION WITH THE PUBLIC

None.

3. APPROVE MINUTES

MOTION: Amanda Mele made a motion to approve the minutes for June 6, 2025. Robert Ravens-Seger seconded. All in favor. *Motion carried.*

4. CORRESPONDENCE

A Van Neil reported Carly McKenny is stepping down and the letter was sent to the Town Clerk's office. If any committee members are aware of anyone who wants to get involved and serve on the commission, let A Van Neil know. The vacancy will be placed on the social media page and if it is not filled it will be placed intalk Turkey.

5. PROGRAM REPORT

A Van Neil reported it is the last week of camp Granbrook and Mini Adventures ends next week. The camps this year were overflowing with participation which was great. Looking ahead to next year she shared some thoughts about offering pre-bookings with incentives. This will help with schedules and staffing. She wants to keep the payment plan as an option. The tennis and flag football went well. A Van Neil is working with Ken Beliveau looking at emergency management and safety centered around the programs. They are gearing up for the fall. E. DeSimone added Allgrove was busy and was good.

6. TREASURERS REPORT

Nicole Sokolowski distributed the new budget and said it was on track. There were some decreases noted. A. Van Neil reported they were looking to increase the salary of the part time positions. The goal is to get the positions back up to 25-33 hrs.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. **Cowles Park** – No update – J. Lindberg noted there were some overgrown areas that could use some attention.

a. **Emergency Management Markers**- L. Bevins will reach out to Carly about the markers as well as Ken Beliveau.

B. Farmington Valley Heritage Trail – R Ravens-Seger visited the Floydville section and reported it looks good. The hope is the paving that was done will be fine now that the nursery will no longer be there. He was very pleased at the work that was done.

a. **CT Rec Trails Grant Update**- A. Van Neil reported the DPW is a third of the way though with the areas needing touching up. The report with DEEP has been started. Becky Hayes is working on signage within the grant requirements. A. Van Neil asked if anyone is on the trails and sees tagging or graffiti to take a picture for her. She would like to replace the signs if possible.

C. **Granbrook Park** – M Bengel reported the trash cans are working well. She noted it would be great if there was a weekend pick up as sometimes the trash is piling up outside the receptacle. She is finding that in the opening and closing, it is not always closed. A. Van Neil shared concerns she had with our Resident State Trooper. There has been some graffiti and DPW is aware. There has also been a number of issues with bees as well as a massive ant farm and she has placed a work order.

a. **Insurance**- The insurance assessment of the playscape has been received. DPW is taking care of items they can address. There are short term fixes and long term goals. Alicia, Morgan and Jim are hoping to meet with Eden in the coming weeks. She noted we need to be creative with the playscape areas. A discussion took place amongst the committee members in regards to the mulch and other options. J. Lindberg suggested looking into the rubber mats for a short term solution as the mulch needs to be replaced each year.

b. Softball Field – A Van Neil reported the work is cruising and you should be able to see a lot of the changes. They took the tree down on the dugout. The work is being done with the Little League money and not the town's dollars. The scoreboard and dugouts are totally done. Ray Carlson suggested a light to be installed above the scoreboard for lighting as well as security. Alicia noted we have to make sure the money is allocated correctly and any decisions can be sustained financially.

D. **East Granby Farms –**The Selectman is looking to increase the rates for the use of East Granby Farms. The rates are currently $50.00 per hour for residents plus a security deposit. A. Van Neil also noted outside townspeople are allowed to use the facility. The dollars received will go into the rec enter rental account.

a. STEAP Grant updates- A. Van Neil reported Roger LaFleur has taken over Clerk of the Works. He will be working with DPW and the contractors. She also noted the contract was awarded to the Maisano Brothers. It will take 4-6 weeks to have the ground and prep work done. Hopefully the courts will be ready this fall. Alicia is working with Suffield on some programming. She will continue to update the committee.

E. EG Farms Playscape Update – A Van Neil reported it is so fun to see so much traffic with people coming to use the new playscape. The ribbon cutting

ceremony was well attended and went well. There was food, face painting, bubble maker, and fun desserts. She noted we need to look at the long term maintenance of the mulch which needs to be done yearly. They are working on the plaque and safety rules. The pieces of the playscape that were sponsored will have recognition of their donation.
Alicia Van Neil reported they are looking to purchase a duo rocker out of the rec center rental fund that needs to be voted on. The Rec Center fund has been used for equipment that is outside of the building when it directly benefits programming efforts. After a discussion, M. Bengel moved to a motion.
MOTION: A motion was made by M. Bengel and seconded by Robert Ravens-Seger to approve $3,206.00 from the Rec Center Rental fund to the fundraising account for the purchase of the duo rocker. All in favor. *Motion carried.*

F. Sports Programs/Coaching/Training/Policies – Leona will get together with Jen to discuss.

G. Programs

a. Summer Concert - August 22nd.
Amanda and Leona met. There is a plan in place for road closures and electricity. It was reported that some of the sidewalks will be done and the equipment will be off site. They are working on volunteers for set up and clean up. Volunteers are needed. There are eleven groups coming. If anyone has anytime to volunteer it would help. Volunteers are not being scheduled in blocks of time so whatever time you can give will be appreciated.

b. 250 Celebration
M. Bengel gave an update with many ideas for the event. It will take place a year from now. The committee is talking about a parade, floats, judging of floats and ending with a concert at East Granby Farms to name a few ideas. There are many logistics to be figured out. Parking does not look like it would be a concern at the farms.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Van Neil discussed a joint effort with Youth Services, Farmington Valley Health and the East Granby Public Library on Resilience Grows Here and bringing attention to mental health. The town library will have a section that will be dedicated to offering resource books from pre-school to high school seniors. Alicia is looking to see if anyone on our committee has connections to anyone who could donate their skill for mental health awareness. Ideas like holding a hike, having a yoga instructor hold sunset yoga at Newgate Prison were just a few thoughts. In addition, possibly tying into existing programs/events taking place in town. Alicia asked everyone to keep brainstorming wellness and let her know of any other ideas or people she could contact.

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION; A motion was made by R Ravens-Seger and seconded by L Bevins to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 pm. All in favor. *Motion carried.*

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Mattera
Acting Clerk