

Recreation & Parks

September 10, 2025, 6:00 PM

Community Center

Attendance: Rossana Ferrante, Karin Ernst, Chris Kennedy, Shelly Bedrossian. Larry Simpson arrived at 6:35.

Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- No minutes to approve.
- Discussion about the process of posting the minutes to the town website.

Brendan Callahan - Elm Street Park

- The former Gerry School site was divided to build condos in the building and preserve the parking area for a park. Friends of Elm Street Park raised money. The project is in multiple phases.
 - **Phase one:** site development (re-doing the parking lot, putting up a new fence, walking paths), funded through ARPA funds.
 - Additional out of scope services were asked for and paid for by Friends (water services, conduit for a future EV charging station).
 - Rafael Construction is currently doing all the site work.
 - ARPA funds and Friends funds were used to hire a landscape designer, Crowley Cottrell, for phase one and phase two.
 - During phase one, a previously unknown cistern from the 1800s was uncovered. It was decided to fill and cap the hole; the investigation was paid for by the Friends group and the work was paid for from town funds (66,000).
 - **Phase two:** design of the playground.
- The left side initially had a path leading to the stairs, but the slope was too steep. The cost of the stairs was going to be 30,000 with a plan to dead-end the path and come back when there is money to do the stairs. Uncovering the cistern led to a large amount of granite from the site that was then used for the stairs and stepping stones. Would some of the granite be able to be used for the Fountain Park stairs?
- Discussion about the left side. Brendan will confirm if there is public access. The stairs go to the condo; would the public want to use that access? Discussion of the playground cost; 10% of the cost needs to be saved for maintenance. ADA compliance will be beyond the minimum requirements.
- There is a funding shortfall between 20,000 and 29,000. Questions to answer: the question of public access, the exact number of the shortfall, and if granite can be used for the Fountain Park stairs, because that would free up some of that cost.
- Brendan will attend the next meeting on September 22nd at 4:30.

Bench Policy Discussion

- The working group met this week and is drafting version 2 of the policy. They looked at three other towns to see the language in their policies (Falmouth, Foxborough, and Mount Vernon, WA).
 - One issue that came up is that sections of properties may not continue to have the same number of benches as in the past for aesthetic reasons. The policy needs to reflect this.
 - We are currently in a moratorium on benches; there have been very few added over the past decade.
 - Discussion about Old Burial Hill: we cut the grass and do leaf cleanup, but otherwise it's the Cemetery Commission's purview, and placement of benches is up to them.

Project Updates

- Gatchell's: We have a fully executed contract for the light project. The contractor will have someone down by the end of the week to look at the progress. They will start on the football field side.
- Stramski's: We had to buy more sheet rock; it was ordered yesterday.
- Hamond Nature Center: The stairs' quotes are due back tomorrow at noon.
- Fountain Park: Bob Schaeffner (Planning Board) and Pam Peterson (Historical Commission) said the plan looks good. Becky wants to meet to see if there is anything else needed for the project. We just need to hear back from the ADA commission.
- Vine Street: the cleaning process should now be more streamlined because it goes through Allison.
- Reynolds: Interviews are on September 19th. There will be AV equipment so people can set up their presentations. Shelly is putting together a list of questions that commissioners can add questions to. Shelly met with a traffic expert who is donating his time to look at the area and give feedback and resources. Bill Peach is also putting together a list of questions for us. Karla has developed a page on the website about the project.
- Seaside: Kent Wheeler will be on the agenda for the next meeting to share information on Seaside.

Park Updates (Pete)

- Our new employee started working on Wednesday.
- The big mower has been returned and is working well.
- The crew has been lining fields for high school athletics and taking care of fields for men's softball.

Recreation Update (Jaime)

- Summer numbers breakdown, keeping in mind that this summer was short compared to previous summers:
 - Summer activities (everything but SUP and playground) for 2025: approximately 355,000; around 47,000 per week.
 - SUP in 2025: approximately 136,000.
 - Discussion about the process of merging and reconciling to compare the costs against how much was brought in.

- Discussion about timekeeping: tracking employees' hours vs. time worked. Jaime is investigating other options for timekeeping.
- Jaime met with procurement today to ensure we are securing independent contractors correctly. The goal is to go to RFPs for every independent contractor by October.
- Upcoming programs:
 - Pumpkin decorating will take place on October 22nd.
 - The haunted house will be held on October 25th, with a light scare from 6:30-7:30 and full scare from 7:30-9:00. The email seeking volunteers will go out later this week.
 - Scarecrows: We are trying a new way of making scarecrows. People can buy a cardboard cut-out and on October 3rd we will hold a decorating day to paint, glue, add glitter, etc.
 - Gingerbread house decorating and Friday Night Grinchmas are coming up.

Correspondence

- Jenn Schaeffner sent an email looking for a person from the board to join the Marblehead Cares Task Force meeting. Chris will attend.
- Joel Steiner requests the use of Devereux Beach on January 1st, 2026, from 11 to 2 for Changing Futures' polar plunge, in support of families affected by cystic fibrosis. 50 estimated attendees. Move to approve pending insurance and water safety, with fee waived. Seconded. All present in favor, the motion passes.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, September 22nd, at 4:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 7:02.

Minutes taken by Mary Herchenhahn