

Recreation & Parks

January 29, 2026, 5:30 PM

Community Center

Attendance: Karin Ernst, Larry Simpson, Shelly Bedrossian, Chris Kennedy. Rossana Ferrante is not in attendance.

Meeting called to order at 5:30 PM.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve the January 6th and January 12th meeting minutes. Seconded. All present in favor, the motion passes.

Public Comment

- No comments.

Support for the Town's Parks

- Kathy Bradford (landscape architect), Charlene Tyler (takes care of the gardens at Devereux Beach), and Brigitte Laggoutte have formed a group out of a shared desire to enhance the ecological environment in the parks and increase aesthetic appeal through plant biodiversity. The focus is on parks, rather than woods or conservancy projects.
- The parks all have large trees and a lot of grass. The group is directing its focus toward the missing layers in the ecosystem; the shrubs, perennial grasses, and groundcovers.
 - The group could create vibrant plant communities around existing trees, which would reduce the grass and thereby reduce maintenance. This would also visually enhance the parks.
 - The planting of native shrubs would reduce the need to treat and mow lawn areas.
 - Diverse and native plant selections would require minimal pruning and maintenance, other than mowing perennial grasses in the spring.
 - Fundraiser ideas: offer tours of private gardens in the spring or summer; a plant sale of native plants.
 - The group is still in the early stages of planning and wanted to keep Recreation & Parks in the loop.
- Discussion: how to prevent overgrowth; matching the right plant to the right place will help keep growth under control. Discussion about the procurement process around accepting donations. The group plans to move forward with forming a 501(c)(3).
- Next steps: pick one space to start with, put a high-level design together, develop a plan around what it would take, then come back before the board. By that time a new parks director will be in place and we can move forward. Jaime suggested a site walkthrough now.

Department Projects Update

- Stramski: Rossana and Jaime met with Jon Fobert about the ramp access at Stramski to provide accessibility to the building.
- Riverhead Beach: the lease is with legal and it will be given to SUP East Coast Style to sign.

Memorial Bench Policy

- Discussion: how to keep the replacement process as streamlined as possible. Jaime will get a price sheet. The board reserves the right to not replace a bench once its memorial period is over, which may help with the excess benches. Discussion: What is the lifespan of a memorial? We are currently looking at 20 years. Wording on the eligibility requirements - should it be explicitly stated that they are to memorialize a person who has passed?

Recreation & Park Updates (Jaime)

- The grounds crew has been part of the snow removal and plowing process since Sunday.
- First thing on Tuesday morning, all sidewalks were plowed and de-iced so accessibility and parking was safe at the Community Center.
- When our lots on other properties are plowed (not including Stramski's because it will cause divots), we will allow people to park there if needed.
- We are opening Monday, February 2nd at 11 AM for summer programming.

Correspondence

- Maria Battista requests a wedding ceremony for 20 people on July 11th from 4-7 at Chandler Hovey.
 - Move to approve pending insurance. Seconded. All in favor, the motion passes.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 3rd at 5:30.

Meeting adjourned at 6:23 PM.

Minutes taken by Mary Herchenhahn