

Recreation & Parks

June 2, 2026, 4:45 PM

Community Center

Attendance: Rossana Ferrante, Karin Ernst, Larry Simpson, Shelly Bedrossian, Chris Kennedy.

Meeting called to order at 4:53 PM.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- The previous meeting minutes will be up for approval at the next meeting.

Public Comment

- No public comment.

Department Projects Update: Reynolds

- We are at 30% of the design phase.
- The space is being designed to be as versatile as possible; soccer and the hockey area are smaller in order to accommodate versatile use of the space.
- Softball field:
 - We asked CHA to revisit the softball field to expand the outfield and draw clean breaks between phase I and II. In previous estimates, they allotted 30K to ensure the softball field was playable. The lighting changes can be made in phase I, as this isn't a major budget hurdle because of MMLD. The initial results: parking decreases from 41 to 11, and significant outfield space is not gained. The infield cannot be moved to a different corner due to sunrises/sets and left or right fields would be too short for any regulation field.
 - The loss of parking was not acceptable; CHA went back to look into it. They came back with the strong recommendation of putting the softball field in its permanent place during phase I.
 - Shelly researched the regulations for men's modified fast pitch and women's slow pitch and created a chart of league type rules delineating field sizes; sent to Peter Jaffe and Mike McCarthy to see if they agreed with those parameters; they responded that they require a 300' outfield.
 - Home plate would be moved up 83 feet, which results in 260' on the right and left field and 300' in center field. The original drawings assumed that a fence would be present even though there is no fence there; without the fence, the size is within parameters.
 - Discussion of lighting: the primary concern was right field lighting.
 - Impacts: Budget impact is about 50-75K more in phase I, but yields savings in parking and finishing work. This is a better long-term value. We can purchase new backstops for phase I and leave them in their permanent place, which is safer and less expensive in the long term.
- Hockey:

- Discussion: will there be locker rooms? The choice came down to either having a roof or having locker rooms; we will have a roof, and have players arrive to practice dressed and wearing skate guards, then remove skate guards to get on the ice. The site of the temporary bathroom is a possible future changing area.
- Civic engagement: there have been letters to abutters, newsletters sent out nine times, eleven newspaper articles, and two television shows to educate the community on how to be engaged with the project.
 - For continued communication, everything will be on the town calendar. The departmental newsletter will be the primary way to receive updates.
 - Shelly asked Chris to share documents with men's softball to get their feedback.
- Approval and future steps: We would still need a formal check-in at 50% and 75%. Rec & Park has a final vote on the project. ConCom, Select Board, Planning Board if needed, the Disability Commission, the construction permitting process and RFP process. Jim Zisson is our liaison with the Select Board; Shelly will check in with him.
- Shelly clarified with Larry: placing new soil on top of the existing soil with clay content would make drainage worse.

Seasonal Properties Update

- Beach: power is back up and the bathrooms are open. The houses and jersey barriers are out for the season. The cashless system is proving easier; hours do not need to account for cashing out. The kayaks will be available once school lets out. We will have four people working. Kyle used the tractor to back-drag everything away from SUP's fence line last Friday.
- Stramski: Heat and AC will be done this week. Roy will come back to complete the sailing room and re-do the walls.
- Fort Sewall: it is not under our jurisdiction, but we maintain it. Jaime sits on the oversight committee and facilitated a meeting that included Larry. A plant by the retaining wall (Gro-low sumac) got a fungus and they all died. The committee was interested in ideas for something else to replace them; something attractive, sustainable, and inexpensive. Larry gave them some ideas and will give them a plan. They discussed raising the wall at the far end to make it a seating wall.
- Burial Hill: Discussion around fall mowing at the cemetery; Brad has been corresponding with Tom. Tom asked if we could block off areas with stakes and ropes to know not to put a mower in specific areas. Brad asked John to avoid tight areas with the mowers. We will also use the smallest rotary. Chris will reach out to arrange a site visit.

Recreation & Parks Department Update

- Gatchell's: Timers are up - three different timers for different fields (one for the Majors field, one for the second field, one for the football field). We are working up on getting access to basic users so they can shut the lights off if they leave early (otherwise, they will shut off automatically via the timer). Once co-ed softball starts (late June or early July), the lights will stay on until 10:15. The electrician is coming on Monday to look at the lights and do some rewiring for the dugouts.
 - Neighbor concerns about the Gatchell's lights and sound: they have been updated where we are at with adjustments and visors. Any further discussion will need to come before the Commission so decisions can be made in a public meeting.

- Town website: Jaime put in a request to have all the past minutes brought over to the new website, and to have the documents work properly.
- We are looking into auto-locks for the bathrooms.
- MVMS Pickleball Courts:
 - James will lock the courts on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday over the summer. We are looking for volunteers for the weekends to lock the courts.
 - Karin met with the neighbors at Vets and shared the proposal for 9 AM openings on Saturdays. They are willing to accept the 9 AM opening on Saturday and agreed to it throughout July and August.
- Discussion about beginning to think for September about the possibilities of offering leases on park property.
- Beauport is offering a free CPR course. Jaime has connected with their education contact. Karin went to the AED meeting at Seaside with the fire chief.

Correspondence

- A teacher in the Marblehead public schools is looking to have the teachers who do not live in town be eligible for a beach-only sticker. The Board of Health declined to separate the transfer station and beach sticker, but Jaime wanted to bring it before the Commission to see if it was something we could explore in the future. We do not have a mechanism to do it at this time but are open to exploring the idea.
- Doreen Marquis requests the use of Chandler Hovey on Sunday, July 12th for an outdoor church service from 9:30 to 11:30, with approximately 20 attendees. Motion to approve. Seconded. Four in favor, one abstained; the motion passes.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, June 16th at 9 AM for the swearing-in of new commissioner(s). We will then meet on Tuesday, June 23rd at 5:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 6:04 PM.

Minutes taken by Mary Herchenhahn