

Recreation & Parks

June 22, 2026, 5:30 PM

Community Center

Attendance: Karin Ernst, Larry Simpson, Shelly Bedrossian, Chris Kennedy. Mike McCarthy was not in attendance.

Meeting called to order at 5:30 PM.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes from May 22nd and June 6th (Coffin site visit and Community Center). Seconded. All in favor, the motion passes.

Public Comment

- No public comment.

Dog Park Discussion

- The commission agreed last year to submit a request to the Select Board to temporarily create a dog park at Coffin.
- The current dog park opened in 2009 on 80 Hoods Lane with various access points, including Tioga Way. As of today, there is no access from Tioga Way. Currently, the only access point is a path through Reynolds field and up an incline, with no way to bring trucks up to make repairs.
- UConn survey results regarding the use of the site showed that 25 of 104 respondents mentioned the dog park or off-leash dog park specifically, and 29 specifically said open space. Housing was the most mentioned need. Karin recommends keeping half the property as Town land under the stewardship of Recreation and Parks and sending the rest of the property out to bid. The area with the ledge would be for the dog park,
- Karin would like to present this option to the Select Board. We would continue to care for the space as we do now. We would need fencing around at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the dog park, including a middle fence for separation.
- Discussion: Stone dust and grass at Coffin makes it difficult to see dog waste. In the winter we would need to ensure it is plowed and accessible. We would need a dog waste station; Karin suggests working with the Friends of the Marblehead Dog Park group.
- Stephen Cooper, president of the Friends of the Marblehead Dog Park, spoke in support for an accessible dog park, and offered to write a letter in support of the dog park. He let the board know that the Friends pays for trash removal. He emphasized the importance of secure fencing to keep the dogs safe, ideally 6 feet.
- The board agrees to have Karin move forward with presenting the idea to the Select Board.

Reynolds Fundraising Discussion

- Shelly: As of July we should be at 60% design. CHA wanted to begin breaking off the phases and taking Phase II for ConCom approval. Shelly asked for a pause on that because the

commission needed to make decisions before moving forward due to budget changes and some movement of items back and forth between Phase I and Phase II.

- In preparation for fundraising and a strategy to fulfill Phase II, Karin, Shelly, and Jaime met with Thatcher and Allison about legal fundraising options:
 - **501(c)(3)**: It would be administered by a group independent of us. Money would be put into that account, and as the town needed it, it would be released for specific things.
 - **53A account**: This is a donation account that can only be spent specifically on the project.
- Shelly brought fundraising examples, such as a Founder's Way brick sponsorship. These would need to follow procurement and prevailing wage guidelines, permitting and licensing and insurance standards.
- We want to get in front of the Public Works meeting and go through where we are.
- Karin suggested going before the Select Board before moving forward with fundraising.

Park Beautification Update

- The native plants sale was held at the Community Center last Saturday from 9-12. Approximately half the plants were sold, about 7000 dollars' worth. People have expressed interest in buying the remaining plants. The group also recently received a gift of 10,000.
- Larry shared a drawing of an idea for plantings at Glabicky Green that would act as a noise buffer and provide a habitat for pollinators. There would be a mix of low walls of shrubs and openings to the field. Discussion about placement of the planting areas. The hope is to do planting this fall.

Ongoing Projects Discussion

- Jaime received a letter from Brendan about the recognition of donors and the process of naming rights for the playground area of the new park on Elm Street.
- Stramski's: the Essex Tech students are done for the year. HVAC is all set. The ceiling tiles and bathroom fittings are set. The basement area is ready for programs. The students will come back in the fall for more electrical work. Peter Rice staked out the pathway for the ramp and asked for receipts for the blocking for the retaining wall and will put together a bid.
 - Shelly and Karin went to Stramski's. Karin is interested in exploring the possibility of installing an outdoor lift rather than a ramp.
- Gatchell's lighting: Last week the control box was tampered with and the lights were turned on later than authorized. Brad tightened up the security and changed the code. The park closes at 10; the lights are set to turn off by 10:15 to allow for safe passage off the field.
- Devereux Beach: opened up full time last Friday. We had an orientation meeting on the 14th.
- Hobbs: The fencing project started today. They finished the Clifton Ave side. They will be back to continue on from the backstop.
- Public bathrooms are all open.
- Brad reached out to Patriot Lighting about magnetic locks for the timers.
- Vine Street: we are still filling the dumpster.
- We are turning on all irrigation systems except Village; waiting to hear about a fix from Kyle.
- Waterfront areas are getting ready for 4th of July. Permanent barrels are being covered in preparation for the festival, but there will be cardboard barrels placed next to them.

Recreation & Parks Department Update

- Summer programs have already begun. SUP is running, as well as one-day programs at the end of this week.
- The official kick-off happens on Monday. Training started last week and continues through this week.
- The Harbormaster and his crew were able to help with repairs to the float.
- Due to the high school's work on the roof, all indoor programming that uses classrooms will be at Village. Anything that needs a gymnasium will be at Vets.
- Jaime sent out the pickleball volunteer email today for opening and closing the courts on weekends at Vets and is waiting for responses.
- We will be discussing increasing the float storage agreement prices within the next meeting or two. It should go out in the letter for next year to allow people time to budget for it.

Correspondence

- There was no correspondence.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, July 7th at 5:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM.

Minutes taken by Mary Herchenhahn