



WESTFORD PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Public Meeting Minutes

Jan 5, 2026, at 6:30 PM

65 Main St 3rd Floor

In Attendance: Commission Chair Chris Barrett, Commission Vice Chair Mike Furman,
Dan Breault, Matt Brown

Not in Attendance: Devin Caglayan, Brock Moses, Alesia Raczelowski

A. 6:30 PM Open Forum – Citizen Participation

This portion of the meeting is for citizens to communicate ideas or concerns to the commission regarding parks and recreation issues WHICH ARE NOT RELATED TO SPECIFIC ACTION ITEMS on the agenda. Speakers are limited to 10 minutes. Individuals desiring more time should contact the Commission Chair two weeks prior to the next scheduled meeting to request to be placed on the agenda. The public is encouraged to comment on the need for parks and recreation programs and facilities, as they perceive them.

B. 6:35 PM Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

Commissioner Dan Breault provided an overview of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Visioning Session held on December 15 at the Westford Fire Station. The event was hosted by the OSRP Committee, with support from NMCOG (Northern Middlesex Council of Governments). Stations were set up by groups, such as the Town of Westford Conservation Commission, and Westford Conservation Trust, to collect community suggestions on how Westford might invest in its recreation, parks, and open space resources. Individuals visited various stations placing stickie notes with their thoughts on the respective idea boards. This well-attended event was composed of a high percentage of young people in their teens. Diverse recommendations were offered with topics that ranged from the construction of a recreation center and pool, field maintenance, field lighting enhancement, and dark sky bylaws. Long term, this plan – which is on a ten-year timeline – could include the creation of grants and community contributions to achieve its goals. The Commission discussed implementing a new OSRP survey with a diverse sample of participants. It was noted that the February deadline for the OSRP draft might be challenging to make.

C. 6:40 PM Field Permitting Update

Commission Chair Barrett stated the need for additional documentation as part of the field use permitting process for TOW Parks and Recreation facilities. Considerations included the need for due diligence, best practices, compliance, financial responsibility, safety, and overall fairness from the perspective of both the private sports groups and the Town. The documentation could include organizational information, roster lists, game and tournament schedules, and CORI forms, for example. Commissioners noted the importance of receiving the documents in a timely manner, while making sure that the submittal deadline was reasonable and doable. For example, CORI checks would require a certain amount of time for confirmation. A two-week window was suggested as ample time for completion of documentation. Commission Chair Barrett noted that comprehensive auditing was not realistic due to limited resources and that the process would need to include some level of trust. It was agreed that full documentation would be required of organizations with permitting fees at or above \$5000, while smaller organizations would

receive a truncated version of the documentation. Commission Chair Barrett shared that, like any Town vendor, the Town would need to replace a youth sports organization if it was no longer viable. Hence the importance of Town oversight, identifying warning signs that might impact the organization's status. Further discussed was how and who would monitor the overall process. Commission Chair Barrett would refine the documentation check list for the Commission to review and vote on during February's meeting. Also mentioned was the addition of a February agenda item to review seasonal permits, as well as the review of the list and process by Town Manager Kristen Las, and possibly Town Council. Once the process was implemented, Commission members would review permit requests and documentation to determine approval status.

D. 6:50 PM Parks and Rec Commission Calendar

Commission Chair Barrett produced an annual Parks and Recreation Commission Calendar draft for discussion. The draft recommended key monthly agenda items to help guide future Chairs, Commissioners, and staff when building each month's agenda schedule. The Commission and Director Michelle Collett discussed topics that required attention over the course of each year, while identifying designated agenda months. Topics included Beach and Summer Weekly Program fees; After School Program fees; Field Permit Process and Fees; and other annual milestones such as a meeting with the Town Crew, and Youth Sports Groups. Commissioner Chair Barrett planned to deliver an updated draft for review during February's meeting. Commissioner Matt Brown wondered if there was a policies and procedures repository for documents like the agenda calendar; the Commission will reach out to IT Director Nathan Guillmette for information on that.

E. 7:00 PM Parks & Grounds Reports and Updates, DPW Director

Director Kyle Fox could not attend the evening's meeting. Assistant Director Lori Halverson updated the Commission regarding DPW status, opening with a reminder that DPW would be presenting at the FY27 budget hearing on January 8. Project discussions included:

- Capital Planning: For capital planning purposes, the department has started its asset inventory review.
- Nutting Community Fields: a meeting was held with the contractor on December 18 regarding artificial turf replacement. Expectation for the completion date is April 30; Nutting user groups may need field alternatives while installation is underway. For contingency planning, the Town Staff met with Director of Facilities, Jeff Goodwin, and WA Athletic Director, Jeff Bunyon, to discuss field options. Commission Chair Barrett would gather assessments from affected sports groups, as well as seek additional information from Recreation department's Joy Felicani, who issues the field user permits. Discussions with the Commission and Lori Halverson encompassed the challenges of field usage during early spring and the unpredictability of weather; the damage associated with athletic play on fields not yet dry or prepared; and the importance of options for youth sports groups who are seeking alternative fields, whether outside, or at an indoor sports complex, like Millworks. Commission Chair Barrett would facilitate future discussions regarding this topic for planning purposes.
- VFW/Forge Softball Field Lighting: Footing construction was underway and the installation would be complete before spring season begins.
- DPW crews were busy with winter maintenance for both roads and Parks equipment.

F. 7:10 PM Recreation Programming Reports and Updates, Rec Director

Director Michelle Collett updated the Commission, opening with her readiness for the upcoming FY27 budget hearing on January 8. She noted that the department received several questions from the Finance Committee, which she was prepared to address. Commission Chair Barrett and Director Collett discussed the importance of tracking the department's retained earnings to catch potential red flags or indicators regarding the health and resilience of the fund. Director Collett said she would bring the last five years of the retained earnings to the next meeting for review. 49% of the department revenue has been collected for FY26, with a gain of 10k dollars, in comparison to this time, last year.

- G. 7:20 PM Approval of Dec 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Mike Furman motioned to approve the December minutes. Commissioner Dan Breault seconded the motion. Matt Brown abstained. Motion passed, 3-0-1.
- H. 7:25 PM Old/New Business
Commissioner Matt Brown expressed concerns about dam removal at Stony Brook in Westford, and how the action could impact the future health of Forge Pond and Mill Pond. He suggested that more coordination with the Town of Littleton and the Westford Conservation Commission might be helpful. Commissioner Barrett agreed to keep it on the radar with plans of following up with Assistant Town Manager of Land Use and Economic Development, Jeff Morrisette, and Chair of the Westford Conservation Commission, Margaret Wheeler.
- I. 7:30 PM
8:28 Adjourned. Next meeting will be on February 2. Commissioner Mike Furman motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0-0.

*Agenda item times are approximate and subject to change.