



# MINUTES

## WATERTOWN PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

DATE: February 5, 2026

TIME: 7:00 PM

LOCATION: Town Hall – Parks and Recreation Conference Room  
61 Echo Lake Road, Watertown, CT 06795

**I. Call Meeting to Order:**

Chairman Bill Donston called the regular meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**II. Roll Call:**

Members Present: Bill Donston, Tadd Johnson (not voting tonight), Alan Mickel, Joseph McGrail, Margaret Germain, and Pat Rinaldi

Absent: Karim Belica  
Herm Desena, Town Council Liaison

Others Present: Michael Ganem, Director of Parks & Recreation, Michael T. Doherty, SLR, Landscape Architect

**III. Election of Officers for 2026:**

*Michael Ganem called for nominations for the position of Chair  
A nomination was made by Joe McGrail and seconded by Peg Germain to nominate Bill Donston.*

*Michael called for any other nominations.  
Michael called for any other nominations.  
Michael called for any other nominations.*

With no other nominations, Bill Donston is voted Chair

*Chair Bill Donston called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair  
A nomination was made by Joe McGrail and seconded by Al Mickel to nominate Pat Rinaldi*

*Bill called for any other nominations.  
Bill called for any other nominations.  
Bill called for any other nominations.*

With no other nominations, Pat Rinaldi is voted Vice Chair

*Chair Bill Donston called for nominations for the position of Secretary  
A nomination was made by Joe McGrail and seconded by Peg Germain to nominate*

*Bill called for any other nominations.  
Bill called for any other nominations.  
Bill called for any other nominations.*

With no other nominations, Al Mickel is voted Secretary

**IV. Public Participation:**

Michael T. Doherty, Manager with SLR Consulting, Landscape Architect. SLR was formerly Milone and McBroom, based in Cheshire, CT. Michael provided the commission with an overview of the procedures to be used to determine the highest and best uses for our spaces, given the need to repair, replace, and relocate park features. Key points are accessibility. Several aerial maps of the parks were spread on the table for review and discussion. The commissioners, the Director, and Michael Doherty shared ideas, history of previous projects, additional tennis courts, additional and dedicated pickleball courts, state of our playgrounds, parking, public safety, wetlands, and the pro and cons of each. How will we measure the pros and cons of each feature and its future impact on a larger Town Plan of Development?

**V. Approval of Minutes:**

A. December 4, 2025, Regular Meeting

*Motion: Pat Rinaldi seconded by Alan Mickel to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 4, 2025.*

*YES: Joe, Pat, Bill. ABSTAIN: Peg, Al  
Motion Passes 3-2*

*Motion by Bill Donston to add under new business #C to discuss the letter received from Steve Martino regarding a rent adjustment at Sunset Grille.*

**VI. Correspondence:**

- Letter from Chris Martin  
It was the consensus of the commission that funds spent from Special Accounts should receive prior approval from the commission
- Monthly report from Carrie Godfrey

**VII. Reports:**

- A. Chairman – Naugatuck River Greenway letter of endorsement. This will go alongside the tracks up to the bridge. A letter from the Watertown Foundation thanking staff for their assistance with the statue display. The Watertown Foundation is extremely generous to the community. A letter from the Kaufman Estate was reviewed. There is a \$2500 donation to the department pending approval.

Ray Zwick, an educator in Watertown, recently passed away. Mr. Zwick was very committed and generous to the Watertown Community. He was a great person and will be deeply missed. The Chair and Commission expressed their condolences to the Director for the recent passing of his mother, Mary (Dolly) Ganem

- B. Director – The budget remains a focus. I have had several meetings with division managers, the Town Manager, and the Finance Director. We are working with a great group of enthusiastic citizens to plan events for July 4, 2026, when we will celebrate with the country its 250<sup>th</sup> birthday!
- C. Sub-Committees – Golf Request for the Sunset Grille Car Show will be discussed under new business.

**VIII. Old Business:**

- A. Reviewing Spring Permit applications and Auditing league applications
- B. Field Permit meeting was well attended by our partners

**IX. New Business –**

- A. Review and Consideration of Submitted Applications for 2026
- a. Saturday, August 29, 2026, 1 PM (McFadden)

*A motion was made by Joe McGrail and seconded by Peg Germain to approve the application for Saturday, August 29, 2026, 1PM (McFadden).*

*Motion passed unanimously.*

- b. Monday, June 8, 2026, 9:30 AM (Knights of Columbus)

*A motion was made by Pat Rinaldi and seconded by Peg Germain to approve the application for Monday, June 8, 2026, 9:30 AM (Knights of Columbus)*

*Motion passed unanimously.*

c. Monday, May 18, 2026, 12 PM (Madden)

*A motion was made by Pat Rinaldi and seconded by Peg Germain to approve the application for Monday, May 18, 2026, 12 PM (Madden)*

*Motion passed unanimously.*

d. Friday, June 5, 2026, 12 PM (Holy Disciples)

*A motion was made by Pat Rinaldi and seconded by Peg Germain to approve the application for Friday, June 5, 2026, 12 PM (Holy Disciples)*

*Motion passed unanimously.*

B. Review Field Maintenance. Budget-related

C. Discuss the letter received from Steve Martino regarding a rent adjustment at Sunset Grille.

*A motion was made by Joe McGrail and seconded by Peg Germain to forward this letter to the Town Attorney.*

*Motion passed unanimously.*

**IX. Adjournment -**

*Motion: Alan Mickel seconded by Peg Germain to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm*

*Motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
William Donston, Chairman  
Watertown Parks and Recreation Commission

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Susan King, Clerk

