



# MINUTES

## WATERTOWN PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

DATE: April 2, 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 7:07 p.m.

### II. Roll Call:

Members Present: Bill Donston, Pat Rinaldi, Tadd Johnson, Margaret Germain, Alan Mickel, Joseph McGrail

Absent: Karim Belica  
Herm Desena, Town Council Liaison

Others Present: Michael Ganem, Director of Parks & Recreation

*Bill Donston moved New Business #D up on the agenda.*

### New Business #D:

Bryce Miller presented his 2026 Eagle Scout Project to the commission. A copy of his presentation on installing a gaga pit is attached to the record. Several locations were presented for consideration. Questions and answers followed. Bryce also took the time to explain some of the rules of the game. Bill Donston explained the process by which donations, including Eagle Scout projects, have been considered by the Town. Both the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Town Council will need to approve a formal request.

The consensus of the commission was that this is best considered for Veterans Park

**III. Public Participation:**

**IV. Approval of Minutes:**

A. March 5, 2026, Regular Meeting

*Motion: Alan Mickel seconded by Tadd Johnson, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 5, 2026. Aye: 4 Donston, Johnson, Mickel, McGrail Nay:0 Abstain 2 Rinaldi and Germain Motion passed*

**V. Correspondence:**

- a. Concepts for new Pickleball and Tennis Courts at Crestbrook Park
  - i. The commission discussed the costs of expansion and the current financial challenges. Perhaps the Staver Fund can be leveraged to fund the need to replace the courts. The director will gather updated quotes to replace the 4 courts using the same footprint
- b. Letter from the USDA requesting to place exotic pest detection monitor stations at Veterans Memorial Park
  - i. The commission approved this request
- c. Letters in support of new pickleball and tennis courts
- d. Letter from Lena Colon suggesting a Community Garden
- e. Copy of Staver Fund check received
- f. Monthly report from the department

**VI. Reports:**

- A. Chairman – presented the report from Carrie Godfrey, Recreation Supervisor.
  - a. Crestbrook Park Golf Course is opening for the season on April 3, 2026
  - b. There will be an approved food truck at the WHS graduation party on June 20, 2026
  - c. A movie scene or two was filmed at Echo Lake Park on March 28, 2026. The appropriate permits were granted by the PD and Parks and Recreation
  - d. There is an excessive amount of trash noticeable in the area of Dollar General
  - e. The Town is discussing the need for a new PD and Community center
- B. Director – Provided a brief update about parks, facilities, events, and programs. He further briefed the commission about the project the Exchange Club is doing. The Exchange Club will display American Flags at the Town Hall before and after Flag Day. This is a nice addition to our 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration Plans
- C. Sub-Committees – Golf. The Sub-Committee would like the player's surcharge not to be used for normal expenses. The floor in the pro-shop will be lifted to reduce the slope at the front doors. New carpeting will be installed on the first floor

**VII. Old Business:**

- A. Policies and Procedures – No update

**VIII. New Business:**

- A. Review and Consideration of Submitted Applications for 2026 - Northfield Fire Dept. 8/21/26, 100 golfers

*Pat Rinaldi made a motion to approve the application from the Northfield Fire Department as recommended by the golf subcommittee.*

- B. The Staver account balance was reviewed and accepted
- C. Eagle Scout Project – Bryce Miller
- D. 2026 Fall Festival. The commission received a request from the Fall Festival to obtain approval for a “tasting tent” at this year’s event. A letter from the Fall Festival Committee was read for the record.

E.

*Motion: Pat Rinaldi seconded by Alan Mickle, to approve the request from the Fall Festival Committee to have a tasting tent this year.*

Discussion: This would also be subject to the Town Manager’s approval. Appropriate signage is required, including citing the infraction if a patron leaves the restricted area with open containers. There was a concern shared that this would set a precedent and send a mixed message, as alcohol is not allowed in the park. The plan was well-received, and the tasting tent is a great idea. This will make a nice addition to the Fall Festival.

*The motion passed. 4 yes. 1 abstention, Joe McGrail*

**IX. Adjournment -**

*Motion: Alan Mickel seconded by Bill Donston to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 pm*

*Motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

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

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Susan King, Clerk

**Crestbrook Park- Concept 1**  
**Watertown, Connecticut**  
**Prepared For: Town of Watertown**  
**SLR # 11452.00033**

**March 15, 2026**

<b>ORDER OF MAGNITUDE OPINION OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COSTS</b>		
	<b>DESIGN ELEMENT</b>	<b>COST</b>
	<b>SITE PREPARATION</b>	<b>\$ 198,000</b>
1	Gen. Conditions, S&E, mobilization, staking, temp construction fencing, clearing & grubbing)	\$ 186,000
2	Remove Existing Fence & Gates	\$ 7,000
3	Remove Existing Gazebo	\$ 2,500
4	Remove Existing Playground	\$ 2,500
	<b>ATHLETIC COURTS</b>	<b>\$ 1,355,000</b>
5	Tennis Court- Full Size Post Tensioned Concrete	\$ 1,140,000
6	Pickleball Court- Full Size Post Tensioned Concrete	\$ 200,000
7	Nets and Posts	\$ 15,000
	<b>SITE FENCING</b>	<b>\$ 209,000</b>
8	10' HT. Chain Link Fence	\$ 160,000
9	7' HT. Double Swing Gate	\$ 6,000
10	7' HT. Single Swing Gate (4' wide)	\$ 8,000
11	Concrete Curbing	\$ 35,000
	<b>PAVEMENTS</b>	<b>\$ 158,000</b>
12	Concrete Walk	\$ 94,000
13	Bituminous Concrete-Full Depth	\$ 6,000
14	Bituminous Concrete Curb	\$ 3,000
16	Concrete Stairs with Handrails	\$ 30,000
17	Concrete Accessible Ramp with Handrails- 30' Run	\$ 25,000
	<b>SITE IMPROVEMENTS</b>	<b>\$ 116,000</b>
18	Bench	\$ 4,000
19	3 Row Aluminum Bleachers	\$ 11,000
20	Stainless Steel Bollards	\$ 8,000
21	20'x10' Shade Structure	\$ 30,000
22	Concrete Retaining Wall	\$ 15,000
23	Lawn Restoration	\$ 48,000
<b>ST</b>	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,036,000</b>
CONT	Contingency on Subtotal	\$ 409,000
<b>T</b>	<b>Total Cost (Subtotal, CONT, To the nearest 1,000)</b>	<b>\$ 2,451,000</b>

**General Notes:**

1. Costs above are based upon best available information from recent projects, and should be considered for planning purposes only.
2. Quantities and items are based on a conceptual plan.
3. Soft costs are not included.





Dear Members of the Parks and Recreation Commission,

The Fall Festival Committee is seeking approval to expand the 2026 Watertown Fall Festival by introducing a Tasting Tent as a new feature for this year's event.

The festival will take place at Veterans Memorial Park (570 Nova Scotia Hill Rd., Watertown, CT) from 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM, with the Tasting Tent operating from 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM.

The purpose of the tasting tent is to highlight local breweries, distilleries, and wineries, while also serving as a fundraising initiative to support additional entertainment and future enhancements to the Fall Festival. Vendors will be permitted to sell unopened packaged products on site; however, any purchased items may not be consumed within the festival grounds, and this will be clearly communicated to attendees.

The tasting tent will be located on the basketball court next to the pavilion, which will be fully fenced to maintain a controlled environment. All patrons entering the tent will have their identification scanned to verify they are 21 years of age or older, and will receive a wristband indicating eligibility for alcohol service. This system will allow vendors to easily and efficiently identify eligible participants. Guests will also be provided with festival-branded tasting cups for use within the tent.

To maintain organization and tracking, patrons will purchase drink tickets upon entry into the tent, with pricing clearly posted at the entrance. These tickets will then be redeemed at vendor stations, with each vendor assigned a unique color-coded ticket for tracking and reconciliation purposes.

The Fall Festival Committee has taken several steps in planning this addition, including:

- Reaching out to surrounding towns to review best practices and operational setups for similar tasting tents
- Meeting with the Watertown Fire Chief and Police Department to discuss required procedures, including state liquor permitting, staffing needs for police presence, and EMS coverage
- Consulting with the Fire Marshal regarding safety guidelines and operational requirements
- Contacting the Town Manager's Office to review options for one-day event insurance and the addition of liquor liability coverage

At this time, we are still awaiting responses and guidance from the appropriate departments and agencies. In order to move forward with the State Festival Permit application, we are seeking preliminary approval for a tasting tent at Veterans' Memorial Park on September 26, 2026 from the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The Fall Festival Committee has already begun receiving vendor inquiries for the 2026 event. We have held off on releasing vendor information, as we would like to formally

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announce the festival alongside the addition of the Tasting Tent. In order to do so effectively we must first secure participation from tasting tent vendors. We are hopeful that, following discussion and direction from the Parks and Recreation Commission, we will be in a position to begin outreach to vendors and move forward with planning and announcements.

We believe this addition has the potential to significantly enhance the Fall Festival experience while generating additional revenue to support future programming. We respectfully request approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission to allow the controlled service of alcohol within the designated tasting tent area for this one-day event.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact:

Giuliana Guerrero  
Special Events Coordinator  
Watertown Parks and Recreation  
wtnspecialevents@watertownct.org

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your continued support in helping us grow and improve community events.

Sincerely,

Giuliana Guerrero/ Watertown Fall Festival Committee