

Easthampton Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2026

The meeting was held at City Hall, Basement Conference Room and virtually.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kira Henninger at 6:02pm

Present: Kira Henninger, Desiree Gribi (virtual), Brian Hiltbold, Carolyn Anderson. John Mason represented the Park Department.

Absent: Eric Poulin

Agenda:

- Public Speak
- Election of Officers
- CPA Projects
 - Dog Park - MOU
 - Skate Park – kickoff meeting
 - Spray Park
 - Historical Designation
 - CPA Master Plan – Public Meeting 3/19 6:30
- FY26 Budget
 - FY27 Budget Info – Rec Coordinator Position
- Park Programs
 - Camp Nonotuck, Seasonal Job Postings
 - Family Skating, Pool – COA
 - PVPRA – Annual Meeting
- Park Facilities
 - Maintenance Building
 - Toll Booth designs and costs
 - New City Playground – LWCF Site Visit
- Old & Continuing Business

Minutes from the November and January meeting were approved unanimously. Brian first, Desiree second

Meeting Minutes:

- Public Speak
- Election of Officers
- CPA Projects
 - Dog Park - MOU
 - Sent to them last February. They cancelled in January. February 25th at 1pm rescheduled meeting to discuss that. Will have an update for the next meeting.
 - Skate Park – kickoff meeting
 - John met with the group last week. The skatepark conceptual design was shared with the parks commission on Monday. They hope to be at 60% design for the middle of March. They want the parks commission to do a virtual meeting for GZA to present the design. The meeting would only have this agenda topic. Brian had a question about whether this is what the design will be. John will leave the design up to them. The elements are asked to be ADA compliant, all wheels and all ages, but other than that, they will focus more on the specific design and elements. There is a hillside feature to help blend into other events that would provide seating. They did not want to dig into the landscape. Question
 - Is the skatepark committee going to manage and oversee the skatepark? John shared that there would be a MOU similar to the dog park group. Graffiti could be a problem as it's typically a problem in other areas, but

there is not a lot of overall maintenance expected. There will be more trash pickup needed and we would like to have a dumpster there to help with that.

- John will meet with them next on February 18th - meeting with them biweekly to keep things on track with the design and planning.
- Carolyn - there was a 2 ½ foot hill in the plans - what does that entail. John shared that they would be doing landscape burning - a gentle sloping down. They will go to the conservation commission in early April so they can have the design in plan in place that meets the concerns of the commission regarding storm water.
- Spray Park
 - Nothing new to report. In a holding pattern before we move forward with a design team. The LWCF is more time friendly, so focusing on the skatepark to meet the July 1st deadline is the priority for now. In March, will move forward with the design work getting done for the spray park.
- Historical Designation
 - National registration provided John with a brief update. Bodwich - It was supposed to be called Brookdale Cemetery originally. 1870 - planning of the cemetery due to need for more space for burials. 1873, the city bought the property. They built a bridge across the pond, near the Nashuannuk office. In October of that year Bodwich designed and laid out Brookside Cemetery. Survey completed in 1874. 1933-1935 the buildings were built and completed in 1938. John will share this with the historical society to see if they have anything to add to this research.
- CPA Master Plan – Public Meeting 3/19 6:30
 - Meeting for the public to have input on the new CPA plan. There is also a survey available to complete.
- FY26 Budget
 - FY27 Budget Info – Rec Coordinator Position
 - One of the concerns for FY26 is the maintenance office trailer - not sure if there is enough funding to pay for this through the end of the year. Met with Hatel to discuss this, but there may need to be an appropriation for \$1,000 or \$2,000 to pay for that.
 - The FY27 budget - We pay a lot to subsidize the city budget from the camp account to pay for pool chemicals.
 - There is another budget that includes the \$7800 for the maintenance trailer for the next year if that needs to be included in the parks budget as well.
 - 511 Budget: Salary Lines:
 - Salaries: Foreman, assistant foremen, year round - contractual agreements for pay
 - Temp positions: 39 week employees that includes security, toll booth workers, pool manager, lifeguards (10 employees in the temp position line)
 - Pool chemicals and electricity costs have gone up considerably
 - Clarification of the rec coordinator in the “temp” category
 - For this year, it will only be starting in September
 - Carolyn - worried that it’s going to impact the pool of applicants
 - 34 hours for full time employees in the city - city will pay 80% of the salary

- Carolyn wants to share that this is a very small amount of money in this budget that does a lot of work for the city. Look into solar panels in the future - John shared that is the plan for the pool house once that is redone.
- Brookside Cemetery
 - Small increase
- Main Street Cemetery
 - Included in the salaries: Sam maintains the records and burials, and research; Cemetery Foreman, and the Assistant Foreman/laborer - mowing, weed wacking, and burials.
- Gave Hatel a heads up that everything being asked for is just what is needed.
- Rec Coordinator Position
 - Working with HR - they have a draft job description created. Evenings and weekends are required. Tuesday through Saturday as the seasons warrant it. June to September it would be Monday through Friday. There is flexibility in the schedule for this position to meet the needs of each season and the support needed. There's a \$35,000/year salary suggested as the starting point. John looked at other community job descriptions to form this. The first step is getting the job description finalized (John will share it with the commission). The next step is getting it into the pay plan to get a grade by the City Council. Do not see any potential pushback in this step.
 - Timing of the budget: Submit the budget to the Mayor. If there are any big changes, John will share with the commission. Hoping to meet with the Mayor to discuss the budget needs of the department.
- Park Programs
 - Camp Nonotuck, Seasonal Job Postings
 - If we get two more snowdays, it will cancel an entire week of camp. John does not want a big gap between when kids get out of school and when camp starts. Sam is getting the events/trips going.
 - Family Skating, Pool – COA
 - Family skating on Sundays is going really well. We needed to buy the learn to skate assists. We want to thank the police department and police fund as they bought 4 skate assists that are adjustable. The numbers have been really good.
 - Met with Cindy at the Council On Aging to discuss pool hours for additional senior swim hours, but it's dependent on lifeguard availability and paying them extra for additional time. We want to be flexible, but we also need to make sure that we can afford to provide the services. The COA is willing to pay the lifeguard hours to add an additional day of senior swim. \$2500 to put on senior swim. We are in the upper range for what we pay lifeguards in the area.
 - PVPRA – Annual Meeting
 - Everyone is dealing with overuse/high expectations with lower budgets. Northampton, West Springfield and Chicopee are offering dates for Lifeguard training and recertification. When they complete a year with us, we do reimburse them the cost to recertify. Will share this information out at the job fair in April at the High School.
- Park Facilities

- Maintenance Building
 - John, Carolyn and Kira met with Mayor Derby to discuss next steps. Will have a follow-up meeting soon. We expressed the importance of having a building asap as there is an entire city department that does not have a heated place to do their work.
- Toll Booth designs and costs
 - Cost estimate from Mandy this morning for the double lane design. \$48,000 project, including electricity
 - Need green light to sit down with DPW to see what work could be
 - Will there be gates? John shared they would use more portable things to differentiate the lanes. Do not want anything permanent due to having big trucks that need to get into the park to get work.
 - Brian: Could the bump out be on the outgoing lane instead of the incoming two lanes? It's a tight area and it's an abrupt curve. John shared that it will not be open to two lanes all the time. It will be during very busy times, especially on Saturday mornings. Having two workers in the toll booth will also help with the flow. The booth will have AC in it. The electrical line is right above where the booth will be. Brian: Just want to put it on the radar that the booths like this in my work have not been ADA compliant. In the future, could put in a reader with an automatic gate for pass holders and one line for cash.
 - There are a lot of logistical concerns with the toll booth being farther into the park.
 - Brian: Notice there is a marker on the fire hydrant. John, once you go down the hill, there is a drop off down the hill, so no room to expand. Carolyn shares a concern about the safety concerns it creates for people who are down into the park doing recreation.
 - Brian: This is a more cost effective option.
 - The commission directs John to move forward
- New City Playground – LWCF Site Visit
 - Had a sight visit last week to talk about the pocket park in front, before the big park with Melissa from the LWCF grant. John was able to share the information about the overall project and the goal of revitalizing the whole neighborhood. The state will share their approval in May. We will find out from the Federal government if they approve around October and November.
- Old & Continuing Business
 - CPA black for pickleball came in so it will be installed when we open the courts in the Spring. Will put it on some type of concrete.
 - Fairy Event - they started their advertising and fundraising. They want to donate tree purchases back to the park as part of their event. George has a list of trees and pricing.

Adjournment at 7:13pm

Next Meeting is March 11, 2026 at 6 pm, City Hall, Basement Conference Room & virtually