

Town of Lunenburg Park Commission

Karin Menard, Chair
Chris Sullivan, Vice Chair
Marianne Mascari, Member
Colleen Shapiro, Member
Anita Schiepers, Member



978.582.4146
960 Massachusetts Ave
Lunenburg, MA 01462

approved 9/24/2025

MINUTES

Wednesday, July 30, 2025

Members Present: Chair Karin Menard, Vice-Chair Chris Sullivan, Member Anita Scheipers

Members Absent: Member Colleen Shapiro, Member Marianne Mascari

Also Present: Facilities Director Chris Ruth (via Zoom), Recreation Director Angela Clement (via Zoom), Select Board Member Glenn McLeod

OPEN MEETING

Chair K. Menard called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. K. Menard informed attendees that the meeting was being recorded and would be uploaded to YouTube after the meeting. She explained that the agenda listed topics that may be discussed, but not all items may be addressed, and other items not listed could be brought up as permitted by open meeting law.

BOARD & PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

FACILITIES DIRECTOR UPDATE

Facilities Director C. Ruth provided an update. C. Ruth stated that the bids for the resurfacing of the Wallace tennis courts are due back on Monday, August 4, 2025. C. Ruth noted that the original contractor thought they were on the State's bid list; however, paperwork was missing, so the Town had to put the project out to bid. C. Ruth stated that the original contractor can still bid on the project.

C. Ruth stated that the Lake Whalom weed treatment project is on the Conservation Commission's agenda for their August 19, 2025, meeting. C. Ruth suggested that K. Menard attend the meeting. K. Menard stated that she plans to attend the meeting.

C. Ruth stated that there was vehicular damage at Wallace Park. C. Ruth stated that a vehicle drove through a fence and the toddler play structure at the Wallace Park playground. K. Menard stated that a neighbor contacted C. Ruth regarding the damage. K. Menard stated that the damaged playground structure was removed. C. Ruth stated that existing mulch had to be removed and refilled with new mulch due to broken glass from the vehicle. C. Ruth stated he is working with the Town's insurance company to file a claim. C. Sullivan stated that the vehicle's driver has been in contact with the Police. C. Ruth stated that it appears to have been an accident.

K. Menard asked C. Ruth if the merry-go-round at Wallace Park and the two-person swing had been replaced. C. Ruth stated that the items discussed at the prior Commission meeting were replaced at Wallace Park.

RECREATION DIRECTOR UPDATE

Recreation Director A. Clement provided an update. A. Clement stated that the Town Beach has been busy since the opening of the season. A. Clement stated that she has identified some ways to streamline check-in at the beach. A. Clement stated that the card reader still requires inputting the address of the user and other information. A. Clement stated that she will be looking into different systems that streamline the process for next summer.

A. Clement stated that the swimming lessons have gone well so far. A. Clement stated that the new afternoon sessions aren't as busy as the morning sessions; however, she said that they have been a good alternative for some parents and guardians. A. Clement stated that all sessions have sold out for sessions 1, 2, and 3. A. Clement stated that she would recommend hiring an additional lifeguard for the 2026 season.

A. Clement stated that there have been staff scheduling issues this summer. A. Clement stated that due to staff shortages, the Town Beach will be closed this Sunday, August 3, 2025. A. Clement stated that on July 21, 2025, the Town Beach was closed due to staffing shortages. A. Clement stated that the target date for closing swimming at Town Beach will be August 23, 2025, due to lifeguards going back to school/college.

A. Clement stated that the last summer youth program is next week. A. Clement stated that she is currently planning Fall 2025 programming. A. Clement stated that she does not have finalized dates yet. A. Clement stated that there will be more painting nights with The Painted Goat. A. Clement stated that the STEM program will occur. A. Clement stated that she has been talking to Good Pickin' Farm and will continue the 'books and bunnies' program.

A. Clement stated that the pickleball program will occur on more dates. A. Clement stated that the pickleball program will end depending on the weather; she stated that mid-late October is what she's projecting as the end of the program for the year. She stated that there will be a beginner program and an intermediate level program.

K. Menard stated that she will send A. Clement the Cultural Council grant information that is due in September or October.

C. Sullivan asked A. Clement that when there are future lifeguard staffing shortages, could the Town hire per-diem lifeguards. A. Clement stated that it is a good idea and will investigate. A. Clement stated that this staffing shortage issue is due to staff only being able to work less than 40 hours, and due to the new afternoon swimming lessons. A. Clement stated that Jared, the manager at the Town Beach, has been well organized this year.

MARSHALL PARK PROJECT: REVIEW, DISCUSSION AND DECISIONS ON NEXT STEPS

K. Menard stated that there is currently \$13,000 allocated in ARPA funds for the Marshall Park Project. K. Menard stated that if the Park Commission doesn't expend the funds by December 31, 2025, the funds will be returned to the Federal government. K. Menard stated that there is \$97,000 remaining to be expended to get the Marshall Park Project to the 75% design level. K. Menard stated that she and C. Sullivan had a meeting with Tom Doolittle and Ray Dunit. K. Menard stated that expending \$13,000 would not provide the Town with substantial deliverables.

A. Scheipers stated that she would recommend that the Commission expend the \$13,000 remaining to design and plan for the smaller Phase 1+ Marshall Park Project.

C. Sullivan stated that he believes the Commission should move forward with the complete design and project. C. Sullivan stated that he is conflicted with presenting Phase 1+ separately. C. Sullivan said that passing the full project is cost-effective and addresses all the issues that Marshall Park has. C. Sullivan stated that Phase 2 addresses parking on Chestnut Street and the drainage issues at the baseball and softball fields. C. Sullivan stated that he believes the Commission should continue to spend down the \$97,000 to get the design of the project as complete as possible.

K. Menard described what occurred at the May 2025 Annual Town Meeting in regard to how the meeting and discussion were moderated. K. Menard stated that there was no opportunity to present a smaller project at the Town Meeting. K. Menard stated that she is concerned with the timing of when to bring the project back to Town Meeting, due to extenuating circumstances, such as a potential Proposition 2 ½ Override and other large-scale Town projects.

K. Menard asked G. McLeod what his thoughts were about the timing of bringing the project forward at an upcoming Town Meeting. G. McLeod stated that consistent community outreach regarding the project is key. G. McLeod described significant financial constraints in regard to the Ritter Memorial Building, Town Hall, TC Passios, PFAS regulations, and the School Department.

A. Scheipers stated that she believes that Phase 1+ addresses significant issues and could be brought to Town Meeting separately from the entire project. A. Scheipers stated that Phase 1+ is more than preparing for Phase 2. C. Sullivan stated that he agrees with A. Scheipers. C. Sullivan stated that the entire project addresses stormwater drainage issues.

K. Menard stated that she believes that it is too soon to bring the project Fall Special Town Meeting due to the outreach and engagement necessary to complete the project. K. Menard stated that she believes that the Park Commission should bring the project to the Fall Special Town Meeting in 2026. C. Sullivan stated that the decision and outcome of the Tri-Board meetings may have an impact on his decision to bring the project to the Annual Town Meeting. A. Scheipers stated that the Park Commission doesn't have to decide to bring forward the article for the May Town Meeting right now.

The Commission's unofficial consensus was not to bring forward the Marshall Park Project to the Fall Special Town Meeting due to concerns about bringing the article back too quickly, after it didn't pass initially. K. Menard stated that she and C. Sullivan will contact the design firm to continue spending down the \$97,000, including the \$13,000 left of ARPA funds.

LUNENBURG SKATE PARK – PRESENTATION AND UPDATES FROM SKATE PARK

Anthony Caiozzo presented the Commission with a 3D physical rendering of the proposed Lunenburg Skate Park. A. Caiozzo stated that the organizers of the skate park are now engaging with a bonding agent who will bond the entire project. A. Caiozzo stated that all components will be wrapped into a single bond. A. Caiozzo stated that the plan is to break ground in Spring 2026 with a 90-day build.

A. Caiozzo stated that the Lunenburg Skate Park project was initially planned in tandem with the Marshall Park project redesign. K. Menard asked A. Caiozzo about the impact of stormwater drainage on the Skate Park project. A. Caiozzo stated that he would need to ask Gregory Roy for information regarding the drainage that would need to be addressed.

A. Scheipers recalled from preliminary discussions about the Lunenburg Skate Park project that there wouldn't be significant drainage work that needed to be done, in comparison to the Phase 1

Marshall Park Project. A. Caiozzo stated that he believed it would not be wise for the Lunenburg Skate Park project to complete drainage work for it to have to be eventually modified due to the Marshall Park Project. A. Scheipers stated that the Park Commission wanted G. Roy to speak with the engineer at RDLA to make sure drainage was coordinated properly. A. Caiozzo stated that an initial conversation occurred; however, he would need to speak with G. Roy regarding the outcome of the conversation.

A. Caiozzo stated that the target fundraising goal is \$372,000. A. Caiozzo stated that they had reached 91% of their fundraising goal. A. Caiozzo stated that they hope to have a contract signed with the builder by Labor Day. A.

A. Scheipers stated that the agreement with the Commission and the organizers of the Skate Park has expired. K. Menard stated that the Board will vote to grant an extension of the agreement at the next meeting. K. Menard said that she will confirm the language of the motion for the Commission to vote on. K. Menard stated that she would check in with G. Roy.

CAPITAL PLANNING – DISCUSSION ON CAPITAL PLANNING ITEMS

K. Menard stated that she called C. Ruth last week. K. Menard reminded the Commission that the Capital Planning Committee will meet in November and December of this year to discuss requests. C. Ruth stated that the McNally Park Master Plan is on the capital improvement list. C. Ruth stated that the Northfield Park Master Plan is currently a placeholder. K. Menard asked if the treatment of lake weeds would be included. C. Ruth stated that the Commission received funds for a pilot program last year, and he would recommend waiting to see if the pilot program is successful before requesting additional funds. K. Menard recalled that there were two weed treatment requests, and one of them did not get funded last year.

K. Menard suggested including resurfacing and releveling at Fitzgerald Park. C. Ruth suggested including the Powell Field dugouts. K. Menard stated that the dugouts are single-use structures, and she is concerned about that being considered for funding.

K. Menard stated that she made a list of potential capital improvement projects. C. Ruth stated that he would add his suggestions to the list. K. Menard stated that she would recommend pausing any requests for McNally and Northfield because the priority is still Marshall Park. K. Menard stated that if the proposed master plans for McNally and Northfield were funded, she believes the Commission wouldn't have the bandwidth for those plans. K. Menard stated that fencing should be considered due to winter snowmobile activities that could damage the resurfacing work.

K. Menard stated that Veterans Memorial Park needs a clean-up effort. K. Menard stated she does not know if a request works within the threshold of capital improvement requests. C. Ruth recommends that the Park Commission advocate for additional funds within the operating budget to address the maintenance issues of Veterans Memorial Park. C. Ruth stated that for the FY27 operating budget, he is requesting an additional \$10,000. C. Ruth stated that he will send over his list of potential capital improvement requests.

C. Ruth stated that the Town Manager suggested better utilization of the left side of the Town Beach. C. Ruth stated that the Town Manager suggested that residents could rent a kayak or canoe, or a place to store their kayak/canoe for a fee.

C. Sullivan stated that he believes the Commission should work on identifying uses and solutions to Northfield Park. C. Ruth suggested that a survey be done of the Park to understand the land and topography.

PARKS USER FEES DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION ON CURRENT USER FEES AND FUTURE USE FEE ADJUSTMENTS

K. Menard stated that she had a meeting with C. Ruth and the Town Manager regarding user fees. K. Menard asked C. Ruth to provide the Commission with the cost of the current contracts for maintenance. K. Menard stated that the Town far exceeds the number of mowings that are included in the contract. C. Sullivan requested the actual number of mowings and weeding. K. Menard presented the Commission with what the School Department charges for the use of their fields by the hour. K. Menard stated that the School Department significantly increased their rates this year.

K. Menard stated that there were 148 residents in the youth baseball program, and they reserved the fields from April 3rd through June 30th. K. Menard stated that they reserved five fields seven days a week. K. Menard stated that the Town doesn't know when the fields are free during that time frame and cannot offer the fields to any other groups because of how it is currently scheduled. K. Menard presented the Commission with the comparison between the School and Town field user fees. C. Sullivan stated that he reached out to neighboring communities and received a response from the Town of Groton, which is determining their new fee structure. C. Sullivan stated that the Town of Clinton doesn't charge for town or youth sports, but schedules the fields hourly. K. Menard stated that the Town of Townsend leases fields to user groups, and the groups maintain the fields themselves.

K. Menard stated that she is not recommending increasing the fees based on the total amount of maintenance to the fields. K. Menard stated that it is unfair for a user group to have the Town increase fees without significant advanced notice. K. Menard stated that she recommends that

there be fine-tuning of some of the policies in regard to scheduling the fields. K. Menard stated that the Commission may need to request more information regarding the number of participants for the youth baseball program.

A. Scheipers recommended that the forms be updated to collect accurate information from the user groups. K. Menard suggested that she could meet with A. Clement and update the forms to capture more information. C. Sullivan stated that he will reach out to the youth baseball program to get more information regarding their program. K. Menard stated that she would send C. Sullivan what she initially sent to the youth baseball program.

CHAIR UPDATES

K. Menard stated that the Commission received a concern from a resident regarding dogs at McNally Field. K. Menard stated that the resident spoke to the dog owner about there being no dogs allowed at McNally Field. K. Menard stated that the resident said that the dog owner was dismissive. K. Menard stated that there is signage posted at the Field, as well as a Park Commission policy. K. Menard stated that she reached out to the Town Manager regarding the enforcement of the policy. K. Menard stated that the enforcement is non-criminal and that a Town employee or Park Commissioner could be designated as the enforcement agent. K. Menard stated she is awaiting a response from the Town Manager, who brought the issue up to Town Counsel. K. Menard stated that Town Counsel is having open office hours next month, and that she plans to discuss the issue with Adam Costa.

K. Menard informed the Park Commission that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) and the Massachusetts Department of Outdoor Recreation (MDOR) asked the Commission for permission to catalogue and photograph the Town's outdoor recreation resources for a Statewide database. The Commission agreed to allow them to catalogue the Town's outdoor resources.

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE UPDATES

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Scheipers stated that her name is misspelled several times in the June 4, 2025, minutes. C. Sullivan stated that he said flood instead of floor on page 5 of the June 4, 2025 minutes. The amendments were accepted by the Commission.

A. Scheipers moved to approve March 26, 2025, April 9, 2025, April 26, 2025, and June 4, 2025, amended minutes. Seconded by C. Sullivan. Call for the vote: Three-aye. The motion passed unanimously (3-0-0).

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

The Commission stated that their next meeting will be tentatively on August 20, 2025.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A. Scheipers moved to adjourn. Seconded by C. Sullivan. Call for the vote: Three-aye. The motion passed unanimously (3-0-0).

Meeting adjourned at 8:32 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anthony Senesi,
Recording Clerk

These Minutes were reviewed and approved by the Park Commission on:
Wednesday _____

Member _____ made the Motion to Approve the minutes of July 30, 2025. Seconded by Member _____. Call for the Vote: Five-aye. Motion Passed unanimously (5-0-0)