

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Thursday, September 18, 2025

6:30 p.m.

Montague Town Hall Annex

One Avenue A

Turners Falls, MA 01376

Present: Barbara Kuklewicz, Chairperson, Ken Danford, Vice Chairperson, Jeff Singleton, Secretary, Jon Dobosz, Director of Parks & Recreation

Guests: Chris Nolan-Zeller, Montague Asst. Town Administrator, Maureen Pollock, Montague Town Planner, Miryam Vessel, resident

Meeting is being recorded

1. 6:30pm Meeting Called to order

2. 6:32pm Approval of May 22, 2025 Minutes

Motion: Jeff Singleton makes the motion to approve minutes from May 22, 2025; seconded by Barbara Kuklewicz.

Vote: Approved 3-0

3. 6:33pm Chris Nolan-Zeller, Montague Asst. Town Administrator

• Unity Park Slide & Surfacing Project Update

As part of the town's 2026 capital budget, \$125,000 was approved to replace the pour-in place surface and tube slide at Unity Park. A bid package was created and as it went out to bid, but there was a realization that instead of a singular tube slide, perhaps a multiuse structure could replace the slide. This project can be pushed back until spring to determine additional funding. The existing slide is more than 25 years old, and the pour in place was from 2012. Jon has tried to patch the pour in place, but cracks still exist. When asked how much more the project would cost to include the multiuse structure, Jon believed it would be an additional \$25,000.

Motion: Barbara Kuklewicz makes the motion to delay the pour-in-place and tube slide project until a funding source can be determined to a multiuse play structure; seconded by Jeff Singleton.

Vote: Approved 3-0

• Green Communities Grant (Unity Park Fieldhouse)

The Green Communities Grant was approved for \$52,401 for the installation of new fieldhouse doors, including the two garage doors, office and main door, and the installation of a new entrance into the building from the main parking lot. The grant would also include removal of old insulation, installation of new insulation (where needed), and other items to prevent heat escape in the building.

4. 6:46pm Maureen Pollock, Montague Town Planner

• First Street Bus Stop Proposal

Maureen Pollock addressed the commission regarding the potential installation of a bus stop on First Street, near the park. She went on to say that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation found a number of accidents occur near bus stops, so it has begun a program so that towns may obtain permits that will ensure safety around bus stops including highly viability cross walks, pedestrian refuge islands and warning signs. Ms. Pollock added that Unity Park is a busy park and having a bus stop available to the public would be beneficial to the community. The commissions were provided illustrations as to

where the bus stop could potentially be placed. The commission asked questions as about safety and bus route changes. Jon spoke and believes accessibility to the park is a positive thing but also expressed his concerns about vehicular speed on the street, safety of children (as the proposed bus stop is very near to the play structures) and that the department would have no say in where the egress for this would be on the property. He added that aesthetics is very important relative to parks, and installing a bus stop in such a prominent spot would be detrimental. Jeff Singleton expressed concern and questioned the source of this inquiry. He noted that he is a committee member of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) and was unaware of such a request. Jeff added that the installation of a bus stop is significant as it affects bus routes, and that he does not support this proposed bus stop at Unity Park at this time. The commission would like more information before making any formal decision.

• **Update Town's 10-year Open Space & Recreation Plan**

The town has been awarded a state grant to update its Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP). Ms. Pollock noted that the Conservation Commission and the Parks & Recreation Department will collaborate with other agencies and Montague residents to update the 10-year plan (which will be a six- to seven-month process) and will be facilitated by a private firm. The department has benefited greatly through the OSRP, as it makes the Town eligible for numerous grants (the PARC Grant, being one, that helped fund the Unity Skatepark and Montague Center Park projects.

5. 7:15pm Miryam Vesset, Resident; Montague Center Park Basketball Court Development

Resident, Miryam Vesset, requested an update on the possibility of a basketball court at Montague Center Park. Jon spoke of a potential \$7,991.91 balance from the Montague Center Park update; he would have to look further into the possibility of using this balance towards this type of project. There was discussion as to where this court could be placed and to its size and cost. Jon will continue to research this matter.

6. 7:33pm Current Facility Projects

• **Unity Sun Shelter.** A quote was received for the shade fabric of \$8,500. The town insurance company has contacted Jon to let him know that we will be responsible for the \$1,000 deductible, and the insurance will cover the cost and installation of the cover. Jon recommends we request a reserve fund transfer to cover the deductible cost.

Motion: Ken Danford makes the motion to request a reserve fund transfer to pay for the deductible for the Sun Shelter; seconded by Barbara Kuklewicz.

Vote: Approved 3-0

- **Old Blacksmith Shop** final evaluation is close to completion and will include estimates for partial and complete demolition.
- **Skatepark maintenance** contract was moved to this fiscal year, and Jon will bring this to the selectboard to sign.
- **Whale Sprinkler Unit** had difficulty operating this past summer. There were mechanical issues early in the season and then we experienced technical issues which we couldn't solve. We used approximately 3000 more gallons of water a day than previously used. We purchased a new motherboard and valves. The plan is to install these before this winter so if there are still issues, they can be addressed immediately.
- **Montague Center Ballfield Backstop** was delivered this past summer, and we are coordinating its installation this fall or early spring.

7. 7:40pm 2025 Spring Programs Profit/Loss Statements

Two programs, EGGstravaganza and Tee Ball's profit/loss statements were discussed. There were no questions.

8. 7:43pm Summer Evaluation

The department had a strong summer camp program, and Jon will provide a more detailed evaluation at the October meeting. Movies in the Park, and a once-a-week summer soccer clinic were our other programs. During the boat club's Christmas in July, the Pioneer Valley Artisan's held a craft fair at Unity Park.

9. 7:45pm Fall Programs

The department's 2025 Fall Brochure was included in the commission packet.

10. 7:46pm Current FY26 Operating Budget Balances

There were no questions.

11. 7:46pm Topics not anticipated in the 48-hour posting requirement

Ken Danford was approached by a resident regarding the possibility of a gazebo or pavilion at the Montague Center Park to provide shade for the residents. Space is limited, but if the Old Blacksmith shop is determined to be a complete demolition, there could also be potential space to create a picnic shelter through partial demolition of the Old Blacksmith Shop. Jon will look further into this possibility.

The Commission determined that the next commission meeting will be held on October 23.

12. 7:55pm Adjournment

Barbara Kuklewicz makes the motion to adjourn; seconded by Ken Danford.

Vote: Approved 3-0

X _____

Jeff Singleton, Secretary

Date

or

Signature & Title: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____