

Wethersfield Advisory Parks and Recreation Board  
Harbor Management Commission  
Meeting Minutes – Thursday, February 26, 2026

The meeting in Town Hall Council Chambers was called to order by Chairman Bisi at 7:03 p.m. Members present were Mike Bisi, Suzanne Barton, Mary Mahar, Sarah Gantley, Ryan Alger, and Rachel Shaltz. Also present was Shelley Carbone, Town Council Liaison and Rachael Mattioli, Director of Parks and Recreation.

A. Public Comment

None

B. Minutes

Chairwoman Bisi asked if anyone had changes to the minutes of the January 22, 2026 meeting. Ms. Shaltz noted that Gianna Ehlich's address is 12 Hunter Path not Place. Ms. Gantley moved to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2026 meeting with the correct address amendment. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alger and passed unanimously.

C. Director's Report – January

Chairman Bisi reviewed the January monthly report with members. Ms. Mattioli shared that Parks and Rec Summer brochure will be available on March 9, 2026 and that registration will start on March 18, 2026 for residents and Friends of the EBW Nature Center.

D. Letters and Announcements

Ms. Mattioli shared that she recently met with members of Wethersfield's Tourism and Cultural Commission to discuss events planned for the week of July 5 in celebration of America 250. The local campaign is titled USA Wethersfield 250. Planned events include a Community Picnic at Cove Park on July 5 and a public reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 8, which will take place simultaneously with readings across the country. The Commission is also exploring the possibility of organizing a community event to commemorate the 25th anniversary of 9/11.

E. Board Discussion

a. CIP and Budget Updates

Ms. Mattioli shared that she presented the Parks and Recreation CIP project requests to CIAC on February 11. Prior to the meeting, the internal CIP committee selected four of the five proposed projects. The selected projects are: Heritage Way Trail: Cove Park Phase 1 Matching Funds (\$115,000), Greenfield Softball Dugout Replacement and Safety Improvements (\$50,000), Cedar Street Playground Basketball Court Safety and Surface Improvements (\$25,000) and Playground Equipment Replacement – Safety and Compliance (\$50,000). The internal committee did not select the Mill Woods Park Multi-Use Field: Initial Funding (\$100,000); however, Ms. Mattioli presented all 5 projects to CIAC.

Additionally, Ms. Mattioli shared that she presented the Parks and Recreation FY 2027 budget to the Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, and Finance Department. The overall budget shows a decrease, as repair and maintenance costs, along with utilities, are being moved to the Physical Services budget for the Community Center, Solomon Welles House, and Mill Woods and Willard Pools. Despite the overall decrease, funding for part-time staff has increased. This supports the department's expanded summer programming, including additional weeks for Therapeutic Recreation and Playground programs, as well as an added week at Willard Pool.

b. Mill Woods Master Plan Public Meeting

Board members reviewed the draft updated Mill Woods Master Plan and provided feedback, including requests to add an access gate and to make the trail colors brighter and more visible. Ms. Mattioli shared that she will forward the Board's comments to KBA and request amendments to the

draft plan so it can be posted online by the beginning of April. This will allow the public time to provide feedback ahead of the informational meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 23, at 7:00 p.m. at the Community Center. Notices of the meeting will also be sent to Mill Woods Park abutters.

c. Parks and Rec Project List

Ms. Mattioli provided updates on the following projects:

- Maisano Bros was selected as the vendor for the rehabilitation of the Old Reservoir Basketball and Standish Tennis/Pickleball courts. Their project proposal came in under the allotted \$70,000. Once the contract is awarded, Town staff will explore whether an estimate can also be provided for repairs to the Crest Street basketball court.
- The Town will issue the RFP for the construction of the pickleball courts by the end of the week, select a contractor, and present the contract to the Town Council for approval in early April. Construction is expected to begin in early May, with tentative project completion scheduled for late July to early August 2026.
- The Town submitted a Capitol Region Council of Governments Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (CRCOG LOTCIP) grant application in the amount of \$1.5 million for construction of the Cove Park Heritage Way Trail from the boat launch to the Solomon Welles House and continuing to State Street.
- Spring Street Pond – Macchi Engineering anticipates having a 30% complete preliminary design to present to the Board at the March 26 meeting. It was suggested to invite the Wethersfield Bike-Ped Committee to attend as well, allowing the engineering team to gather input from both groups. The Town is planning to hold a public information meeting on the Spring Street Pond Conceptual Plan in May 2026. Board members asked about any conversations with abutting neighbors. Ms. Mattioli stated that she is unsure what discussions may have occurred prior to her tenure as Director but will follow up to find out.
- Weston Rose Garden – The Parks and Recreation Department will coordinate a date to dedicate the renovated Weston Rose Garden and will invite members of Frank Weston’s family to attend.

d. Youth Sports League Survey Results

Ms. Mattioli shared the results of the Youth Sports League survey with Board members. The survey provides a useful starting point for determining what should be included in the Youth Sports League Agreement currently under development. The survey offers insight into several key areas, including: the number of athletes registered for the 2025 season, fees associated with each league, use of Town facilities, required screenings for coaches and volunteers, training required for coaches, and any additional information league representatives felt was important to share.

Councilor Carbone shared that she attended a joint meeting earlier in the day between Town Council and Board of Education members. During the meeting, the question arose regarding responsibility for keeping Cottone Field locked. The Board of Education emphasized that they want the field to remain locked when not in use to protect it from vandalism, damage, and misuse.

e. Youth Sports League Agreement

Board members reviewed the draft of the Youth Sports League Agreement submitted by Mr. Alger. Discussion focused on several items within the agreement. Questions were raised whether George D. Ritchie Soccer Club cut players from the travel teams. Ms. Mattioli will follow up. Members also inquired about scholarships. Ms. Mattioli noted that families can apply for a Camp Scholarship through Social and Youth Services, which can be used toward youth sports league registration, and that many leagues themselves also offer scholarships to players. Ms. Mattioli shared that the Department received a request from Wethersfield Basketball Association (WBA) to run a summer clinic at WHS. Last year, WBA used the gym free of charge; however, Board members agreed that because this request falls outside the normal basketball season, the daily gym rental fee should

apply. Going forward, requests for gym/school space outside of normal sports seasons will be addressed in the Youth Sports League Agreement.

f. Rocky Hill Tackle Football

Ms. Mattioli shared that Eagles Youth Football (EYFB) has been contacted by Rocky Hill, whose tackle program is disbanding due to low enrollment. EYFB would like to begin accepting Rocky Hill youth while keeping Wethersfield participants as the majority. The percentage of Rocky Hill players is expected to range between 10% and 25%. Ms. Mattioli sought the Board's approval.

Kevin Martin, EYFB tackle coordinator, was present and noted that each team would only accept approximately 5–9 Rocky Hill players. Ms. Gantley made a motion to allow Rocky Hill youth to join the Wethersfield Eagles Youth Football program, not to exceed 25% of non-Wethersfield residents. The motion was seconded by Ms. Barton and passed unanimously.

g. Follow Up Items

Cottone Field – Councilor Carbone has shared earlier in the meeting that the BOE wants to maintain the current practice of locking Cottone Field at WHS when it is not reserved as they want to protect the field from vandalism, damage and misuse.

F. Public Comment

None

G. Board Member Comments

Ms. Barton asked a question regarding Wethersfield Basketball Association's use of Hanmer and Emerson Williams schools. Ms. Mattioli shared that WBA does not use Emerson Williams but that they use Hanmer during the week for practices.

H. Harbormaster's Report

- Ms. Mattioli reported that the updated draft of the Wethersfield Harbor Management Plan has been submitted to the Connecticut DEEP for approval. The review process may take up to three months, as it also requires approval from the CT Port Authority, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and relevant DEEP divisions, including fisheries, boating, and coastal regulatory.
- Ms. Mattioli shared that the Department purchased a new harbormaster boat from Cabela's for \$20,345.
- At the January meeting, the Board requested a balance of the Cove Preservation Fund, which currently stands at \$157,490.53. Estimated costs include \$4,170 for the attendant shack. Due to ice damming in the Cove this winter, the Town will need to purchase at least one, and potentially three, new dock sections. The Board also discussed whether to purchase six new picnic tables.
- Ms. Mattioli shared that she met with the tree warden and Rick Willard from the Village Improvement Association regarding planting a Founders Grove (12 trees) at the Cove Park Boat Launch. The tree warden will perform site clearing this spring, with planting planned for spring if possible, though it may be delayed until fall.
- Registration for moorings and tender cleats will begin on March 18 for residents and March 19 for non-residents.
- The Historic District Commission (HDC) approved replacement of the Cove Park Rules sign but also requested that the Cove Park sign with the red onion be replaced. The HDC tabled the application to replace the attendant shack.

I. Town Council Report

Commission members requested that the following information be included in the monthly Parks and Rec Advisory Board Town Council memo to send to Councilor Carbone:

- The Parks and Rec Advisory Board will be holding a public information meeting on Thursday, April 23 at 7:00 pm at the Pitkin Community Center to review the updated Mill Woods Master Plan.
- The revised Harbor Management Plan has been sent to CT DEEP for review.
- The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board is developing a Youth Sports League Agreement to standardize requirements across all youth sports programs.

J. Motion to Adjourn

Ms. Gantley moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 pm. Motion was seconded by Mr. Alger and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachael Mattioli, Director Parks and Recreation Department