



# Gates Recreation and Parks Commission Meeting

## January 14, 2025



### Those in Attendance:

Commissioners: Brom Bianchi (Chairperson) Jim Battaglia Christine Maurice Steve Murphy  
John Unson (via Zoom)

Director: Dan Hoock

Town Board Liaison: Chris DiPonzio

The meeting was called to order by Brom Bianchi at 6:00PM. Following an introduction, Jim Battaglia was officially welcomed to working on the GRP Commission. A brief discussion followed this welcome.

The minutes from the December meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Steve Murphy to accept the minutes without changes. The motion was seconded by Chris Maurice. The vote was unanimous to accept the minutes.

The Town 2024 financial form was reviewed and discussed. It was noted the spending for the Dept. was excellent for this past year with approximately 99.86% of the budgeted monies spent. A discussion followed with the points mentioned below highlighted for further explanation and understanding:

- \* More monies were spent related to the purchase of the bathroom unit at Memorial Park and the pickleball courts.
- \* The senior meal program costs were up slightly due to adding a third day of offering services.
- \* The Summer Celebration costs were up a small amount.
- \* Wages are increased due to higher minimum wage laws. The affects the PT seasonal help the most.
- \* A suggestion for the updated financial report format was to include monthly/date comparison option.

Following this discussion, Dan will take the input shared and will report at a later date, a new format for the Commission to review of this report. A motion was made by Steve Murphy to accept this financial report as presented. This motion was seconded by Chris Maurice. The vote was unanimous to accept this report.

### **Unfinished Business:**

A discussion followed pertaining to updating the three documents that describe the workings of the Commission. The following are highlights from the discussion of the document, "GRP Commission Guidelines":

- \* Many suggestions of wording changes throughout the document were noted. This included items deleted that are no longer applicable to the current Commission responsibilities.
- \* Re-numbering of "Expectations" section due to the deletion of some previously listed items.
- \* Under the "Subordination of Self Interest" extensive discussion took place related to the word "*selflessness*." This wording will be deleted and it will read now, "*Members should support the goals and objectives of the department and commission.*" All agreed this wording change is appropriate.
- \* The Commission secretary will make the appropriate changes to this document for final review and approval for the next meeting.

The next document to be reviewed and discussed was the "Town of Gates, Recreation & Parks Commission, Procedures and Regulations."

- \* Chris Maurice shared the chairperson of the Commission is appointed by the Town, and is done in early January. A discussion of the history of how this selection process has been done in previous years took place. It was decided that at our upcoming November or December meeting, a nomination process will take place by the Commissioners to select, and recommend to the town, the person who they have chosen to be the chairperson. This will be done in a more timely manner than it was done this past year. At that time also, a vice-chairperson will be nominated by the Commission members to serve for the upcoming year, in case the chairperson is unable to attend a meeting. All agreed this was a good clarification of wording, and it will be reflected in this document that way.
- \* The addition of the "alternate" clarification statement was approved.
- \* Under "Organization" the additional wording of "*recommend to the town board*" will be added for clarification.

- \* Under “Committees” this entire section will be removed since these committees don’t exist anymore.
- \* Under “Commission Authority” this statement was said to be part of the accreditation process that took place in the early 2000’s. Extensive discussion took place on the necessity of keeping it. Following this discussion, a motion was made by Chris Maurice and seconded by Jim Battaglia that this section of this document be deleted. The vote was unanimous to delete this section.
- \* Under “Finance” discussion took place to omit this section, or modify it. Following the discussion some minor wording changes will be made, and this section will remain in the document.
- \* Under the “Personnel” section, discussion took place to change the wording of “create” to “review and suggest.” All agreed to this change. Discussion took place on “job descriptions.” This was tabled to be discussed at a later time in order to find out what NYS rules say. Chris DiPonzio will follow up on this.
- \* The Commission secretary will make the appropriate changes to this document for final review and approval for the next meeting.

Due to time constraints, the continued discussion of these documents was tabled until the February meeting. All agreed this was a good idea.

**New Business:**

Dan Hooch shared the following updates on the status of the parks:

- \* The bathrooms at Memorial Park are installed with other necessary work to be completed in the spring. This will include doing the electrical hook-up, the connection of the plumbing, and also the finish ground work surrounding the building. A brief discussion took place relate to whether or not these bathrooms will be open year round. No decision on this was finalized.
- \* Dan shared information pertaining to options for updating the playground at Memorial Park. Following a recent discussion he had with the Town Supervisor, Dan wants to go back to the three companies who gave him bids. The decision to be made will be how to spend the budgeted monies for these playgrounds. The scenario entails spending the majority of funds on one playground that would be appropriate for a wider age group; or having a playground with fewer options, but the monies could be spent doing more improvements in other playgrounds. Discussion took place. Dan will have a presentation available for the Commission to review for the February meeting.
- \* The discussion of goals for the Commission to recommend to the Town took place. Many points of improvements are made from lighting, to increased security, to grounds improvements. Following this discussion, it was decided to have each Commission email their ideas to the Commission secretary prior to the next meeting, and she will compile the input for discussion. These would be goals that would be suggested for 2026, as well as long range planning also (1-year, 3-years, 5-years, etc.)
- \* Brom Bianchi nominated Steve Murphy to be the vice-chairperson for 2025. A consensus vote was taken and this was approved.
- \* Park Assignments were confirmed. They are as follows:
 

Westgate Park - John Unson	Memorial/Lions Park(s)- Christine Maurice & Jim Battaglia
First Responders Park - Brom Bianchi	Wegman Rd. Park - Steve Murphy
- \* Brom Bianchi mentioned on the Town website the information about a term of office for the Commission needs to be changed from 6 years to 5 years. Also, the time for the meetings need to be changed from 6:30PM to 6PM. An updated Commission picture will be taken in April when John Unson returns. The website would then be updated with the current picture.
- \* Dan Hooch shared the new Department website seems to be working well, and other than a learning curve for everyone to get used to it, it seems more comprehensive and easy to work with. Dan also shared that a new logo was being designed for the Summer Celebration. It is not finalized. Dan also will be sending out information to all the Commissioner for their input for the first band to play for this event. The Commissioners were asked to email back their selection in a timely manner so a contract can be put in place. Dan also mentioned that Youngs Fireworks has been contracted for this event.
- \* A brief item related to a building project on the corner of Manitou Rd./Lyll Rd. was discussed.

A motion was made by Steve Murphy and seconded by Christine Maurice that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, February 11, 2025, from 6PM-7PM at the GRP conference room.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Valerie Young - Commission Secretary