



# Gates Recreation and Parks Commission Meeting January 13, 2026



## Those in Attendance:

Commissioners: Brom Bianchi Christine Maurice Steve Murphy John Unson (via Zoom)  
Director: Dan Hook  
Town Board Liaison: Chris DiPonzio - Unable to attend  
Commissioner: Jim Battaglia - Unable to attend

The meeting was called to order by Brom Bianchi at 3:00 PM.

The minutes from the November 18 meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Steve Murphy, and seconded by Christine Maurice they be accepted as read, with no changes. The vote was unanimous to accept this document.

The financial reports sent by Dan Hook to the Commission were reviewed. The following questions were raised:

- \* Brom Bianchi asked about line item 7140-2000 (Capital Equipment) pertaining to the monies listed under the amended budget. Dan Hook explained that these were the monies that were spent on the new playground equipment for Memorial Park slated to be installed in spring of 2026, and that the county had reimbursed the town.
- \* Brom asked for an explanation of line item 7140-4850 pertaining to the number listed under the amended budget. Dan explained this was the total of all the items listed under that line number designation. Brom asked about the unencumbered balance of \$61,561.93 and where those monies were dedicated to go. Dan explained that as far as he knew, that money would go back into the general funds for the town.

No other questions were raised, and a motion was made by Steve Murphy and seconded by Christine Maurice the financial report be accepted as presented. The vote was unanimous to accept this document.

## Unfinished/Old Business:

A brief review was done of the following events that occurred since the Commission met in November. Highlights of that conversation included the following:

### **Wobble Gobble Event - Town Hall - Thanksgiving Day - 8:30 AM:**

- \* Dan Hook shared that approximately 200+ people participated in this race. This number has grown over the years this event has been held, and now includes a wide variety of age groups.
- \* Dan thanked Christine Maurice for helping out at the table selling items for the race.
- \* Christine Maurice shared that a great deal of non-perishable food was donated, which will go to the local food shelf.

### **Wreaths Across America**

- \* Dan Hook shared although he doesn't have much to do with this particular event, he had heard things went very well, and this was also another well attended town event. Christine Maurice added the Gates Garden Club was involved with this event.

### **Holiday PJ Party - Rec. Dept. - December 6 - 9AM-Noon:**

- \* Dan Hook shared this was a very successful event and was very well attended. Pre-registration was done, even though this was a free event. Families were scheduled to come at staggered times (9AM/10AM/11AM.) Although some families chose to stay longer than an hour, most participants stayed the allotted hour's time.
- \* A variety of activities were available which included: games, crafts, pictures with Santa, snack foods, and a gingerbread house contest. Many families came in matching PJ's and everyone seemed to have a good time.
- \* This event will definitely be part of this year's coming holiday season activities.

### **The Holiday Drive Throughout the Town:**

- \* This event took place on the evenings of December 21 & 22. Although not every street in the town was reached, the majority of the streets were. Christine Maurice brought up the fact that a GPS tracking map was not available this year to see when to expect the drive thru the neighborhoods, which made it difficult to figure out what time to look for them. Discussion followed on this event.
- \* Dan gave the history of why this event was created (mainly due to COVID restrictions from 2020) and discussion followed as to whether or not it should be continued in this format. It involves a lot of planning and coordinating of units involved, is weather dependent, uses a lot of resources in the town, and drives through go so quickly that frequently people miss out seeing it all. It was decided this should be an agenda item to be discussed again, with a possible recommendation given by the Commission to the town concerning it.

### **The Holiday Luncheon:**

- \* Dan Hook shared this was a very well attended event with approximately 65 participants. Everyone enjoyed the food and the activities and music.
- \* Dan thanked both Christine Maurice and Brom Bianchi for participating in this event.

### **Miscellaneous Items discussed:**

- \* Steve Murphy inquired if the Dept. would be partnering with the Garden Factory on any upcoming events. Dan mentioned he had recently reached out to them related to doing an upcoming Earth Day event. They were not available, so the Dept. will be partnering with the Westside YMCA instead for this event.

- \* Registration for the upcoming Winter/Early Spring programming has gone very well, and most programs are filled. Also, the new addition of the Thursday evening hours open to the public to use the facilities has been well received, and good feedback has been received.

#### **Update on Parks/Winterization:**

- \* Dan Hoock shared that all the parks have been fully winterized, and the bathrooms at Memorial Park are open on weekends for people using the sledding hill.
- \* Dan also shared that he has blocked off two weeks of bookings of the shelters at both Lions and Memorial Park during the week, for much needed painting, maintenance and cleaning needed. A brief discussion followed as to the impact of this.

#### **New Business:**

##### **Winterfest: January 31 at Westgate Park**

- \* Dan shared this is basically a floor hockey type activity, so even if it's cold/snowy, it will take place.

##### **Day of Sledding: February 7 at Memorial Park**

- \* This event is weather dependent, so if there is no snow on this date, there is an alternative date planned. If neither of these dates have snow on the ground, it will just be cancelled. Christine Maurice inquired if hot chocolate and snacks would be offered, and Dan said that could be a consideration.

#### **Summer Celebration Update:**

- \* Dan Hoock shared the Town of Chili has changed their celebration date from July 4 to June 27, the same day we're slated for our event.
- \* Dan shared there might be some competition related to getting vendors/food vendors, but the commitment letters will be going out this week related to reserving a spot. Participating fees will be included in this letter. He will keep us posted on how things go.
- \* All other portions of the planned activities are either confirmed (e.g. - bands, fireworks, etc.) or are being worked on. Work is still being done related to having a food contest, and kid related activities. John Unson, Steve Murphy and Brom Bianchi all volunteered to be food tasting judges.

#### **Security Cameras:**

- \* Dan Hoock explained that security camera's in the parks were not included in the 2026 budget process, but hopefully will be included in the 2027 budget planning. A brief discussion followed mentioning security concerns in the parks.

#### **Valentine's Day Lunch (2/13/26)/St. Patrick's Day Lunch(3/17/26):**

- \* Plans are under way for both these events and they both should be very successful. Dan will report back at a later meeting concerning them.

#### **Buckets & Badges Event:**

- \* Dan is working on setting up this event with the Gates Police and having a basketball game between the police department and community participants. He is looking for sponsorship so possibly there would be a free basketball give away. More information will be forthcoming.

#### **Kentucky Derby Day Event (5/2/26):**

- \* This is an event held for adults to celebrate the Kentucky Derby.

#### **Miscellaneous Items discussed:**

- \* Brom Bianchi inquired about the debris pick up at First Responders Park. Dan shared that an assessment had been done by the Town related to the removal of the barrels in the pond, but nothing has been done yet to address it. Extensive discussion followed concerning this safety situation. Brom is going to inquire on getting bids from independent companies pertaining to cleaning up this debris, and will report back to the Commission at our February meeting.
- \* Christine Maurice raised her concerns about reaching veterans who live in apartments/don't own property/etc. so they are aware of the Veteran's Day ceremony held in November. The invitation mailing is based on tax records. A brief discussion followed, and Dan will work with Christine to remedy this situation.
- \* The August 15 "Kid's Fest" will be held at First Responders Park, and planning is still be done related to this event.
- \* Christine Maurice inquired as where the musical concerts would be held this summer, and if the band shell at Memorial Park would be used? Dan indicated it's really not groomed yet for that type of activity, so the concerts would remain at the Town Hall parking area.
- \* Dan mentioned the outside bathrooms at Lions Park are being paid for by grant monies and should be in place in early spring. He also said the new swing set at Lions Park will be installed then also. The Memorial Park playground replacement set will be installed during that timeline also.
- \* The Commissioners were very pleased with the most recent brochure printing. Using the higher quality paper to print on truly made a difference in clarity and readability of type, and the color of pictures. Approximately 11,000 copies are mailed, and 400-500 are distributed in other ways. Christine Maurice asked about distribution in apartment housing/etc. Dan explained they do their best to get them out to everyone.

#### **Other:**

- \* Dan mentioned the Westgate playground shade will not be installed until late spring. A cement pad will be poured in that area, and should accommodate at least 5-6 picnic tables.
- \* Dan mentioned the German Fed. wants to expand their land usage at Memorial Park and have spoken with the Town Supervisor about it. At this point, their request has been denied.

A motion was made by Steve Murphy and seconded by Christine Maurice the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 4:04PM. The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 10, 2026 - 3PM at the Dept. Conference Room

Respectfully Submitted,  
Valerie Young - Commission Secretary