



# Gates Recreation and Parks Commission Meeting February 10, 2026



Those in Attendance:

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

The meeting was called to order by Brom Bianchi at 3:02 PM.

The minutes from the January 13 meeting were reviewed. Brom Bianchi asked for a further explanation of the Kentucky Derby event. Dan Hock explained it was a senior event that will include light food options, games and activities related to the Kentucky Derby race, and then will culminate by watching the race. Following this explanation, a motion was made by Steve Murphy, and seconded by Christine Maurice the minutes be accepted as written. The vote was unanimous to accept this document.

There was no financial report to present. Dan will email this document to the Commission when he receives it from the finance department.

**Unfinished/Old Business:**

**Winterfest Event:**

Dan Hock shared this event occurred as planned, with many players returning to participate. This event was playing street hockey on the basketball courts at Westgate. The weather could have been better, but everyone seemed to have good time.

**Community Sledding Event:**

Due to inclement weather conditions (low temperatures/negative wind chills/snow) this event was cancelled. Dan shared the sledding hill should be groomed more, so delaying this event until next year might be a better choice. In addition, the outside bathrooms were not available due to recently burst pipes. This facility is now closed, and will not be repaired until better weather conditions. Extensive discussion followed concerning this bathroom situation. Highlights included the following:

- \* Questioned if this facility was built with our winter weather conditions taken into consideration?
- \* Who is responsible for making the repairs? Do repairs fall under a warrantee since this is a new facility?
- \* What timeline should we expect this to be repaired?
- \* What costs are going to be related to fixing this, so it doesn't happen again?

When more information is available, this will be discussed again.

**Senior Lunch Program:**

Dan shared this program is still going well, although for some days, when the weather has been particularly harsh, the attendance has been down. Christine Maurice added that the registration process is made 10-days out, so there might be times when a conflict occurs, the person isn't feeling well, or bad weather, and the person might change their mind. The 10-day registration process is a County regulation.

**Senior Exercise/Tai Chi Programs:**

Dan shared these programs are well attended by seniors. There are two Tai Chi programs and each has an enrollment of 15-20. The Sr. Exercise program has an enrollment of 35-40. These classes are obviously meeting the needs of our senior community members.

**Youth/Child Programs:**

Dan shared the upcoming recess camp week enrollment is at capacity. Other program offerings for youth/children have been well supported too. The GAP program is running well also.

Dan shared that he was recently informed that both Armstrong and Disney Schools will not be available to use for summer camp this year due to construction going on at each of these sites. This will have a huge impact on how the camp program is run this summer. The staff is looking at what other options might be available to address this change. Extensive discussion took place concerning this situation. Highlights of that discussion included the following:

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| * Use of Hope Hall School    | * Use of Town Hall (not a good option as construction will be going on during the summer) |
| * Use of North Star School   | * Use of GCMS   |
| * Use of some local churches | * Use of Wegman Rd. Park site   |

Dan shared that another option would be to limit the enrollment to fewer children, which in turn would cut back on staffing/supplies/costs. Dan also mentioned applications for camp staff are now being accepted, and enrollment for camp will start on March 23.

**Valentine's Party/St. Patrick's Day Events:**

Both of these are events are for our adult/senior community members, and will include food and entertainment. Dan will report back at the March meeting the status of these programs.

### **Holiday Around the Town Ride:**

Discussion about this event is a carryover from our last meeting. Extensive discussion took place. Highlights of that discussion include the following:

- \* What are the costs of doing this event?
- \* How many hours of planning/coordination between departments is needed for this to take place?
- \* How effective is it? Has anyone surveyed the community if they want to continue this type of activity?
- \* How can this be tracked better as the drive-by goes through so quickly, it might actually be missed by many people?

Brom Bianchi will touch base with Cosmo Guinta (Town Supervisor) before the next meeting and ask for input on this event. He will share that information at our March meeting.

### **New Business:**

#### **Easter Egg Hunt:**

Dan shared several options for prizes for the upcoming Easter Egg Hunt. After a brief discussion, the decision to get the blow up beach balls for the younger children was made, and the Mini Light up Puff balls for the older children. Dan shared the staff wanted to shrink down the size of the field of eggs for the older children (ages 6-8) since fewer of them attend. This would allow for an area for the very small children (age under 3) to have their own field of eggs, and not get run over by older children. The remaining field would be for children (ages 3-5) which is the age group the majority of the children fall under. The consideration of getting a separate prize for the 3 and younger group will be considered also. Dan also shared that a sound system has been rented for that day, which will help when announcements are made.

#### **Summer Celebration update:**

Dan shared updated information about this upcoming event. This included a parade map, the names of the bands who will be entertaining, and also a copy of the advertisement that will be appearing in the upcoming edition of the Cornerstone. Discussion followed. Highlights of that discussion included the following:

- \* Increase the size of the printed date for this June event, so it is more noticeable in the advertising notification.
- \* The need for another reminder about this event done closer to the date in June. Maybe a postcard mailing?
- \* Review of vendors participating, which would include food vendors, community groups, floats, artisans, etc.
- \* Children's activities, traffic control, buses for transport from parking lots, final layout of where things will be set up.
- \* Food judging contests: Brom Bianchi - Tacos; John Unson - Pizza and Steve Murphy - Garbage Plate

#### **National Parks Day:**

Dan shared this will be held at Westgate Park on May 2 from 9AM-11AM. There will be many projects set up to celebrate this national day. These might include: garden tending, cleaning up of trash/garbage, painting, etc.

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

- \* This event will be held on May 2 also, from 2PM-4PM at Westgate Park. This is an event done in conjunction with the Gates Police, and will include a basketball game between the police and community participants. Dan is also looking for sponsorship to get donations of basketballs that can be distributed as prizes. When more information is available, Dan will share it with the Commission.

#### **Park(s) Maintenance Update:**

Dan shared the following information:

- \* The cabin at Westgate Park has been painted and looks very good.
- \* The cabin at Lions Park is being painted this week.
- \* The cabin at Memorial Park will be painted once the Lions Park project is done.
- \* The first payment for the outside bathrooms at Lions Park has been made. Installation should be in early May.

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

- \* A brief discussion took place on the value of surveying the community as to what they might be looking for in programming, parks facilities, etc. Survey's done in the past have been helpful, but unfortunately very few people respond back. This discussion was tabled.
- \* Dan shared an updated listing of staff members/Commission members phones/address listing. He mentioned that Randy Minster is the Supt. of Public Works, and Nick Santillo is the new Hwy. Dept. Supervisor.
- \* Steve Murphy inquired about the status of the barrels in the pond at First Responders park? Dan shared they are still there. Hopefully, they'll be removed this spring.
- \* Christine Maurice asked about the status of the information the Commission collected on improvements at Memorial Park last year, and whether or not anything has been done related to it. Dan shared that he's not aware of any actions being taken on that listing.

A motion was made by Steve Murphy and seconded by Brom Bianchi the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 3:59PM.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 10, 2026 - 3PM at the Dept. Conference Room

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Young - Commission Secretary