



Gates Recreation and Parks Commission Meeting May 12, 2026



Those in Attendance:

Commissioners: Brom Bianchi Christine Maurice Steve Murphy John Unson
 Jim Battaglia (via Zoom)
Director: Dan Hoock
Town Board Liaison: Chris DiPonzio - not in attendance

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

The minutes from the April 16 meeting were reviewed. No changes were made. A motion was made by Steve Murphy, and seconded by Brom Bianchi the minutes be accepted as written. The vote was unanimous to accept this document.

The financial report was reviewed and discussed. The highlights of that discussion are as follows:

- * Brom Bianchi inquired about the amount of monies allocated for the upcoming Summer Celebration, and whether or not it would cover all the costs? Dan Hoock explained that although the amount of money scheduled is more than usually spent on this event, all of the costs incurred so far would be covered. Savings were accomplished because local bands were hired for entertainment; the fireworks are costing more than usual (\$10,000) but monies allocated will cover that increase. Also, an additional bathroom trailer will also be covered.
- * John Unson questioned if the current monies scheduled for gas purchases would cover the costs, as gas prices have been escalating? Dan explained that our buses fill up at the GCSD bus garage, and so far, the costs have fallen well within the budgeted amounts.
- * Dan Hoock explained that the listed \$40,000 (Code A00-7140-2000 Playgrds-Capital Equip.) is to cover the costs for the Lions Park bathrooms. The company wanted the payment to be broken down by 10%; 40%; 40% and 10%. This \$40,000 is the second 40% payment.

A motion was made by Jim Battaglia, and seconded by Christine Maurice, the finance report be accepted as presented. The vote was unanimous to accept this document as presented.

Unfinished/Old Business:

National Parks Day (May 2):

- * Dan shared that a great deal of work was accomplished with a small group of dedicated volunteers, and also some members of the Grounds dept. The shelter gutters were cleaned out, some painting got done, and generalized clean-up occurred. A Girl Scout troop (approximately 8 girls/parents) volunteered to help which was great. The weather could have been better, but for a first time effort for this event, Dan felt it was successful.
- * Dan shared that as soon as the "seasonal" help starts to work for the Grounds Dept. they will focus on cleaning up the gardens around the park signage and plant flowers. This will be at Lions Park, Memorial Park and First Responders Park. Wegman Rd. Park is taken care of by the Gates Garden Club, and at Westgate Park, the plaza owner takes care of the landscaping
- * Dan also mentioned that a new "fairy garden" was going to be added to the landscaping done at the back of the Town Hall, which should add a lot of interest in that area.

Badges & Buckets Event (May 2):

- * Unfortunately the weather was quite cool and damp, so the turnout for this event was lower than hoped for, but for those who came, they had a good time! Everyone involved enjoyed their playing time, eating (from donated food/drinks from Walmart) and also receiving basketballs as prizes (again, donated by Walmart.) This event will definitely be considered to do again, but maybe at a later time in May or early June.

Ongoing Classes and Summer Classes:

- * Dan shared that most of the spring classes are winding down over the next few weeks and should be done by early June. There are no scheduled classes for the summer at the Town Hall due to the major renovations that will be occurring. Dan did share, at this point he's not sure exactly how the renovation work schedule will be happening, and that there is a chance it might effect the fall schedule for classes. Hopefully, once the project starts more information on a timeline will be available.

New Business:

Summer Celebration Update:

- * Dan shared a color-coded sheet listing all the events, community groups, bands, food vendors, etc. that have been confirmed. There are still a few open slots to be filled, but all is moving along well with this event. A brief discussion followed. It was mentioned that the food contest that was talked about earlier in the year would now include five local restaurants participating, and the dish being judged would be a "garbage plate." A brief discussion followed. Dan also mentioned a post card mailing would be done approximately a week ahead of this event to make sure that our community is notified of what will be happening on that day.

Status of Parks:

- * Dan reported that all the parks, and all the bathrooms, were open now. Brom Bianchi asked if the potholes on the road into First Responders Park could be addressed, as they are huge and could damage cars. The fact that the road isn't paved makes this road even more of a challenge to drive on. Dan said he would report that information to the Highway Dept.
- * Dan explained the status of the playground work scheduled for Memorial Park, as well as the swing set replacement and new bathroom placement at Lions Park, would be done as soon as the weather was better, and grounds weren't so water-logged. Hopefully, things will be underway by the end of May.
- * Steve Murphy inquired whether bookings at Memorial Park were still on hold? Dan explained that he reopened the bookings when the new cabin building project was cancelled. Right now, the park is booked for the 2026 season. Dan mentioned that for 2027, he might close the bookings for a few months, as there are some renovation project options that might be done to the current cabin using the grant monies that have been set aside to have that happen. Discussion followed as to what those improvements might include. Dan mention that possibly rerouting the main road might be considered, upgrading some areas inside the current cabin, landscaping, etc. Jim Battaglia asked if the listing of improvements the Commission put together a year ago for Memorial Park would be taken into consideration? Dan assured him it would be given top priority. Dan shared also, that once a plan of options is created, Commission input and suggestions would be asked for.
- * Dan mentioned that more grant monies are being investigated to possibly cover the costs of a new playground at the Wegman Rd, Park, and if it qualifies, possibly at First Responders Park too.
- * Dan also mentioned that the "Friends" group has approached him related to disbanding. This is a group of volunteers that over the years, worked very hard raising funds for the Dept., that would cover costs of items and events that Town monies didn't cover. When they disband, the remaining treasury monies will be given to the Dept. Dan suggested that these monies could be put towards a new floating dock system at Lions Park. A brief discussion followed. Dan also mentioned he's researching information related to maintaining "healthy" ponds and how to maintain them. He will report back at a later meeting concerning these options.
- * Christine Maurice inquired about the "spotted" fly program, but Dan has not heard anything concerning it this year.

Summer Camp:

- * Dan shared that all but Lions Park campsites are booked solid for the summer. At Lions Park there are still a few openings left.
- * Dan shared that GCSD will again be supplying all the camp sites with both breakfast and lunch options every day the camps are open.
- * Dan shared the listing of staff members who have been hired to work at the camp program. He was very pleased that so many of these seasonal employees are experienced and have worked with us before. The new hires are mostly people who have worked as volunteers at the camp. Dan feels very positive about the camp staff this year.
- * Anyone on the Commission is welcomed to come to the orientation day scheduled for June 29 (new staff) or June 30 (all staff.)

Food Link Truck/Farmer's Market:

- * The Food Link truck had a "pop up" date open and came to Gates. It was well received, and hopefully will come again. If Dan gets information on a date(s) that this might happen, he will let the Commission know.
- * The Farmer's Market will be happening on the first and third Sundays of the month, and will take place at the Gates Library parking lot. The time for this event is 10AM - 1PM.

Budget Meeting for 2027 Budget Planning:

- * Dan shared that the process for planning for the 2027 budget will starting by mid-July and he welcomed any input from the Commission. Several of the Commissioners expressed interest in being part of this planning. Dan will send out options for dates in July.

Memorial Day Celebration:

- * Dan thanked Christine for offering to be the "rose presenter" representing the Commission at this event. Brom Bianchi indicated if he is in town, he will try to be there also. A brief discussion followed.

Miscellaneous Items discussed:

- * Dan mentioned the presentation by the GCMS held on May 16 went well, and 70 senior members from our community attended.
- * Steve Murphy inquired about plans for Veteran's day in November. Dan mentioned it will be a the GCPerforming Art Center. There will an essay contest and Dan will try to get some military volunteers to go to the schools and talk about their military experiences. Dan also shared he'd like to offer a light lunch option as a "thank you" for the veterans who attend. Discussion followed. Dan will keep the Commission informed as this event gets closer.
- * A brief discussion occurred about the Commission getting more involved in community projects. Discussion occurred as to what options this might include (e.g. - Hinchey House, donated property from Dolomite, etc.) This discussion will continue at upcoming meetings.

A motion was made by Steve Murphy and seconded by Christine Maurice, the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00PM. The next meeting will be Tuesday, June 9, 2026 - 3PM at the Lions Park shelter.

Respectfully Submitted,
Valerie Young - Commission Secretary