East Haddam Recreation Commission

Special Meeting Minutes
September 28, 2026

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Recreation Commission was called to order by the Chair, Mr. Grillo, at 7:02 PM at the Municipal Office Complex.

Attendance

Members Present: Chick Grillo, Patrick Laffan, Barbara Free, Christine King, Travis Goodie, Margy Roberts, Barry Thiele
Members Absent: Fern Tremblay, Jamie Kehlenbach
Also Present: Lisa Conroy

2. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Goodie to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Ms. King, and unanimously approved.

3. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of June 15

A motion was made by Mr. Goodie to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Ms. Free and unanimously approved.

4. Committee Report

Music on the River – Ms. Roberts noted it went well this year; there was one rain out that occurred (US Coast Guard). The US Coast Guard moved to the auditorium, and there was good attendance for that, even with the rain. Ms. Conroy noted the opening fund balance was $21,298. With all the donations and merchandise sales, total income earned was $24,450. The expenses were $24,567; the starting balance for next year's series is now $21,181. Ms. Conroy indicated she has a formula she uses for monitoring the monies to be spent. This year, the bands accounted for 49% of the starting balance, which would have been about 60% if the Coast Guard had required payment. Submissions have started for next summer, which is the 20th anniversary of Music on the River.
Disc Golf – Mr. Laffan noted the course is in good shape and is self-sustaining with a very active community who keeps it really well-maintained.

5. Director's Report
   a. Summer Review
      Ms. Conroy showed the summer camp video showing pictures from the summer. Everything went well this summer. There was quite a bit to manage, but Ms. Conroy noted she had a fantastic summer staff. She outlined that she could not praise the staff enough; they were excellent to work with and unfortunately many are not returning next year, so it was a bittersweet summer.

Swim lessons had some rain dates, so next year's scheduling will be handled differently due to lessons learned from this year. First session, there were 12 kids. For the second session, there were 13 kids.
Noises Sports Academy – very popular and it is the start of the summer camp season. Cheer was not part of it due to the high school coaches not being available but was run with another coach.
Summer camp was fantastic. There was a great intern who majored in Parks and Recreation from University of Maine.
There were a few challenges at the elementary school – a leaking gym roof which limited gym space, no access to the gym on the last week due to the repair, and the hallways were not able to be used to go from the gym to the cafeteria. The cafeteria was used for games. There was known construction going on this summer for HVAC. Ms. Conroy was under the impression that there would be an access point to the cafeteria on rainy days. Given that summer school was in session, the hallways were not open. She reached out to the Board of Education and the school administration; the outreach and conversations did not go well. There were buckets of rain coming down during the rainy days, so staff and campers were not the happiest those days. The Elementary School was used this year as the Middle School had work going on within it.
Ms. Conroy noted that next year, she will have the first week include the field trip in the price, given the numbers from this year's first week.
SkyHawks Camp – one time a week for ages 2-5, had 16 total kids.
Cheer Camp had 11 and then 18 for the 2 sessions.
They are gearing up for Project Safe Halloween. Parks and Rec, the police and East Haddam Youth and Family Service all donate $500. The goal is to have some new activities and offerings for the hayride. She is looking for volunteers to be part of the event.

b. Fall Preview

Ms. Conroy provided an update on Fall programs:

- Volleyball was revived and people are really enjoying it. Mr. Grillo asked for clarity on how programs are advertised.
    - Ms. Conroy noted that it is on the Town's website, emailed to all account holders and the programs are posted in the Town newspaper, the school system and the Facebook and Instagram accounts. She will reach out to Franklin Academy to include them as well.
- Soccer participants are slightly decreasing.
- Pickleball – new attendees must know how to play before joining. There are private group lessons and clinics available, which is the best way to learn how to play. The numbers have decreased a bit. They were running into availability issues with the High School, so Basketball has been moved back to the MOB. Due to this shift, Sunday Pickleball will shift to 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. to allow Basketball to have the gym from 9 – 11 a.m. Right now attendees are small, but with the inclement weather the past weekend, that was not a surprise.
- 18+ Basketball has been posting strong attendees even with people going back to college after summer break.
- Boot Camp and Yoga are going well.
- There has been a request to add Mahjong instruction. The Senior Center already offers it so Ms. Conroy will look into offering it if the non-senior crowd wants to do this.

- Soccer season has started, with a bit of a shift needed due to the inclement weather this weekend. The numbers are really strong across all categories. The coaching staff is very strong.
- Middle School Volleyball clinic has started
- Food Explorers started and has 6 kids.
- Futsal is starting in November.

c. Budget Update

Ms. Conroy provided a table outlining the income for the Town Beach summer's activity. In summary, income was $1,660 in daily passes, $600 in season passes (5 passes purchased), kayak rentals were $480 for 6 spaces, and there were 4 pavilion rentals ($375 total); total income was $3,115. Overall beach attendant cost $6,930, so $3,115 was covered just with income earned this summer. There were a large number of rainy days. All lifeguards are brought to Cave Hill to make sure that kids are safe. The beach attendant is there 7 days of the week. Even with the beach attendant, there was still trash left after hours in the parking lot which had to be cleaned up the next day by the staff. Ms. Conroy will look into posting a sign noting that the parking lot is under surveillance. There are a few lifeguards who will not be coming back; recruiting for next summer's beach season is needed. Lifeguard training is very detailed, and it is paid for by Parks and Rec (and reimbursed at the end of the season).

6. Unfinished Business

Ms. Conroy noted the Tree Warden has assessed the trees at Nichols Field. There is still a tree that they want addressed there.

7. New Business

a. Facility Updates

Ms. Conroy noted the Gaga Pit was installed over at Town Beach. It was very well received. A resident shared a concern related to handicap accessibility for the playgrounds. Ms. Conroy outlined how helpful it was to help her gain a new perspective. There is a large playground study being made across the Town to look at accessibility. While it will be pricey to address accessibility issues, it is important. There are 2 areas that Parks and Rec has playgrounds at: Town Beach and Nichols Field. At Town Beach, there is handicap parking close to the beach and a walkway which allows someone to go from the parking lot to the playground. The area of concern at the beach is the slope which must be addressed to get to the playground. Engineered wood fiber is fine to create pathways. Ms. Conroy outlined there are a few options for consideration; the study needs to be completed though. Mr. Goodie asked about the motorized carts with the big tires that allow for access.
At Nichols Field, the large rocks are being used for guardrails. Ms. Conroy is looking into the wooden guardrails and will reach out to see if the State can install the guardrails in place of the rocks. In addition, one of the tables has cracked and it will be replaced with one that allows for a wheelchair to be able to sit at the table. Mr. Goodie noted the best option is the cable guardrails.

The skate park sign needs to be replaced
There are a few tree stumps that need to be ground down.
There is more mulch needed at the Nichols Field playground.
Ms. Conroy noted that a small boat was purchased for the crew to pull in the buoys and lines. $800 was spent and now there is a boat with oars to be able to pull in the lines as needed.
The beach attendant shed needs to be painted.
The bathroom floors at the Town Beach need to be dealt with and Ms. Conroy is looking into epoxy for them.
The roof needs to be replaced in the next few years and the pitch of the roof may change.
Ms. Conroy outlined that an ATVer came down from the foods and drove along the soccer field at Nichols Fields which caused ruts at the base of the hill. She was able to catch the person on video and addressed with the Police. She is hopeful that ends the issue with the ATV use.
Kids' Night on the Green is December 4; planning and volunteer recruitment is underway. The first meeting for that event is November 3.

8. Adjournment

The October 19th meeting has been cancelled due to lack of quorum. Ms. Conroy will send out an email to check if November 16 works for the last meeting in 2026. First meeting in 2027 will be February 8, at 7pm. The meeting adjourned at 7:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon A. Goyette
Recording Secretary