East Haddam Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2025

Attending: B. Free; P. Laffan; F. Tremblay; T. Goodie; C. Grillo
Absent: M. Roberts; J. Kehlenbach; B. Thiele; C. King
Guests: L. Conroy; T. Gelston

1. **Call to Order** – Mr. Grillo called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

   MOTION MADE BY MR. TREMBLAY, SECONDED BY MS. FREE, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

3. **Approval of Minutes – October 20, 2025**

   MOTION MADE BY MR. LAFFAN, SECONDED BY MR. GOODIE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 15, 2025 AS WRITTEN. ONE ABSTENTION DUE TO ABSENCE ON 10/20. FOUR AYE.

4. **Committee Reports**

   - Disc Golf – Mr. Laffan reported that the signs for the new nine holes were installed about a week ago. The course will be the site of a tournament on Saturday, April 11, 2026.

   - Music on the River – Ms. Conroy reported that the Committee will collect submissions through January 1 and review at their first meeting on January 14. She will reach out to Goodspeed Musicals this week to determine available dates.

5. **Director's Report**

   A. Late Fall/Winter Programs

   Ms. Conroy provided the following update:

   - MS. CONROY responded to a letter received from Lowell Joerg who had shared a postcard circa 1936 of a picture of the Moodus Green. She shared both the original letter and postcard along with her response.
   - The 5th through 8th grade Open Gym Volleyball program was very popular and benefited from its volunteer coach. A second session will be held this winter for Grades 4-8.

- Basketball with Coach Lombardo, Boot Camp, Basketball, Soccer, Home School Family Open Gym, and Yoga all had solid registration numbers. The 16+ Volleyball program was on pause but will start back in January.
- The Lego program was well attended. A second session will be offered in the spring.
- Kids' Night on the Green had 387 visitors. The teamwork by town businesses, community groups, EHFD, EHPD, EHYFS, EH Library System, and volunteers ensured it went smoothly with 101 participants in candy guess contest, 264 cookies and 275 cups of hot cocoa served, 155 candy canes and 134 toys distributed, 178 participants in the snowball fight and 35 completed scavenger hunt cards. Winners of the scavenger hunt and candy guess contests were notified. Project Jingles took place last week, and 114 letters were mailed this morning.
- Youth basketball practices began for grades 3-5, with two grades 3/4 boys' teams, two grades 3/4 girls' teams and one grade 5 girls' teams. MS. CONROY met with area recreation directors to set up the game schedule. Skyhawks will be running the ages 2-5 program with 18 registered and one on the waitlist. MR. GRILLO inquired about the possibility of adding one more spot for the wait-listed child. MS. CONROY will be reaching out to Skyhawks tomorrow to inquire. Grades K-2 program has 46 players currently registered. MR. TREMBLAY suggested a digital game/practice schedule that could easily be added to calendars. MS. CONROY noted she would address.
- Pickleball has been very popular with high attendance since the closing of the outdoor courts on December 1. To ensure a positive experience, all January sessions will require online registration to be capped at 16-18 participants. Registration will open on December 29 at 8:00 a.m. for residents and December 30 at 8:00 a.m. for non-residents.
- General discussion about the possibility of offering a fishing club at the middle school and the requirements for a volunteer versus paid instructor program. MR. GELSTON noted that HK High School offers a program/class. MS. CONROY will reach out to DEEP regarding CARE program.

B. **Financial Report Update**

MS. CONROY called the Board's attention to the FY2024-2025 departmental financials in their meeting packets. She also noted that minimal expenses are reflected in the Building Maintenance line because most of the maintenance projects typically happen in the spring. Discussion took place regarding the upcoming budget directives along with capital projects including a larger playground. MR. GRILLO noted that a larger playground/recreation complex has been desired for years and recommended reaching out to Columbia to learn more about their recreation complex and planning/implementation process. He also suggested reaching out to MR. VENTRES with Land Use to discuss possible locations. MR. GELSTON emphasized the importance of developing a good plan with phases of implementation to encourage community interest and funding. He also suggested looking into grants to help with financing such projects. MR. GOODIE suggested reaching out to local landscaping businesses to discuss beach improvements. MS. CONROY noted the desire to hire a part-time staff member (15 hours/week) to support continued growth of the programs and department. She

noted that HK has 3 staff members (90 hours/week) and Portland has 2 staff members (75 hours/week). She currently has 65 hours/week staff with 2 employees including herself. General discussion supported asking for additional staff and continuing to include larger playground in 2025-26 budget requests.

6. **Unfinished Business**

   A. Gym and Stage Mat Project – Ms. Conroy reported that the gym and stage mats have been ordered and will be installed in March.

7. **New Business**

   Next Recreation Commission meeting is scheduled for February 23 at 7:00 p.m. in Meeting Room 3.

8. **Adjournment**

   THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL BUSINESS TO DISCUSS, MR. GOODIE MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. LAFFAN, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. UNANIMOUS AYE.

   The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

   Respectfully submitted,
   Lisa Conroy
   Recreation Director