



TOWN OF PLYMOUTH

Parks and Recreation Commission

80 Main Street
Terryville, CT 06786

Special Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 28, 2026

7:00 p.m. – Senior Lounge

2026 MAY 29 AM 9:29
PLYMOUTH, CT
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1. Call to Order

Chairman Dennis Fowler called the Special Meeting of the Plymouth Parks & Recreation Commission to order on Thursday, May 28, 2026, at 7:00 PM in the Senior Lounge, 80 Main Street, Terryville, CT.

2. Attendance

A quorum was established.

Present: Chairman Dennis Fowler, Dave Downes, Rich Schnaars, Kerri Bamrick, Kathy Bilodeau, Commissioner Maureen Cappelto, and Pam Pelletier – Recording Secretary.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance.

4. Fire Exits

Chairman Fowler noted that fire exits are located to the right.

5. Approval of Minutes

a. April 16, 2026 Meeting

It was noted that the April meeting had been canceled, and therefore the minutes under consideration were from the March 19, 2026 meeting. A **MOTION** was made to approve the minutes as presented.

MOTION to approve the minutes was made and seconded. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

6. Public Participation

There was no formal public participation recorded.

7. Terryville Youth Soccer Club Report 3:25

A report was delivered on behalf of the Terryville Youth Soccer Club by Chairman Dennis Fowler. The Commission currently hosts three travel teams using the field for Tuesday and Thursday practices and Saturday and Sunday games. The field is being mowed once a week and lined regularly, and is reported to be in great shape. The parking situation has been orderly, with no incidents to report. A porta-potty on site is scheduled for removal at the end of the season in June.

Chairman Fowler noted that one side of the field — the side nearest the parking area — has sustained wear from heavy use, which is common in the early years of a new field. The Club is pursuing a grant from the Connecticut Junior Soccer Association in the amount of approximately \$4,000–\$5,000 to fund reseeding, with the goal of having the field ready for the following season.

Looking ahead, Chairman Fowler advised the Commission that the Club's boys' program may see a reduction in numbers as players age into high school, potentially leaving the field available for fall

programming. The Commission was encouraged to consider alternative uses for the field during that period.

Additionally, it was noted that police have been patrolling the area in the evenings, which was welcomed given the site's history of prior issues. Community garden plots at the adjacent area were reported to be active, and an upcoming Eagle Scout project at the site was briefly mentioned.

8. Program Financials to Date

Director Cappetto presented the program financials. At the current point in the fiscal year, revenues are outpacing expenses sufficiently to project an addition of approximately \$5,000 to the Commission's revolving fund. A \$3,000 payment from the Titans soccer organization — covering a prior year balance plus an increase for the current year — was noted as pending receipt, with flexibility on whether to record it in the current fiscal year or carry it forward to July.

Director Cappetto drew the Commission's attention to a significant budget concern: a \$30,000 grant expenditure line item that had been deliberately included in the budget to allow the Commission to spend revolving fund money on items such as lanterns at Lake Windfield, the fishing derby, and other non-standard expenditures. Despite four separate requests to the accounting department to include this line in the adopted budget, it was omitted. **Director Cappetto** expressed concern that the omission would create the appearance, in future budget cycles, that the Commission is suddenly requesting \$30,000 it has never previously sought — when in fact the line has been a consistent budget element. She stated she had been told the issue would be corrected but it was not, and further noted that portions of the Commission's budget section contain arithmetic errors.

The Commission was advised of this matter so that members would not be surprised if it becomes a point of contention in the next budget cycle. **Director Cappetto** made clear that if the issue is not resolved by July, she would look to the Commission to be vocal in advocating for the correction. It was also noted that the broader revolving fund balance stands at \$257,000.

On a positive note, the Commission did receive approval for an additional half-time position to support parks operations — the first such staffing increase in approximately 20 years. This position is expected to provide meaningful relief to the parks crew, which have been required to work forced overtime with no ability to take time off during an extended period from December through May of the prior year due to staff absences.

9. Director's Report

Core Drilling — Revolving Fund Expenditure

Director Cappetto requested that the Commission formally approve the use of revolving fund money to pay for core drilling, estimated at \$15,000. The Commission has been discussing this project for several years and has submitted it through the capital budget process on multiple occasions, only to be denied each time. **Director Cappetto** noted she has a vendor identified and that the expenditure can be made from the existing \$15,000 grant expenditure line without requiring additional approvals, provided the Commission votes to authorize it.

MOTION to authorize the use of revolving fund money to pay for the core drilling was made by a Commission member and seconded. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

Programs Update

The Fishing Derby was reported as a success. Summer camp registration was noted to be running lower than in prior years, attributed to a combination of declining school-age population in town, increased competition from Camp Mattatuck (which has opened enrollment to non-scouts at a higher price point), and general economic pressures on families. **Director Cappetto** noted that one family with four enrolled children requested and received a refund due to a change in financial circumstances. She expressed confidence that late registrations are typical and that the program will not operate at a loss. The first week of camp has only five registrants due to it falling immediately after the last day of school; the second week has 21 registered participants.

The Pickleball Tournament is scheduled for the morning of Saturday, June 27. Additionally, on June 20, one group has reserved all four pickleball courts and the gazebo for a private event and gathering.

Senior Transportation Pilot Program

Beginning June 1, the Commission will launch a supplemental pilot transportation program in partnership with Northwest Transportation. The service will operate two days per week, offering rides to Torrington or Bristol for seniors and individuals with disabilities for purposes including grocery shopping, medical appointments, and senior center activities. Riders will be charged \$2.00 for a one-way trip or \$4.00 for a round trip. The program will operate alongside the existing Cook Willow dial-a-ride contract while the Commission works to exit that agreement.

Director Cappetto expressed significant dissatisfaction with the existing Cook Willow contract, citing chronic underperformance — including instances where the service transported only two individuals in an entire day while charging the town for idle driver time. The Cook Willow contract runs through June 2027. The Commission has sent a formal letter seeking termination, and Cook Willow has responded; they have been given a defined period to demonstrate improved performance before the Commission pursues further action.

The Commission discussed the possibility of directing the new transportation service toward special events, such as pickups at elderly housing complexes for concerts on the town green, noting that the current Cook Willow driver is unavailable after 2:00 PM, making evening events inaccessible to seniors who rely on the service.

Director Cappetto requested informal Commission authorization to use revolving fund money — not to exceed \$10,000 over the course of the pilot — to support the program's transition costs if needed, with the understanding that this figure is a cap and that if the revolving fund were ever seized by the town, the Commission would cease to contribute.

The Commission informally authorized the **Director** to spend up to \$10,000 from the revolving fund in support of the senior transportation pilot program as needed.

Lunch and Learn — Technology for Seniors

Director Cappetto announced a new Lunch and Learn series focused on technology literacy for seniors, beginning in June. The inaugural session will cover setting up an email address and, optionally, a Facebook account. The motivation for the program is that an increasing number of state and federal benefit programs — including SNAP and fuel assistance — require participants to have email addresses, and many seniors in the community lack both the account and the confidence to obtain one. The program will provide laptops and a judgment-free environment. **Director Cappetto** noted an additional benefit: with seniors' consent, gathering email addresses would allow the department to communicate program information directly to participants. If the initial session is successful, the series will expand to cover additional technology topics.

Veterans Time Capsule Proposal

Chairman Fowler presented a formal written proposal submitted by Keith Golnik, a veterans advocate and longtime Plymouth resident, requesting permission from the Commission to install and bury a veteran's time capsule within the existing veteran's memorial area in Plymouth. The capsule is proposed to be buried on Veterans Day, November 11, 2026 — a date of added significance as it coincides with the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States — and to be opened 50 years hence on November 11, 2076.

Throughout 2026, local veterans and their families would be invited to contribute items for inclusion, such as military unit patches, photographs, letters, medals, and written biographies. The capsule site would be marked by a professionally crafted granite marker. The project would be funded entirely through private donations, corporate sponsorships, fundraising, and potential grants, with no municipal funding requested.

The Commission expressed enthusiastic support for the proposal. A caveat was raised that the State is currently conducting work in the memorial area, and that the final placement of the capsule should be coordinated with the State to avoid conflict with that project. The Commission also expressed a desire for Mr. Golnik to return in September or October to present his plans in greater detail prior to the burial ceremony.

MOTION to approve and support the veterans time capsule proposal by Keith Golnik was made and seconded. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

Flag Lighting

It was noted that the Commission is addressing the issue of flags in town not being properly illuminated at night, which legally requires them to be lowered at dusk. The Commission is purchasing a solar panel light fixture for the flag at the front of the building at a cost of approximately \$400. A suggestion was made that, on an annual basis, the Commission consider purchasing similar solar lighting for other flag installations around town where organizations such as the American Legion may lack the resources to do so themselves.

10. Chairman/Commissioners Comments

Kerri Bamrick reported visiting Lake Windfield regularly and commended the parks staff for the quality of maintenance and upkeep at that location.

Chairman Fowler reported that he has been serving on the Mayor's Citizens Advisory Council, which meets on the first Tuesday of each month. He advised the Commission that he consistently raises parks and recreation priorities in that forum, including the Lake Windfield swimming situation and the core drilling project. He offered to bring specific items to that council at the Commission's request and committed to providing a brief update to the Commission each month on highlights from those meetings.

A significant and extended discussion took place regarding the future of the Senior Center. It is widely understood — based on information from various forums — that the Police Department is likely to take over the current building that houses the Senior Center, due to space and accreditation needs at the police station. The Commission discussed the urgency of identifying a suitable alternative location that includes access to a kitchen, adequate parking, and single-floor accessibility.

Locations discussed included the Terryville branch of the public library (ruled out due to severe parking constraints during school activities), the Harwinton Avenue fire station and Plymouth Company Fire location (noted as a possibility given its newer construction, ample parking, and single-floor layout), the Gosinski Park facility, and the possibility of a modular or prefabricated structure on town-owned land. **Director Cappetto** emphasized that without knowing when the displacement will occur, it is difficult to plan and schedule programming — particularly events requiring kitchen access such as the Lunch and Learn series.

The Commission acknowledged that when the building was originally constructed, it was funded with the understanding that a senior center would be maintained therein, and that this history could be leveraged to advocate for a quality replacement space. **Director Cappetto** made clear that while she does not intend to obstruct the police department's needs, she will insist that seniors be relocated to an appropriate, functional space — not simply any available room.

11. Adjourn

MOTION to adjourn was made by **Rich Schnaars** and seconded by **Kerri Bamrick**. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by,

Pam Pelletier, Recording Secretary