



TOWN OF PLYMOUTH

Parks and Recreation Commission

80 Main Street

Terryville, CT 06786

MINUTES

Assembly Room

October 15, 2026

Dennis Fowler
TOWN CLERK

PLYMOUTH, CT
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
RECEIVED FOR RECORD
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1. Call to Order- Please state Date & Time for the Record

Chairman Dennis Fowler called the meeting to order on October 15, 2026, at 7:05 PM.

2. Attendance

Present: Chairman Dennis Fowler, Commissioner David Downes, Commissioner Richard Schnaars (remote, via phone), Commissioner Kerri Bamrick, Commissioner Kathy Bilodeau, Commissioner Kelly Vitale, Councilman TJ Zagurski, Parks and Recreation Director Maureen Cappetto and Pam Pelletier-Recording Secretary.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Dennis Fowler led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Fire Exits

Chairman Dennis Fowler identified the fire exits as out to the right and then right again through the front door.

5. Approval of Minutes

September 10, 2026 Meeting

MOTION: Motion to approve the minutes of the September 10, 2026 meeting was made by Kathy Bilodeau and seconded by Kelly Vitale. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Public Participation - No members of the public were present.

7. Terryville Youth Soccer Club Report

Chairman Dennis Fowler reported that the field was in the best condition it had ever been in, thanks to the rain, warmth, and cool nights. The club plans to invite the Lions Club to an end-of-year game, played by either a travel team or a younger recreation team, to show appreciation for the Lions Club's support when the field opened a couple of years ago. No date has been set. The Chairman noted that the junior varsity team did not field a team this season because there were not enough players.

Chairman Dennis Fowler also reported telling Athletic Director Mark Fowler that, under the existing agreement, the high school may use the field if one of its teams advances to the state tournament. The club hopes to renew the agreement next year.

8. Program Financials to date

Director Cappetto reported that at least five checks for the Lanterns on the Lake event had to be issued without the program and project line item that she had requested for the \$30,000 budget. The Mayor arranged an interim method so that the band, portable restroom vendor, sound technician, and others

could be paid. She said the funds would be moved once the matter is resolved, so the expenditures did not yet appear in the Commission's accounts.

The one significant purchase was \$4,799 for a larger equipment trailer, shown under equipment, that lets maintenance staff carry two mowers at once. Because a capital request for the trailer was expected to reach about \$25,000, she purchased it directly. Facilities will include a new mower in its capital request and, in the meantime, will use one of its existing mowers as a replacement. Commissioner Downes noted the trailer had been used heavily that fall.

9. Director's Report

E-bikes and Veterans Memorial Park. Director Cappetto presented a letter from a resident to the Superintendent and the Commission. The resident reported youths on e-bikes spinning their tires on the Veterans Memorial Park basketball court, leaving dead spots in the surface that affect ball bounce. The letter also mentioned a \$300,000 capital allocation for the park's playscape. Director Cappetto confirmed with the Mayor's office that no such allocation existed and responded courteously to the resident. She said signage would be added, but physical barriers or gates would impede handicapped access. She said increased police patrols were the most effective available remedy.

Commissioner Kerri Bamrick reported being confronted by three young riders on motorized bikes at Lake Winfield that day. The riders ignored a warning and responded with obscene language. The commissioner said such riders startle elderly visitors, people with strollers, and dogs. Commissioner Schnaars also reported seeing the riders. The Chair noted that the Board of Education had passed a policy prohibiting e-bikes on school property.

Vandalism at the park. Director Cappetto reported that Little League Staff next to the park had seen youths pulling up tiles at Veterans park, photographed them, and called both the police and the Director's office. She told the Chief of Police she wished to be notified promptly of incidents at park properties so that damage could be reported to insurance. An officer later called to ask whether the department should prosecute, and she said yes, to the fullest extent possible.

Commissioner Downes said the surface cost between \$75,000 and \$80,000 and that failing to act would set a precedent. Chairman Dennis Fowler called for a coordinated effort by the Police Department, Parks and Recreation, and the Board of Education, and suggested the matter be raised with the Town Council with a view to a zero-tolerance approach.

Commissioners agreed that visible police patrols, enforcement, and confiscation of bikes would be the strongest deterrents. They also agreed that signage, though unlikely to deter by itself, would support police prosecution. Commissioner Downes noted police had begun confiscating bikes after several e-bike accidents. Director Cappetto said that prosecution, even if it drew some negative publicity, was warranted.

Basketball. Registration for basketball was opening. Director Cappetto said a 3rd and 4th grade travel team had been requested, which she opposed. She said uniforms in those sizes would have to be purchased if enough players signed up, and she suggested adding 4th graders to the 5th and 6th grade team instead. Discussion followed about coaching. Jake runs the session, and Dom had been asked to serve as his backup. Director Cappetto said she would pay Dom to attend initially and observe Jake.

Some commissioners questioned whether a first-time coach could manage a four-hour session alone, and Director Cappetto said she did not want to turn away a willing coach. She also reported that the league was considering rule changes, including 3-point shots for 4th and 5th graders, which she opposed. She said the new league organizer was well organized and open to feedback, and that a general meeting for travel basketball families would be held.

Cheerleading. The prospective middle school cheerleading coach declined the position the previous night. Director Cappetto said she would look at other candidates, including a former spring program coach, and that the Commission might need to begin paying a cheer coach, as it does for other programs. The Chair reported that a community member had inquired about starting a separate cheer program and had been encouraged not to, because the Commission's program was going well.

Other programs. Yoga numbers were growing, but space was limited. The Fire Department allowed use of a room for two Friday mornings, which Director Cappetto described as a courtesy rather than a permanent solution. A men's group grant meeting was scheduled for the next afternoon. Jenny Fowler and the Craft Box were planning crafts for seniors, and Director Cappetto was considering a Christmas trip to Mystic Village. Commissioner Downes noted that one program level had been canceled in three of five weeks due to low numbers.

Core drilling. Core drilling was the next priority, expected to start around the beginning of November. Joe from Public Works would help determine the locations.

Lanterns on the Lake. Director Cappetto reported that, given public image concerns, volunteer coverage, and the possible need to rope off an area, she decided not to serve alcohol at this year's event. Hot chocolate would be sold. She proposed a bonfire on the open peninsula across from the band, away from the area where people gather by the band and the beach.

Forecasts showed temperatures of about 39 to 43 degrees on Saturday evening. The Chair asked whether the event should proceed. Director Cappetto said she believed it should, because canceling would disappoint attendees, and the Beautification Committee had voted in favor the night before.

The band was confirmed. She had purchased five outdoor heaters, to be placed at each pickup station and on the band deck. One might be moved to the bus pickup if the band did not need its heater. Pallet signs were being collected at no cost, including from the business park. Hand warmers would be given selectively to adults by roaming volunteers. Fewer lawn games would be put out. Rain was expected the day before, so setup would be affected, but maintenance staff would still assist. The portable restrooms had already been delivered. Volunteers were asked to arrive at 4:00 PM, with buses beginning to run from the high school at 4:30 PM. A commissioner would arrive at 4:45 PM and stay late to help with cleanup. Commissioners praised the social media promotion and agreed to push it further the following day.

MOTION: Motion to approve a bonfire at Lanterns on the Lake was made by Commissioner Kerri Bamrick and seconded by Commissioner Richard Schnaars. The motion carried.

Chairman Dennis Fowler offered to help manage the bonfire. Director Cappetto apologized for deciding on the alcohol question without a vote, and commissioners expressed support for the decision.

Bus service. Commissioners discussed running one bus instead of two to save \$200 to \$400, given the expected smaller crowd. Commissioner Schnaars noted that the cost was small compared with the \$4,000 band, and that people waiting in the cold might leave. The Commission agreed to keep two buses.

10. Chairman/Commissioners Comments

The Chair reported on the previous night's Board of Education meeting. The Board denied a request to look into use of the library meeting center, citing student safety, so the Commission needs new options for a senior center. The Chair also reported speaking with Mr. Falcon of the Boys and Girls Club, who said he did not want the club's programs to take away from Parks and Recreation. He said he would cancel any club program the Commission wished to run itself and offered to explain this to the Commission directly. The Chair said that was not necessary at this point.

Commissioner Schnaars said he was pleased with the update on the Boys and Girls Club and asked about committee assignments, which had not been reviewed in some time. The Chair agreed to table the item to the November meeting. Pam was asked to prepare a list of committee assignments, the annual meeting calendar for approval, and a program discussion item for the November agenda so that commissioners can bring program ideas.

11. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Kerri Bamrick and seconded by Commissioner David Downes. The motion was carried by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 PM.

Submitted by:

Pam Pelletier
Recording Secretary