Somers Parks & Recreation Board
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Kevin Westerman
Chairman

MEETING MINUTES
July 22, 2026

Chairman Westerman opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

The members present were: Jim Boniello, Stephen Krug, Chris McCormack, John Papalia, Janelle Robbins, Kevin Westerman, Bobby Zattola and John Zattola.

Parks and Recreation Superintendent Steve Ralston and Councilman Rich Clinchy were also present. Residents Terry Clifford and Jack Mattes were present as well.

Chairman Westerman welcomed new Parks and Recreation Board member Bobby Zattola. He is happy to have him on the Board and is looking forward to his perspective on topics, participation and contributions.

PUBLIC COMMENT
There was no public comment.

MINUTES
A motion was made by Mr. McCormack to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2026, meeting as submitted. Mrs. Robbins seconded the motion. All were in favor.

MR. RALSTON'S REPORT
The oppressive heat did not stop the 2,000 plus attendees from enjoying music, hot dog eating contest, food, fireworks and watching the USA play in World Cup Soccer at the Independence Day Celebration. Mr. Westerman appreciated Mr. Ralston's willingness to make last minute arrangements for attendees to be also able to watch the United States play in a World Cup soccer game. Next year's Independence Day Celebration is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, July 1, 2027.

NEW BUSINESS:

2027 Budget
Mr. Ralston is working on a draft of the 2027 budget. He may have to put in a request for additional office staff as there is only a part-time person working in the office currently. He welcomes any additions, deletions or changes Board members may have. A final review will be done by the Parks and Recreation Board at their September meeting and then it will be submitted to the Finance Department. Town Board budget hearings will take place in October.

OLD BUSINESS

Day Camp/Programs Update

Day Camp is going well, especially given the high number of registrants this year. Mr. Ralston is grateful to the School District for the use of the Middle School on rainy days. Their staff has been most cooperative.

Registration continues for specialty camps that will take place when day camp ends. Plans for fall instructional programs are underway.

Bailey Park Enhancements Update

In May, Mr. Westerman mentioned that he would like the Board to revisit the proposal made to the Town Board a few years back to enhance Bailey Park to entice more use. Mr. Ralston shared documents that included plans, pricing, letters, etc. The Town Board initially approved the project but then shelved it without taking a formal position. Unfortunately, there was some opposition at the time from the Somers Open Space Committee, which is understandable, as its expressly stated purpose is to try to preserve parcels of land by opposing improvements, and the Somers Historical Society, which seemed to misunderstand both the specifics of the proposed project and that the property itself, though it is located in the Business Historic Preservation District, has no history attached to it. Both of those organizations apparently placed little or no value in making the park to be a place that residents and civic organizations would actually use.

The proposal presented included a path from the corners of Routes 100 and 202 to a patio in front of the existing gazebo, three small sitting areas and new plantings. All agreed the proposal of these enhancements should be reintroduced as Bailey Park, though it has a large gazebo and is located in what should be seen as the center of Town, is rarely used, because it is not welcoming and does not have easy access for older folks, or anyone after it rains.

It was suggested that Mr. Ralston reach out to the Town Supervisor about how to move this forward to make sure that Town Board would be generally supportive of the project before the Parks and Recreation Board expends the time and energy of working through the process needed to obtain final approval. This past Monday, Mr. Westerman and Mr. Ralston met with the Supervisor at Bailey Park and they had a really good discussion. Past history concerning this proposed project was reviewed. The Supervisor expressed his support for the Parks and Recreation Board to pursue improvements to Bailey Park. A memo will be sent to the Town Board requesting permission to solicit RFP's for a landscape architect to create a design. Recreation Fees will be used for this project. It will also be suggested that the Town Board reach out to the Architectural Review Board, Historic Properties Board, Landmarks Committee of the Somers Historical Society and Open Space Committee to see if they have any suggestions on improvements for Bailey Park. All agreed that it made sense to enhance the park but to keep the plans simple. Mrs. Schirmer will draft a memo for Mr. Westerman to review and comment on.

The previous design was reviewed and discussed by the Parks and Recreation Board, as were potential changes to the design and ways to improve the process, compared to the last proposal.

Angle Fly 15 Acre Master Plan Update

In January, it was announced that the Town was in receipt of a Greenway Grant that was submitted by Woodard & Curran consulting engineer Steve Robbins to create a master plan for the Town's exclusive 15-acre portion of Angle Fly Preserve, including the Reynolds House. All Parks and Recreation Board members were reminded to email any and all ideas that they had to Mr. Ralston. At a previous Parks and Recreation Board meeting, Steve Robbins and representatives from Scouts of America discussed potential uses of the land. The discussion continued this evening, including the purposes of Angle Fly and comparisons with other Town properties. The Parks and Recreation Board proposed the following ideas for consideration of being implemented at Angle Fly: pavilion; picnic area; fire pit area; amphitheater/education area (outdoor classroom); archery area; nature play area; primitive camping area; universal access trail; and fitness trail. Mr. Westerman will provide this proposed list to the Supervisor.

Reis Park Improvements Update
This evening Mr. Ralston reported that a change in the law has arisen that apparently prevents the use of cooperative purchasing for public work contracts. Because this was the approach being used for the Reis Park improvements project, the project has been placed on a temporary hold, while the Town works through this issue. Mr. Ralston will keep everyone updated.

MR. RALSTON'S COMMENTS
Mr. Ralston had no additional comments.

BOARD MEMBER'S COMMENTS
The Board members had no additional comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m. The Board will meet next on September 23rd at 6:30 p.m. in the Recreation Center in Van Tassell Park.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Schirmer, Secretary
Parks and Recreation Board

cc: Parks and Recreation Board
Superintendent of Parks and Recreation
Town Board
Town Clerk