

**Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2026
Elmwood Community Center**

Meeting called to order by Anna Park, Chair, at 6:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call:

In Attendance: Mike Fournier, Nancy Gierlich, Cara Paiuk, Anna Park, and Chris Timmel.

Absent: Patrick Cooney, Shawn Daly, Steve Garneau and Lisa Karam.

Staff in Attendance: Helen Rubino-Turco.

2. Adoption of December 1, 2025 Minutes – passed unanimously.

3. Old Business:

Capital Improvements Updates Helen highlighted some of the needs in the Leisure Services 12-year Capital Improvement Plan, which will be submitted with the budget for Town Council approval in April.

New Community Center - Budgeting work continues.

Rockledge Driving Range - Should be completed in February 2026.

Eisenhower Pool - Work is on schedule. Pouring concrete January 15.

Items out to Bid -

- Eastern parking lot at Wolcott to improve accessibility
- Kennedy Park planning
- Footbridge at the park on Asylum Avenue with the Little League fields. The board recommends naming the latter park University Park.
- Westmoor Park projects – seeking grant funds or donations for improvements or accessibility at Westmoor Park. A grant was secured to replace a small barn there. Grant funds at Westmoor are difficult to obtain for more mundane activities like replacing roofs or painting the buildings.

Veterans Memorial Skating Rink -The rink will close April 1, 2026 for extensive renovations and hopefully reopen by July 31, 2026. Summer camp will be held there, just operating without skating until late summer.

4. New Business:

- **Accomplishments/Goals draft**

The board reviewed the draft and provided comments. Notably, Becky Sears, Director of the Senior Centers, allocated bequest funds to re-establish the free lunch program at the centers three days a week, (two days at ESC with meals provided by students from the Rising Star Café at A.I. Prince Technical High School and one day at the Bishops Corner Branch by Effie's. Pre-Covid, lunches were provided daily by an outside agency that cut the funding last year.

- **Tree Canopy Study** - It is complete and will be posted to the town website soon.

- **Cornerstone Aquatics Center**

Future planning has begun for upgrading the filters and piping for Recreation Pool and Lap Pool at an estimated cost of \$3,550,000, versus \$6+ million that had been earmarked for

new Recreation pool. The recreation pool, built in 1961, has been deemed in satisfactory shape and does not require replacement at this time.

- **America 250** – In collaboration with West Hartford’s America 250 committee and Town PTO’s, Leisure Services will plant a white oak tree at each school and park. The white oak is the state tree, and is important as a keystone species as well as a historical tree. The state gifted each municipality an offshoot of the original Charter Oak tree; West Hartford’s tree can be found at the north end of the park at Asylum/Trout Brook.
- **Kennedy Park Planning** – After a consultant is identified, a spring survey will be contemplated as well as other forms of community outreach to obtain community input for what should be available at the park. These ideas will provide input for planning purposes. A new playscape and splashpad are envisioned but their locations within the park may change; other options might include a futsal court, depending on how the community responds. New signage and parking areas may be included.
- **Park Ordinance**
A revised draft of Municipal Law section 128-3 was discussed and comments provided. Rules for parks differ from rules for school grounds. Updated clear signage is needed at all of the parks.
- **Spring/Summer Program Registration**
Summer camp registration opens for residents at noon on February 4 and for non-residents on February 11. Spring program registration for residents opens at noon on February 18 and for non-residents on February 25. Health forms must be completed prior to registration.
- **Increase in rates at Cornerstone**
Rates have been steady for a year and a half. The local high schools’ swim and diving teams practice there for free. Other schools occasionally rent the pools. The Town Council sets the fees including for swim lessons. The board approved the proposed fee increases set forth on the list dated January 27, 2026 (attached).
- **Celebrate West Hartford** -Planning is underway for this popular event, to be held June 6 and 7, 2026.

4. **Friends of West Hartford Parks Report** -- None presented.

6. **Public Comment**—None.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, March 30, 2026, at 5:30 PM; location Elmwood Community Center.

Minutes submitted by Nancy Gierlich.