



*City of Bristol
Board of Park Commissioners*

INFORMATION TO ACCESS MEETING

<https://bristolct-gov.zoom.us/j/88962098471?pwd=tUIEr2YCTI5twltd8mgsAnQheYx9p.1>

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The regular meeting was held on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at 6:00 PM in Meeting Room 1-2 in City Hall, 111 North Main Street, Bristol, CT 06010.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Attendance

Members Present:

Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu, Chair
Robert Fiorito, Vice Chair
Cynthia Donovan, Commissioner
Rob Parenti, Commissioner
Aaron Weber, Commissioner
Mark Dickau, City Council Liaison
Dr. Joshua Medeiros, Superintendent
Sarah Larson, Deputy Superintendent

Absent:

Cecilia Garay, Commissioner
Leonard Lamothe, Commissioner

2. Approval of Minutes

a. Approval of Minutes: December 17, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Made by Vice Chair Fiorito to approve the December 17, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes.

Seconded by Commissioner Donovan; all in favor; motion carried.

3. Public Participation

Irida Topalli of LULE Art Training Programs, an instructor of the "Make it with Yarn" class with the Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services Department, presented a program that teaches participants artisan skills with the goal of fostering small business opportunities. Commissioners encouraged collaboration with the Arts and Culture Commission and local organizations such as the Boys & Girls Club to expand reach and resources. Discussion followed.

Erik Madsen of 70 Oak Hill Drive in Bristol, and Friends of the Hoppers-Birge Pond Preserve board member, spoke regarding environmental protection and management of Hoppers-Birge Pond. He highlighted inaccuracies in the city's wetlands mapping, proposed collaborative efforts to update maps, and suggested potential acquisition or use of the house at 112 Ambler for park operations and safety oversight. The Board noted that 112 Ambler is on the Parks Board's properties of interest list. Discussion followed.

MOTION: Made by Vice Chair Fiorito to refer the property of 112 Ambler Road to the Real Estate Committee as a property of interest.

Seconded by Commissioner Donovan; all in favor; motion carried.

4. Superintendent's Report

a. Division Supervisor's Report

Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services Superintendent Joshua Medeiros presented the Division Supervisor's Report. The report included updates on fundraising efforts for the Dennis Malone Aquatics Center Scoreboard, the results of the "Name that Plow" campaign and the announcement that Muzzy Field was named 2025 Baseball Field of the Year (School and Parks Category) for all of North America by the Sports Field Management Association; Discussion followed.

b. Project Updates

Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services Superintendent Joshua Medeiros presented the Project Updates. The updates included the current status of Page and Rockwell Park, the installation of the Dennis Malone Aquatics Center diving board and starting blocks, and the Rockwell Maintenance building; Discussion followed.

c. Year to Date Financials

Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services Superintendent Joshua Medeiros presented the Year to Date Financials; Discussion followed.

d. Strategic Plan Updates

Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services Superintendent Joshua Medeiros presented the Strategic Plan Updates. Commissioners reviewed the Strategic Plan Update, now included as a monthly packet item. The update outlines the department

and Board's 2026 priorities and associated activities. A status column has been added for monthly progress tracking. Staff reported that initiatives are underway and remain on schedule; Discussion followed.

MOTION: Made by Vice Chair Fiorito to place the Superintendent's Report on file. Seconded by Commissioner Donovan; all in favor; motion carried.

5. Old Business

a. By Commissioners

Commissioner Donovan inquired about an update on the Pequabuck DEEP Grant. Deputy Superintendent Sarah Larson reported that a draft MOU has been prepared and is under review. The finalized document is expected to be submitted to Corporation Counsel for the February meeting. Deputy Superintendent Larson noted that required documents must be submitted to the State before further action can occur. Insurance will be required, and bonding requirements will be explored; Discussion followed.

6. New Business

a. Consider a Request from the City Arts and Culture Commission to install a polyresin heart sculpture at Federal Hill Green

Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services Superintendent Joshua Medeiros presented the request from the City Arts and Culture Commission to install a polyresin heart sculpture at Federal Hill Green. Superintendent Medeiros noted that the City Arts and Culture Commission Chair expected to speak to the request was not present.

MOTION: Made by Vice Chair Fiorito to consider the request from the City Arts & Culture Commission to install the heart sculpture on Federal Hill Green. Seconded by Commissioner Donovan; Discussion followed.

During discussion, several commissioners expressed support for the partnership and the concept of public art but raised concerns regarding the appropriateness of the proposed location, citing the historic character of Federal Hill Green and upcoming America 250 commemorative efforts. Members suggested alternative locations, including Wilson Park, the downtown pocket park, areas near the parking garage and Hope Street, and other active or high-visibility sites.

MOTION: Made by Vice Chair Fiorito to consider the request from the City Arts & Culture Commission to install the heart sculpture on Federal Hill Green. Seconded by Commissioner Donovan; discussion followed.

VOTE: A hand-raised vote was conducted: **In favor:** 0, **Opposed:** 6; Motion failed.

b. Update on the Hoppers-Birge Pond Development

Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu, chair, presented the update on the Hoppers-Birge Pond Development. Mayor Zoppo-Sassu requested the item be included for continuity. No decisions have been made, as the Wetlands Commission hearing has been continued and Zoning has not yet acted. Staff will continue to monitor the application. No action was taken.

c. Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends of the Hoppers - Birge Pond Nonprofit

Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services Superintendent Joshua Medeiros presented the Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends of the Hoppers-Birge Pond Nonprofit. The draft MOU is to help formalize the partnership with the Friends of Hoppers Birch Pond (501c3) and clarify roles and responsibilities. The nonprofit may conduct independent fundraising and stewardship activities, but any park projects require Parks Board approval. Corporation Counsel reviewed the draft with no concerns. The MOU is term-limited through December 31, 2026, with renewal options; Discussion followed.

MOTION: Made by Vice Chair Fiorito to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends of the Hoppers-Birge Pond Nonprofit, with the condition they remain in compliance with all City and State requirements of a 501c3.
Seconded by Commissioner Parenti; all in favor; motion carried.

d. Acceptance of the Bristol Blues Baseball Letter of Intent and to schedule a Finance Committee Meeting for February

Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services Superintendent Joshua Medeiros presented the Bristol Blues Baseball Letter of Intent and scheduled a Finance Committee Meeting for February; Discussion followed.

MOTION: Made by Vice Chair Fiorito to place the Bristol Blues Letter of Intent on file.
Seconded by Commissioner Donovan; all in favor; motion carried.

e. Annual Review of Board Expectations - Roles & Responsibilities

Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu, chair, presented the Annual Review of Board Expectations — Roles and Responsibilities. Staff reviewed the distinction between Board policy-setting responsibilities and staff operational duties, emphasizing its importance for new members and effective governance; Discussion followed.

MOTION: Made by Vice Chair Fiorito to place the Annual Review of Board Expectations — Roles and Responsibilities on file.
Seconded by Commissioner Donovan; all in favor; motion carried.

f. By Commissioners

Commissioner Donovan presented an update on the Jim Cleveland Wildflower Field. Commissioner Donovan stated funding is approaching confirmation, and no further work will proceed until funding is secured. No further discussion was taken.

Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu reported the increasing social service demand exceeding current resources, challenges with referrals and case management, and potential impacts on Parks programs due to staffing limitations; Discussion followed.

Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu reported ongoing recruitment efforts to fill a vacancy on the Parks Commission.

7. Reports and Committee Reports

a. Fund Development & Advocacy Committee

Nothing to report.

b. Policy & Strategy Committee

Nothing to report.

c. Finance Committee

Nothing to report.

d. City Council Liaison Report

Nothing to report.

8. Adjournment

MOTION: Made by Vice Chair Fiorito to adjourn at 7:16 p.m.
Seconded by Commissioner Donovan; all in favor; motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amaris Estrada
Recording Secretary,
Board of Park Commissioners