

**Parks & Recreation Committee
Meeting Agenda
01/28/2026 @ 5:30pm at Town Hall**

Attendance:

Samantha Awand-Gortel- Committee Chair
Autumn Brookmire- Committee Vice Chair
Nick Torres- Smith Park Manager
Bex Caldbeck- Parish Field Manager
Gina Krause – Rock Cut Manager
Kerry Henderson- Skate Park Manager
Christina Varga- Marketing & PR

Not Present:

Kevin Van Blarcum- Liaison to the Town Board
Conor Malarkey- Big Indian Manager
Kayla Sharon- Glenbrook Park Manager
River Houska- Dog Park Manager

Guests: None

Meeting called to order at 5:31pm

Pledge of Allegiance- No flag in the meeting space

November Meeting Minutes Approval

Motion by Autumn

Seconded by Samantha

All in favor Y

New Committee Structure: All new managers and members have been approved by the Town Board effective January 1st, 2026. Bex, Gina, and Conor- Please see Joyce Grant at Town Hall between 9am and 3pm to be officially sworn in at new managers.

- **New Managers-**
 - Bex Caldbeck- replacing Babs at Parish Field
 - Kayla Sharon- replacing Kathy Williams at Glenbrook Park
 - Conor Malarkey- replacing Autumn at Big Indian Park
 - Eugenia (Gina) Krause- replacing Nolan Wilder at Rock Cut Park

- Program Manager-
 - Kerry Henderson- Skate Park
 - Manny Jean-Pierre- Summer Recreation
 - River Houska- Dog Park

- Vice Chair- Autumn Brookmire

- Marketing and PR- Changing Christina Varga's role from Resource Development. This change fits better with her skills and background.
 - Responsibilities- Establish and manage a P&R Facebook and Instagram page and promote the following.
 - Park rules and responsibilities
 - Hiking safety (very important in the warmer months)
 - Pine Hill Community Center (PHCC) summer camp at Smith Park
 - Calls for volunteers
 - Events happening at our parks specifically- check with Joyce for some of this information.
 - Phoenicia Library Balkan Festival- Glenbrook Park
 - Summer Concert Series- Big Indian Park
 - Phoenicia Festival of the Arts- Parish Field

Conservation Advisory Council: 03/16/26 @ 630pm at Town Hall Rep, John Milo from Bear Wise, will give a presentation to make Shandaken the next town that is Bear Wise. We encourage committee members to attend the presentation. We hope it will provide some insight into how to mitigate the issue surrounding garbage in all parks, which always comes back to our bear population.

All Park Managers: It would be in the town and the committee's best interests if each park manager comes up with a volunteer Love Your Parks Day throughout the summer. In the early spring, everyone should go to their respective park and note tasks that could be easily completed by volunteers, led/executed by the park manager, and at minimal cost to complete.

General Note: We still want to install cameras in each of the parks to help deter people from leaving garbage and other nefarious activities and are looking into the cheapest option possible. (Sams Club- 3 cameras for \$170))

Rock Cut Park:

- Ideas for the park- See the attached list of items Gina put together for the future of Rock Cut, including name change, signage, benches, volunteer days, and natural trails/paths etc.
- Garbage- Gina noted a significant amount of garbage at the park in November. She feels most of this is coming from road traffic (people throwing garbage out their windows.) She feels July and August will be the months when there is the most garbage (she did find a bag in the woods that looked like it was from the summertime.) She will also ask the Mt. Tremper Fire Chief if it would be ok to use the firehouse dumpster when she collects.
- 212 Access Path- Due to significant traffic on Route 28, Gina would like to make a path for herself to enter under the bridge for safety reasons. Gina would need to cut some high grass and weeds. (Babs/Kevin) Do we need to have permission from any government entity to do this?
- DEC Meeting- We have a number of questions about property line and what can and cannot be done to this park and have asked Kevin to arrange a zoom meeting with someone from DEC that could help us determine a game plan for the future of this park.

Parish Field:

- DEC Signage-
 - Joyce mentioned the need for signs warning of rattlesnakes at the entrance of the park and at Tanbark Loop Trailhead. There are currently signs on Route 214 at a popular swimming spot, and we would like the same signs at Parish. Who do we contact?
 - We may also need signs to say NO ROCK/ICE CLIMBING. Someone local who volunteers to maintain the trail noticed that people are rock/ice climbing from the rocks and that is probably not a safe place to do this kind of activity. There are a lot of people that use the trail, especially in the summer months. The town only leases the field portion of this park, but the church owns the trail. Kevin and Babs are going to be contacting the church to renew the lease.

- Mini Golf- We would like feedback from the newest members of the committee on how we can make the mini golf better.

Glenbrook Park:

- Park Signs- Autumn and Sam are still working on finalizing the specifications of the signs but closer to finishing this project.
 - Hyper-local historical panel put together with the help of the Historical Museum.
 - Work with Kurt to create a map.
 - Finalizing the QR codes and additional information on the other panel. This includes our GoFundMe QR code, and general information about hiking safety.
 - We will present at an upcoming meeting once ready.
- Playground Trees- Autumn has reached out to several sources to try and locate trees and obtain pricing. Trees should be between 10-15 ft and we are looking for roughly 25 trees.
 - Cornell Cooperative Extension recommended some nurseries, including Catskill Native Nursey which seems to be a promising option.
 - Autumn has also been in contact with Shawn at Migliorelli Farm who is in the tree business, and he gave her pricing on some trees.
 - Estimates from the above two resources are roughly \$10,000 for trees.
 - Autumn also reached out to Soil and Water (NYS and Ulster County) but that came up short.
 - Autumn is still looking for funding to purchase trees. So far state grants for trees have not proven fruitful, including a tree planting grant from Governor Hochul but it doesn't apply to our specific area.
 - They are not running the Arbor Day grant anymore.
 - If anyone has other recommendations for who/where to look for these trees, please let Autumn know.
 - The committee thought that since none of the above-mentioned grants are a fit for our playground project, that maybe we will look to get smaller saplings at a lower cost (Gina had some suggestions) or to use different options like Elderberry shrubs that will look nice and fill out as they grow. We would want to review these alternatives with Karine as the designer of the new playground.

- Playground Stone and Fill- Autumn is in contact with the new owner of the Pine Hill Gas Station to hopefully procure some of the large stones/boulders and excess fill he's got from construction and use them for playground landscaping. The owner may be a good donor for future projects.

- Dog Park-
 - River reported that the dog park is frozen, but she thinks someone is taking most/all the doggy bags because she doesn't think they should be disappearing at the rate they are, especially in the winter when the park isn't used as frequently. The reason may be that the newest bags are in a roll while the old bags were individually (pre-torn.) The roll makes it easier for people to pull more than one bag as a time.
 - The committee asked if these bags are biodegradable, and River confirmed they are.
 - River also asked if she could close the dog park for the winter months because people are breaking the gate more when attempting to use the park with the extreme amount of snow we have. Sam presented that to the town board and they agreed.
 - Bex and Kerry had questioned the disposal of the used doggy bags at Parish Hall when they noticed the bin was overflowing. River, would you be willing to stop at Parish to dispose of these when you do Glenbrook, or would Bex be willing to bring them to the town hall.

Big Indian Park:

- Holiday Gazebo Decorating- Former park manager, John Michelotti Sr asked Autumn if we could put up a Christmas Tree in the gazebo which he typically does every year, but due to surgery, he was not able to this year. Autumn worked with Migliorelli Farm to donate the tree, while Sam and Ted set it up and decorated. The decorations came from the Big Indian Fire House. Autumn removed the tree on January 6th. We are hoping that the firehouse will take on this responsibility in the future, but if anyone would like to volunteer to do it, please let Autumn and Sam know.
 - Discussion ensued about planting a pine tree that would be permanent in the park and used for the holiday decorating. We would then plant smaller trees nearby so that when the initial tree grows too large to decorate safely, we could cut that tree and have a new one growing.

- We need to remove the Native American statue at the entrance of the park because it is rotting and cannot be repaired, so this may be a good location to plant the tree(s).
- We are considering planting a pine tree in all parks to decorate for the holidays.
- ADA Swing- to round out the upgrades to the play equipment at this park, we would like to ask for a donation from Hudson Valley Foundation for Youth Health for an ADA swing, as they have donated swings in other parks before.

Smith Park:

- DASNY PLAYS grant opportunity- Can we apply with the other grant still open? Robert Drake will work with Autumn.
 - This grant requires a 20% match from the municipality, which we are not sure is an option.
 - There is also a question about whether we can apply for this grant while we still have the Glenbrook playground grant open.
 - Could the skate park be included in this grant?
 - Robert Drake offered to review the information with Autumn.
- Skate Park Update-
 - The Tony Hawk grant application is open between January and March and is for \$25k, awarded to disadvantaged areas.
 - Planning for a fundraiser at PHCC late winter.
 - They will have an opening event in the spring.
- NY Forward Grant- We hope to hear back in the spring on a decision for the application Jan Jaffee submitted for Pine Hill.
- Follow up items from Nick-
 - Surveyed property line where neighbors have installed a fence. Per Grace Grant, their deed shows it is their property, but the survey that was completed trumps the deed. These neighbors need to be approached to remove the fence. (Babs to approach the property owners)
 - Right away to create a path from the park the Main Street and water access for Pine Hill Fire Company need to be discussed with Kevin and Eric Hofmeister.

- Wishlist items-
 - Pump track- Autumn found one that is mobile and does not require extensive maintenance a dirt track would require.
 - Walking path around the perimeter of the park
 - Ditch maintenance for water runoff
 - Cleanup of the bank along the water for better fire access
 - Creating a prominent parking area

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Christina Varga

Seconded by Kerry Henderson

Meeting adjourned at 6:38pm

The February meeting will be held on Friday, February 20th at 5:30pm at Town Hall.