Town of WILTON New York

Wilton Park and Recreation Advisory Committee – Meeting Minutes

September 14th, 2026 - Gavin Park

Time: 7:01 p.m. - 8:22 p.m.

Members Absent

- Sara Bogardus

Guests/Visitors

- Ross MacNeil
- Erinn Kolligian
- Firecrackers Fastpitch Softball Organization:
    - Chloe Van Hall
    - Eric Van Hall
    - Dave Blomquist

By Phone

- Ken Bishop

Approval of August Minutes

Motion: Wendy

Second: Andrea

Vote: Approved unanimously.

Visitor Presentation: Firecrackers Fastpitch Softball Organization

Dave Blomquist provided an overview of the Firecrackers Fastpitch Softball Organization, a nonprofit established in August 2025 that currently supports 12U and 14U travel teams. The organization was created to provide opportunities for girls who wish to continue playing competitive softball beyond the recreational level.

Key points from the presentation included:

- Limited softball infrastructure in the region restricts participation opportunities for girls.

- While there are approximately 18 baseball fields in the area, there are only four dedicated softball fields.
- Participation in girls' fastpitch softball continues to grow significantly, yet access to practice and game facilities remains a challenge.
- The organization frequently struggles to secure field time and currently lacks the ability to host games or tournaments locally.
- Existing softball fields are often heavily utilized by adult softball leagues.
- Gavin Park has historically been the primary facility used by the organization.
- Many players aspire to compete at the collegiate level, but participation often declines as athletes age due to a lack of available facilities.
- Participation levels between baseball and softball are relatively similar, despite a significant disparity in field availability.

Discussion centered on the ongoing Gavin Park planning process and whether additional accommodation for fastpitch softball could be incorporated.

Field Design and Turf Discussion

Committee members and Firecrackers representatives discussed several facility considerations:

- Turf fields would provide greater flexibility and support multiple sports throughout the year.
- Turf would extend playing seasons by reducing weather-related cancellations and improving field conditions during cold and wet spring months.
- Softball and baseball field dimensions differ, limiting the ability to use baseball fields for sanctioned softball competitions.
- Softball requires removable pitching mounds and field configurations that differ from baseball.
- One field currently used lacks fencing, while another field is oversized for regulation softball play.
- Portable fencing was discussed as a possible alternative to permanent fencing, given the need for shared field use.
- Infield turf on multiple fields was identified as a way to create flexible, multi-sport facilities rather than dedicating fields to a single sport.
- Hybrid turf field concepts and alternative field angles were also discussed.

Additional comments included:

- The importance of communication and scheduling among user groups to maximize field access.
- Revenue opportunities associated with hosting tournaments.
- Potential demand conflicts would likely remain even with facility improvements.
- Preliminary turf cost estimates discussed ranged from approximately $300,000 to $500,000.

- Turf improvements could also improve accessibility and potentially enhance eligibility for grant funding.

Dave indicated his willingness to assist with grant writing efforts should the Town pursue future field improvements.

Committee members thanked the Firecrackers representatives for their input and noted that all feedback will be considered as part of the planning process.

Director's Report

Ross MacNeil reviewed the Director's Report.

Topics included:

- Results and feedback from the recreation survey, including interest in:
    - Bike trails
    - Pool facilities
    - Dog parks

Shawn also noted the closure of the St. Clement's gym facilities and discussed the possibility of utilizing space at Gavin Park to address recreational programming needs.

Subcommittee Updates

Gavin Park Master Plan

Erinn reported on a recent meeting with the school district.

Updates included:

- The district is prepared to move forward with parking improvements and Veterans Flag Project coordination.
- Approval from the School Board is not required before advancing planning efforts.
- LA Group will coordinate directly with the school district and subsequently submit plans to:
    - The School Board
    - State Education Department
    - Town Planning Board
- The anticipated review and approval timeline is approximately five to six months.
- The Highway Superintendent will determine whether work is completed in-house or outsourced.
- Use of BOCES resources remains a possibility.
- Available Town funding may help accelerate implementation.

Additional Discussion

Committee members discussed:

- Parking configurations and field layouts.
- Potential use of BOCES for turf installation.

- Tournament capacity, parking demands, and revenue-generation opportunities.
- Creating a single entrance lane along the access road, though concerns were raised regarding emergency vehicle access.
- Incorporating additional trees for shade, which will be reviewed with LA Group during future planning discussions.

Veterans Flag Project

Erinn reported that authorization has been received from the school district regarding the project.

Current priorities include:

- Existing park light poles.
- Lewis Drive.
- Potential expansion onto Jones Road.
- Opportunities to install multiple flags within the park.

The committee reviewed Sara's prior notes and discussed several methods for identifying and engaging local veterans who may wish to participate in the project.

Scout/Edie Property Update

Mark reported that he visited the property and observed minimal damage.

Additional updates included:

- A draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been prepared and is currently being reviewed by SMBA.
- Legal review will follow.
- Kellie noted that the SMBA Board was scheduled to meet on September 16.
- The Town has approved the grant contingent upon execution of the MOU.
- Once finalized by SMBA, Erinn will forward the document to the Town Attorney for review.

Other Business

Recreation Survey

General discussion continued regarding survey feedback and recreation priorities.

Northern Pines Ribbon Cutting

Attendees included:

- Mark
- Erinn
- Kellie
- Ken
- Brent

Members expressed appreciation for the ceremony and presentation.
Additional ideas discussed:

- Expanding the Veterans Flag Project to Northern Pines fishing pier.
- Exploring environmental education opportunities in partnership with Wilton Wildlife Preserve.
- Evaluating the feasibility of a trail connection from the Veterans Home to the fishing pier.

New Business

- Erinn reported that a potential candidate may be interested in serving as an alternate committee member.
- Mark will follow up with the individual regarding the opportunity.
- PLAN is hiring a consultant to map local trails, accessibility features, usage patterns, and trail characteristics.
- The committee discussed potential partnership opportunities related to this effort.

Next Meeting
October 5, 2026

Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at **8:22 p.m.**