

## Pelham Recreation Commission and Department

Over the past several months, we have undertaken a review of the Town's recreation programs, including participation, costs, and how programs are structured and delivered.

This review has highlighted two important realities:

First, Pelham has a strong and valued recreation program that serves a wide range of residents.

Second, our current structure does not consistently align program offerings, staffing, and pricing with the full cost of delivering those programs. This has contributed to a significant gap between program activity and financial performance.

### **Historical Context**

The Town's Recreation Commission was established in 1946 in response to a growing need for organized recreation in the post-World War II period.

The minutes from that time reflect that the Commission played an active role in building Pelham's recreation system, including preparing budgets, organizing programs, and participating in staffing decisions.

Over time, as recreation became a professionalized function delivered through Town staff, the role of the Commission evolved. However, that evolution was not formally defined through a clear charter or policy, and the Commission's role today is largely based on practice rather than an explicit framework.

This evolution reflects the natural maturation of the Town's recreation services, but also highlights the need for a clear and updated framework.

### **Purpose of This Action**

The proposed actions are intended to:

- Clarify the role of the Recreation Commission
- Improve alignment between programs, staffing, and financial performance
- Enhance transparency and consistency in operations
- Support long-term sustainability of recreation services

## RECREATION COMMISSION CHARTER – approved 4/6/2026

### Section 1. Establishment

The Recreation Commission (“Commission”) is hereby continued pursuant to New York State Town Law §243 as an advisory body to the Town Board of the Town of Pelham.

### Section 2. Purpose

The purpose of the Commission is to advise the Town Board in supporting a recreation system that is:

- Financially sustainable
- Responsive to community needs
- Inclusive and accessible

The Commission shall also serve as a liaison between residents and the Town regarding recreation programs, facilities, and priorities.

### Section 3. Responsibilities

The Commission shall have the following advisory responsibilities:

#### A. Program Review

- Review recreation programs and participation trends
- Recommend improvements, additions, or modifications

#### B. Financial & Program Sustainability Review

- Review summary information regarding:
  - program participation
  - revenue and cost recovery (at a program or category level)
- Provide recommendations to the Town Board regarding:
  - pricing approaches
  - cost recovery targets
  - appropriate subsidy levels for community programs

#### C. Facilities & Capital Planning

- Provide input on maintenance, improvement, and development of recreation facilities
- Assist in identifying capital priorities

#### D. Community Engagement

- Gather community feedback regarding recreation programs and services
- Promote awareness of Town recreation offerings
- Serve as a communication bridge between residents and the Town
- Encourage broad community participation in recreation programs and Commission service, including identifying, encouraging and recommending potential candidates for Commission membership for consideration by the Town Board

## E. Strategic Planning Support

- Participate in Town-wide planning efforts related to recreation
- Identify emerging needs, trends, and opportunities

## Section 4. Limitations of Authority

The Commission is an advisory body only and shall not:

- Supervise, direct, or evaluate Town employees
- Approve or administer compensation, stipends, or payroll practices
- Manage or oversee day-to-day operations of the Recreation Department
- Expend, encumber, or obligate Town funds

All authority over policy, personnel, and financial matters remains with the Town Board and designated Town officials.

## Section 5. Relationship to Recreation Department

- The Recreation Superintendent/Director shall be responsible for all day-to-day operations of the Town's recreation programs and facilities
- The Recreation Department will at the request of the Commission present program, participation, and financial summaries to the Commission for review
- The Commission shall provide input and recommendations but shall not direct staff operations

## Section 6. Board Liaison

The Town Board may designate one of its members to serve as liaison to the Recreation Commission.

The purpose of the liaison role is to facilitate communication between the Town Board and the Commission and to support the effective functioning of the Commission.

### A. Responsibilities of the Liaison

The liaison shall:

- Serve as a communication bridge between the Town Board and the Commission
- Provide context regarding Town Board priorities, policies, and budget considerations
- Assist in framing discussions to align with the Commission's advisory role
- Support productive and focused meetings
- Encourage clear articulation of Commission recommendations
- Promote transparency, including the preparation and availability of meeting minutes

### B. Participation

The liaison may participate in discussions and offer perspective but shall serve in a facilitative role

## Section 7. Membership

- The Commission shall consist of seven (7) members appointed by the Town Board
- Members shall serve staggered terms of three (3) years, or as otherwise determined by the Town Board

- The Chair shall be designated by the Town Board

#### Term Limits and Appointment Structure

Members of the Commission shall serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms. Following a break in service of at least one (1) year, a former member may be eligible for reappointment.

The term limit provisions shall apply prospectively. Current members may continue to serve through their existing terms and may be eligible for reappointment consistent with the establishment of staggered terms.

The Town Board may make initial appointments of varying term lengths as necessary to establish and maintain staggered terms and ensure continuity of the Commission.

#### Section 8. Meetings, Minutes, and Transparency

1. The Commission shall meet regularly, typically on a monthly basis
2. All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the New York State Open Meetings Law
3. Minutes shall be recorded for all meetings, and shall include:
  - Date, time, and location of the meeting
  - Members present
  - Summary of discussions
  - Any recommendations made to the Town Board
4. Draft minutes shall be prepared within a reasonable time following each meeting and made available to the public in accordance with law
5. Approved minutes shall be maintained as part of the Town's official records and posted on the Town website, consistent with Town practices

#### Section 9. Reporting

- The Commission shall provide bi-annual updates to the Town Board
- The Commission may submit an annual summary of recommendations, as requested by the Town Board

#### Section 10. Amendment

This Charter may be amended by resolution of the Town Board.

## RECREATION COMMISSION — OPERATING GUIDE

### 1. Purpose

The Recreation Commission provides structured, community-informed input to support recreation programs that are:

- Sustainable
- Accessible
- Responsive to community needs

### 2. Role of the Commission

The Commission serves as an advisory body to the Town Board and shall:

- Review recreation programs and participation trends
- Review summary program and financial information, including participation and cost recovery
- Provide recommendations on:
  1. Program mix and offerings
  2. Pricing approaches and cost recovery
  3. Community priorities and needs
- Serve as a liaison between residents and the Town

The Commission does not:

- Manage or supervise Town staff
- Approve stipends, compensation, or payroll practices
- Operate or administer programs
- Control the budget or expend funds

### 3. Roles & Responsibilities

#### a. Town Board

- Sets policy and strategic direction
- Approves budget and fees
- Appoints Commission members and Commissioner

#### b. Recreation Department

- Manages all day-to-day operations
- Develops and runs programs
- Provides program and financial information to the Commission

#### c. Recreation Commission

- Reviews information presented by the Department
- Provides recommendations to the Town Board
- Offers community perspective

d. Board Liaison

- Provides context on Town Board priorities and policy direction
- Supports effective communication between the Commission and the Town Board
- Helps ensure discussions remain aligned with the Commission's advisory role

4. Meeting Structure

- a. The Commission shall meet regularly, typically on a monthly basis.  
b. A typical meeting may include:

1. Department update
2. Program participation review
3. Financial summary (high-level)
4. Discussion and recommendations
5. Public input

c. Minutes & Transparency

- Minutes shall be recorded for all meetings
- Draft minutes should be prepared within approximately 1–2 weeks
- Minutes shall include:
  - Attendance
  - Summary of discussion
  - Recommendations
- Prior meeting minutes should be approved at the next meeting
- Approved minutes shall be posted on the Town website

5. Annual Cycle

Each year, the Commission will:

1. Review program performance and participation trends
2. Discuss program mix and community needs
3. Provide input on pricing and cost recovery approaches
4. Submit recommendations to the Town Board
5. Guiding Principle

The Commission supports a recreation system that:

- Reflects community priorities
- Uses Town resources responsibly
- Maintains long-term sustainability