

Sudbury Park and Recreation Commission Charter
FINAL: April 10, 2023

This charter formalizes the roles & responsibilities of the Sudbury Park and Recreation Commission (“Commission”) as outlined in Massachusetts General Law Chapter 45 Section 5, which defines the powers and duties of boards of park commissioners, and in concert with the review of the Sudbury Town Manager Act and current Sudbury General Bylaws. This document is intended to be reviewed periodically and adjusted to meet the changing park and recreation-based needs of Sudbury.

The Commission consists of five residents elected by the town voters. The Commission is responsible for guiding the administrative policy of public parks and recreational assets and parcels as well as steering future development of recreation facilities to serve the residents of Sudbury.

Duties & Responsibilities

- General
 1. Above all else, serve the community of Sudbury and its residents, by acting as representatives for all park and recreational activities in the town and acting as a liaison between the community and town staff for all park and recreation matters.
 2. Supports the Sudbury Park, Recreation, and Aquatics Department (“Department”) regarding programs, policies, and long-range planning. Serves on subcommittees or task forces as decided or assigned.
 3. Make recommendations regarding improvements to/for organizational operations and effectiveness. Provides letters of opinion for park or recreation-specific initiatives as the Commission deems appropriate.
 4. If requested or directed by the Town Manager, advises the Town Manager on the appointment or other topics related to the Director of Parks, Recreation, and Aquatics (“Director”).
 5. Recommend to the Director potential cooperative arrangements for programs or initiatives with other towns, groups, businesses, or private entities.
 6. Provides feedback relative to recreational programs, events, or other activities that take place or could impact any Park and Recreation parcels.
 7. As necessary, is responsible for assisting the Director, the Town Manager, and/or Town Boards/Committees in special studies or town-entered contracts relating to public use of parks and/or recreation. While the Commission cannot enter into contracts or direct those under contract with the Town, the Commission will be involved as appropriate.
 8. Reviews all recreational use and park-related strategic plans (e.g. Sudbury Master Plan, Open Space & Recreation Plan) across all Town boards and bodies; make recommendations regarding updates and revisions, as necessary or assigned.

9. Reviews and makes the final decision about any addition, removal, or modification that is requested to a parcel or asset on a parcel under the jurisdiction of the Commission that results in a change of use. As such the Commission will be engaged at the onset of any addition, removal, or modification and aid with a liaison and/or be updated and advised to support communication and awareness. The intent is not to become involved in routine operations or maintenance (e.g. moving fields due to seeding), but to be involved with anything that might impact usage and user groups. All reviews will occur in collaboration with the Department.
10. Available to the Department for review and recommendation regarding recreation facility improvements, developments, and/or maintenance plans. The Commission will also review and provide recommendations when users or user groups ask for assistance/guidance from the Commission regarding facility improvements, developments, and/or maintenance plans.
11. Authors and submits an annual report regarding Commission business for incorporation in the Annual Town Report.
12. Facilitates a collaborative dialogue amongst park or recreation-focused users and either directly or indirectly ensures their questions, comments, concerns, and viewpoints ("Feedback") are raised to the Department. As such, all Feedback will be shared directly with the Commission. Commissioners should refrain from engaging in further Feedback with any stakeholders without the permission of the Commission.
13. Serves as a liaison to Town Boards, Committees, Task Forces, or other bodies as requested.
14. Participate, as required by law, in the Community Preservation Committee.

Commission Roles

- Chairperson
 - The chairperson serves as the leader of the Commission, responsible for organizing the group's activities, and guiding the Commission meetings. The chairperson deeply understands the group's interests and ensures that all members have an equal opportunity to participate and contribute to the decision-making process. The chairperson fosters collaboration between the Commission, the Town, and user groups, promoting a broad-based approach to problem-solving.
 - In addition, the chairperson ensures that the Commission operates in compliance with its charter and facilitates communication among members to ensure that tasks are carried out effectively. The chairperson must adhere to the principle of consensus building and cannot make independent decisions without the consent of the Commission.
 - Before meetings, the chairperson should carefully plan and understand the agenda, ensuring that all necessary information is available to the members of

the Commission. The chairperson will collect agenda requests from the Commission and coordinate with invited guests. The chairperson is responsible for following all Open Meeting Law guidance including but not limited to posting the agenda with the Town Clerk.

- During meetings, the chairperson should carefully manage the meeting. Public comment is welcome but there will be timing considerations as deemed appropriate by the chairperson that will be managed.
- It is important to note that the Commission should regularly rotate the position of chairperson, typically on an annual basis but with the flexibility to extend if needed. Seniority should not be the only criterion for choosing the chairperson; instead, the willingness and ability of an individual to serve in this important role should be taken into consideration.
- Vice Chair
 - The vice chair serves as the backup to the chairperson and assumes their responsibilities in their absence or if the chairperson is unable to participate. The vice chair should understand the commission's activities and be familiar with the commission's goals and objectives to ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities.
 - Like the chairperson, the position of the vice chair should be rotated regularly in concert with the chairperson's rotation, typically on an annual basis. This ensures that all members of the commission have an equal opportunity to serve in leadership roles and develop the skills necessary to lead the commission effectively. The selection of the vice chair should be based on the willingness and ability of an individual to serve in this capacity, with seniority being a secondary consideration.
- Commission Members
 - Commission members are expected to uphold a high standard of professionalism and demonstrate a commitment to the commission's goals and objectives. Members should attend meetings punctually, arrive prepared with relevant materials, and adhere to the agenda to ensure that meetings run smoothly and efficiently. Members will adhere to Open Meeting Law and Conflict of Interest Law regulations.
 - Commission members should work collaboratively as a team, supporting and encouraging quieter members while discouraging domination by one or a few. Members should act on tasks identified from previous minutes, vote on issues, and assist with projects and sub-committees.
 - Commissioners may be assigned tasks to perform due diligence or act as a liaison for the Commission on projects, boards, or committees, as needed.
 - To promote constructive discussion and decision-making, members should aim to engage in respectful and considerate discourse, demonstrating honesty and integrity in their actions and speech. Commission members should encourage participation from residents of Sudbury in appropriate park and recreation-focused activities and demonstrate a commitment to promoting the community's best interests.

- Furthermore, commission members should uphold principles of fairness, equity, and inclusion, and strive to ensure that all community members are represented, and their voices heard. Members should also demonstrate a willingness to learn and develop their skills, seeking opportunities for professional development and engaging in self-reflection to continuously improve their performance.