

CITY OF WORCESTER

VETERANS' MEMORIALS, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, April 9, 2026
Esther Howland (South) Chamber
Convened: 5:02 P.M.
Adjourned: 7:11 P.M.

MAYOR

Joseph M. Petty

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairperson John P Fresolo

Vice Chairperson Robert A Bilotta

Councilor Jose A Rivera



CLERK OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Nikolin Vangjeli

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City Hall - 455 Main Street Worcester, Massachusetts

Present Were:

Chairperson Councilor John P Fresolo

Councilor Robert A Bilotta, who participated in the meeting
remotely

Councilor Jose A Rivera

Also:

Councilor Gary Rosen

Deputy Commissioner of Health and Human Services and
Interim Veterans' Services Officer/Director Alex Arriaga
Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Robert
Antonelli

Maintenance Director Scott Morin

Deputy City Clerk Stephen AJ Pottle, clerk

1. Virtual Attendee Call-In Information

- a. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021 and in order to ensure active, public engagement, the City of Worcester currently allows for both in-person and remote participation at all City Council and Standing Committee meetings. To partake in the meeting, you may attend the meeting in-person within the meeting location, follow the below link to join via Zoom or dial the direct line as indicated. If you join a Zoom meeting by dialing in with a phone number, you can raise your hand by dialing *9.

Veterans' Memorials, Parks and Recreation Committee Zoom Link:
<https://worcesterma.zoomgov.com/j/1609351430>

Veterans' Memorials, Parks and Recreation Committee Zoom Phone Number: +1 646
828 7666

Veterans' Memorials, Parks and Recreation Committee Zoom Access Code: 160 935
1430

2. Approval of the Minutes

- a. Order - That the City Council Standing Committee on Veterans' Memorials, Parks and Recreation hereby approves the minutes of the Veterans' Memorials, Parks and Recreation Committee meeting on December 23, 2025.

**Chairperson Councilor Fresolo read the item and moved for a roll call vote to adopt the item.
Order adopted on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays**

3. Communications of the City Manager - Veterans' Services

- a. Transmitting informational communication relative to the proposed Purple Heart and Gold Star Memorials.

10.19A CM December 9, 2025

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo read the item and recognized the Deputy Commissioner of Health and Human Services and Interim Veterans' Services Officer/Director, who discussed future plans concerning the Purple Heart and Gold Star Memorial monuments.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized Councilor Rivera, who discussed whether there have been public meetings scheduled for the monuments, the planned locations and timeline concerning the installation of the monuments and planned virtual monuments/website with the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery and the Deputy Commissioner of Health and Human Services and Interim Veterans' Services Officer/Director.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized Councilor Bilotta, who spoke concerning the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized the Deputy City Clerk, who discussed the procedural motion for the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be filed.

Recommend File on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays

4. City Manager Communications - Parks, Recreation and Cemetery

- a. Transmitting informational communication relative to a report listing all permitted festivals in 2025 that includes the permit fees paid by each applicant and whether any funds are currently owed.

11.10C CM February 24, 2026

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo read the item and recognized the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery, who provided an overview of the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized Councilor Rivera, who discussed the causes relative to applicants carrying a balance after the event is over and the proposed policy change to require the fees be paid in full upfront with the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized Councilor Bilotta, who discussed the owed fees can be compounded with the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo then discussed plans to address issues relative to large fees owed to the city with the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized the Deputy City Clerk, who discussed the procedural motion for the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be filed.

Recommend File on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays

- b. Transmitting informational communication relative to 2026 Arbor Day.

11.10B CM February 24, 2026

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo read the item and recognized the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery, who provided an overview of the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be filed.

Recommend File on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays

- c. Transmitting informational communication relative to the new Green Hill Park Community Garden planning application.

11.10A CM February 24, 2026

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo read the item and recognized the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery, who provided an overview of the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized Councilor Bilotta, who spoke concerning the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be filed.

Recommend File on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays

- d. Transmitting an informational communication concerning the feasibility of installing water bubblers in the city's parks that prioritizes Recreation Worcester locations.

12r CM February 10, 2026

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo read the item and recognized the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery, who provided an overview of the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be filed.

Recommend File on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays

- e. Transmitting informational communication relative to an update on Bennett Field.

9.7E CM June 18, 2024

In Committee September 25, 2024 - Held

In Committee April 8, 2025 - Held

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo read the item and recognized the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery, who provided an overview of the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized Councilor Bilotta, who spoke concerning the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized the Deputy City Clerk, who discussed the procedural motion for the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be filed.

Recommend File on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays

5. Miscellaneous Items

- a. Petition of Patrick W. Grady request City Council request City Manager provide City Council with report concerning additional updates regarding the status of the renovations to and reopening of Bennett Field and funding not yet secured for Phase II and Phase III of the plan outlined in communications conveyed on June 18, 2024.

81 CC January 21, 2025

In Committee April 8, 2025 - Held

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo read the item and recognized the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery, who provided an overview of the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be filed.

Recommend File on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays

- b. Petition of Frederick Rushton request City Council request City Manager establish a citywide plan to establish at a minimum 30 pickleball courts by modifying some of the underutilized tennis courts in the city or establishing new courts similar to all the other towns surrounding Worcester. Further, request City Council work with the School administration to establish a minimum of 8 courts at or next to the four city junior high schools to help expand at the school the sports opportunities for middle school children.

8s CC November 19, 2024

In Committee April 29, 2025 - Held

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo read the item and recognized the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery, who provided an overview of the item and discussed the proposed plans to install pickleball court at Green Hill Park.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized Councilor Rivera, who discussed plans concerning installing pickleball courts at other locations in the city with the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized the Deputy City Clerk, who discussed the procedural motion for the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo brought forth the following Chairman's Order: Request City Manager request Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery provide City Council with an update concerning plans to install pickleball courts at Green Hill Park.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be filed.

Recommend File on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays

Chairman's Orders

Request City Manager request Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery provide City Council with an update concerning plans to install pickleball courts at Green Hill Park.

- c. Petition of Brian Bickford request installation of lighting at the Beaver Brook Dog Park on Mann St., operating from dusk until the park closes.

8x CC November 12, 2024

In Committee December 16, 2024 - Held

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo read the item and recognized the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery, who provided an overview of the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized Councilor Rivera, who spoke concerning the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo brought forth the following Chairman's Order: Request City Manager request Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery provide City Council with an update concerning the second phase of the plans to install solar-powered lights at the Beaver Brook Dog Park.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be filed.

Recommend File on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays

Chairman's Orders

Request City Manager request Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery provide City Council with an update concerning the second phase of the plans to install solar-powered lights at the Beaver Brook Dog Park.

- d. Petition of Councilor Etel Haxhiaj on behalf of Serge Belozarov request installation of a second basketball court at Logan Field.

9t CC September 24, 2024

In Committee December 16, 2024 - Held

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo read the item and recognized the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery, who provided an overview of the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized Councilor Rivera, who discussed feasible locations to install basketball court at Logan Field with the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized the Deputy City Clerk, who discussed the procedural motion for the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be filed.

Recommend File on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays

- e. Order of Councilor John P. Fresolo - Request Standing Committee on Veterans' Memorials, Parks and Recreation discuss the feasibility of the use of low-maintenance materials in lieu of grass in median and sidewalk strips.

10g CC March 17, 2026

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo read the item and recognized the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery, who discussed the different types of materials and designs used for median and sidewalk strips in the city.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized the Deputy City Clerk, who discussed the procedural motion for the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo brought forth the following Chairman's Order: Request City Manager request Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery provide City Council with a report concerning potential appropriate locations for the implementation of poured-in place rubber medians and sidewalk strips.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be filed.

Recommend File on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays

Chairman's Orders

Request City Manager request Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery provide City Council with a report concerning potential appropriate locations for the implementation of poured-in place rubber medians and sidewalk strips.

- f. Order of Councilor John P. Fresolo - Request Standing Committee on Veterans' Memorials, Parks and Recreation discuss current policies regarding planting of street trees, with said discussion to include whether these locations are suitable and whether resources are adequate to maintain said trees.

10f CM March 17, 2026

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo read the item and recognized the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery, who provided an overview of the item and discussed the tree removal process and policies, the types of trees that are planted in the city, the policies concerning tree pruning, watering and maintenance.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized Councilor Rivera, who discussed the program where people can request to have tree planted at their properties, programs and plans concerning planting trees in the right-of-way and list of requests for tree inspection and process for tree removal with the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized the following speaker:

1. Fred Nathan, Worcester resident, spoke neither in favor nor opposed to the item

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery, who discussed working with utility companies to maintain the trees and the tree removal process relative to said companies with Speaker #1.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized Councilor Bilotta, who spoke concerning the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be filed.

Recommend File on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays

- g. Order of Councilor Gary Rosen and Councilor John P. Fresolo - Request Standing Committee on Veterans' Memorials, Parks and Recreation host a discussion between the city, the Friends of Institute Park, Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), and all other interested parties concerning making improvements to Institute Park, located in District 2 at 82 Salisbury St., as well as the sixteen (16) acre, man-made Salisbury Pond, located inside the park. Said beautiful and iconic park was named in recognition of WPI and donated by Stephen Salisbury, III in 1887 to provide green space for the school and the city. Said discussion should include strengthening the partnerships between all parties associated with the park's wellbeing, clearing the pond's perimeter of invasive growth, restoring/replacing the park's corroded restroom fixtures, sprucing up the park's branded entrance sign, and opening the never-used snack bar hidden away in the restroom concession building.

12j CC March 10, 2026

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo read the item and recognized Councilor Rosen, who discussed the challenges relative to funding and the importance of working with other institutions to address various issues relative to beautification at Institute Park such as removing invasive growth as the pond, restoring and replacing bathroom fixtures, signage and snack bar.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized the following speaker:

1. Laura Martinez, Worcester resident, spoke in favor of the item
2. Paul Levenson, Worcester resident, spoke in favor of the item

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized Councilor Rosen, who discussed the timeline concerning forebay construction, plans and costs relative to dredging the pond at Institute, usage of the concession stand, timeline concerning upgrades to the bathroom and signage at the park, plans concerning addressing overgrowth at the pond and the allocation of funding from WPI's pilot payment to the city with the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized the Deputy City Clerk, who discussed the procedural motion for the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized Councilor Bilotta, who spoke concerning the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be filed.

Recommend File on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays

- h.** Chairman's Order from the Committee on Veterans' Memorials, Parks and Recreation - Request Standing Committee on Veterans' Memorials, Parks and Recreation invite representatives from Friends of Newton Hill and the Newton Square Neighborhood, South Lenox Street Neighborhood, and Saxon Road Neighborhood Groups to a public forum for the purpose of demonstrating to said groups a presentation relative to the planned improvements to Newton Square in Elm Park and to promote community engagement with the project.

12c CC January 13, 2026

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo read the item and moved to take the item up collectively with Item #5i.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized the following speaker:

- 1. Rick Miller, Worcester resident, spoke in favor of the item**

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery, who discussed the conditions of the current trees that are planted at the location, short-term and long-term plans relative to tree planting in the neighborhood and timeline relative to working with students and the public to create a design for improvements for Newton Square in Elm park, and short-term and long-term plans concerning installation of cameras on Newton Hill.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized Councilor Rivera, who discussed plans concerning public meetings and reports brought forth the City Council relative to the progress of said plans with the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemetery.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized Councilor Bilotta, who spoke concerning the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo recognized the Deputy City Clerk, who discussed the procedural motion for the item.

Chairperson Councilor Fresolo moved for a roll call vote to recommend the item be filed.

Recommend File on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays

- i.** Order of Councilor Etel Haxhij and Councilor Jenny Pacillo - Request City Manager install cameras on Newton Hill in an effort to address neighborhood concerns relative to nuisance issues in the area.

12f CC August 27, 2024

In Committee September 25, 2024 - Held

Recommend File on a roll call vote of 3 Yeas and 0 Nays (See Item #5h)

