

TOWN OF CLIFTON PARK TOWN BOARD  
PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER PROPOSED EXPENSES FOR THE CLIFTON KNOLLS/  
MILL CREEK PARK DISTRICT  
March 25, 2026

The meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Clifton Park was held in the Town Office Building at 6:30 p.m. Deputy Supervisor Reid presiding.

Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Supervisor Barrett  
Councilwoman Bellamy  
Councilwoman Reid  
Town Clerk Fantini

Absent: Councilman Fantini  
Councilman Manir

Also Present: Town Attorney Dailey  
Mark Heggen, Comptroller  
Daniel Clemens, Director of Buildings, Parks & Recreation

Town Clerk Fantini read the public hearing notice as advertised in the Times Union on March 10, 2026.

OVERVIEW

**Deputy Supervisor Reid** opened the public hearing regarding the Clifton Knolls and Mill Creek Park District. She explained that the Town serves as Commissioner for the park district and is seeking community input on how tax funds are allocated. Discussion topics include landscaping, entrance flowers, playground equipment, ponds, trails, and neighborhood events. She noted that residents have expressed differing opinions in recent years, particularly about the flowers at neighborhood entrances, with some volunteers offering their time and expertise to assist with planting and design. Deputy Supervisor Reid encouraged continued volunteer participation and emphasized that the purpose of the forum is to gather feedback, ideas, and questions from residents. All input will be considered in developing an annual plan that balances aesthetics and affordability, with the goal of reaching a community consensus on park district maintenance and improvements.

PUBLIC PRIVILEGE 6:33 p.m.

Mark Glogowski of raised concerns regarding the switch from perennial to annual flowers in neighborhood landscaping. He questioned why perennials were removed in favor of annuals, noting that perennials are attractive while being more cost-effective and lower maintenance. He emphasized that annual flowers are more expensive and require greater upkeep, and asked for clarification on the reasoning behind this decision.

**Dan Clemens** explained that his department maintains Town-owned properties and supports multiple park districts. A few years ago, the park district requested changes to simplify garden areas, which were viewed as overgrown and difficult to maintain. The proposed solution was to reduce the size of the garden beds and transition to annual flowers only, removing perennials. Clemens noted there was considerable debate about this change, including opposition from a local gardener, but the park district committee ultimately directed the shift. After the changes were implemented, feedback indicated dissatisfaction with the smaller, annual-only gardens. Dan Clemens added that there have since been requests to expand the beds again and reintroduce perennials, suggesting that the issue is less about size and more about overall design and plant selection.

Laura Brothers asked for clarification regarding references to “they” and “the park district.” She requested more detail on who specifically makes up the Park District Advisory Committee and who is responsible for the decisions discussed.

**Dan Clemens** clarified that at the time of the landscaping decisions, the Park District Advisory Committee was chaired by Marlo McInness and included approximately five to six neighborhood residents. He noted that he primarily communicated directly with the chairperson.

Clemens added that, to his knowledge, there is currently no active advisory committee, although the park district itself still exists.

Kim Spath expressed concern about the decline in neighborhood landscaping over the past several years. She noted that the removal of perennials led to periods of unmaintained beds with dirt and weeds, negatively impacting the neighborhood's appearance. She described difficulty in locating or engaging with the Park District and stated that residents felt disconnected from decision-making, adding that past landscaping efforts were often ineffective and did not meet expectations. Kim emphasized that residents expect better management of funds and advocated for reestablishing a responsive and accessible park district or advisory committee with active resident involvement. She recommended a balanced landscaping approach that uses perennials as a foundation, supplemented by seasonal annuals for consistent color, along with thoughtful plant selection based on varying site conditions such as sunlight, shade, wildlife, and traffic. She also called for improved communication between residents and the park district, as well as additional neighborhood enhancements, including playground upgrades and amenities like dog waste stations along walking trails. She stressed that residents are willing to contribute their time and expertise and are seeking a cohesive, well-planned approach that maintains the neighborhood's appearance without excessive spending. Kim also raised concerns about the effectiveness of recent landscaping expenditures, noting that approximately \$8,200 spent on flowers was not well utilized due to restrictions imposed by the prior park district. She explained that limitations—such as not being allowed to modify or remove existing plantings like mums—prevented proper garden design and resulted in disorganized, less effective planting arrangements. She added that while seasonal plantings like mums can provide fall color, they were not incorporated thoughtfully as part of a long-term plan. Kim also noted that high expectations for improvements were not met, partly due to these constraints as well as environmental factors like heat affecting plant survival. She expressed frustration that past decisions were made without sufficient resident input and did not reflect the neighborhood's best interests. Additionally, she cited broader concerns about lack of responsiveness from the park district in prior years, including delays in addressing community requests such as stocking fish in local ponds. She concluded that residents have been advocating for improvements for some time and emphasized the need for more responsive and community-driven decision-making moving forward.

Emily Gold expressed appreciation for the neighborhood gardener, noting that she has consistently demonstrated dedication and strong effort despite being limited by prior decisions. Emily emphasized that the gardener's contributions and commitment to the community should be formally recognized. She also raised concerns about a lack of transparency regarding the park district budget, stating that she has not seen detailed information about how funds are allocated or spent. She requested access to budget documentation to better understand contributions and expenditures, including costs related to landscaping, maintenance, playgrounds, trails, and other amenities. Additionally, she inquired about the possibility of community features such as sponsored commemorative benches. Emily concluded by noting that the financial aspects of the park district are unclear and expressed a desire for greater visibility and understanding of how funds are managed.

**Mark Heggen** provided a detailed overview of the park district's finances. As of the end of 2025, the park district had just over \$84,000 in available cash. The annual budget, passed in November of the previous year, included a tax levy of \$82,192, allocated to all residents. The budget does not draw on 2025's available cash to balance expenditures, resulting in an overall budget of \$82,757. The difference is explained by allocations related to Dan Clemens' employees, including summer work at the NLES and associated workers' compensation, which are funded through county and town tax bills with revenue and expenditure offsets. Combined, the budget and available cash total \$166,471. Key allocations include \$38,000 for general maintenance, covering all landscaping and flower expenses throughout the year. Additionally, \$35,000 is allocated for employee salaries, along with associated Social Security and Medicare contributions. Mark Heggen clarified that the pools and golf course are not included in the park district budget. Specifically, the Barney Road Pool and the Barney Road Golf Course are fully funded through general fund revenues. Any expenditures related to these facilities, as well as the

trails, are covered separately by the Town's general fund and do not impact the park district's allocated budget.

**Deputy Supervisor Reid** emphasized that the purpose of the meeting is to gather community input and ensure transparency in how local tax dollars are spent. She stated that no unilateral decisions will be made regarding neighborhood expenditures. The Town will collaborate with the Buildings and Grounds department, review last year's plans, and incorporate feedback from this meeting to develop a new plan. Once finalized, the plan will follow Town policy by going out to bid, with the contract awarded to the lowest reputable bidder. She reiterated the Town's commitment to being responsible and diligent with public funds.

Ann Connolly thanked attendees for their support and participation in the public hearing. She expressed concern over the previous removal of perennial plantings, noting they were attractive and that replacing them primarily with perennial mums is not ideal due to their short bloom period and high maintenance requirements. Ms. Connolly described her positive experience volunteering with the Buildings & Grounds team and the contractor, highlighting lessons learned about landscaping challenges such as rabbit damage, unsuitable planting conditions, and the importance of proper plant selection and mulch. She suggested using alternatives like pavers or decorative features in areas where plants do not thrive. Ms. Connolly emphasized the need to use the park district budget strategically, proposing that funds be shifted from excessive spending on flowers toward broader community improvements, including upgraded playground equipment for older children, inclusive features for children with autism, and enhancements to trails and other amenities. She encouraged residents to share input and work collaboratively to ensure the neighborhood serves everyone. She also noted that volunteer efforts can help reduce costs and allow for additional community activities, such as seasonal events and holiday celebrations. Ms. Connolly reminded attendees that residents contribute to the park district through taxes and should have a voice in spending decisions, and she concluded by encouraging continued volunteerism and expressing confidence in the community's ability to work together to improve the neighborhood.

Bev Berube introduced herself as an avid gardening enthusiast and expressed interest in becoming more involved, specifically asking how to join the advisory board. She raised a concern on behalf of her son regarding a swamp area in the neighborhood that has developed an unpleasant odor, noting that it is a space used by local teenagers and children for recreation, including fishing, and asked whether the issue could be addressed within the budget. Berube also expressed willingness, along with other interested neighbors, to volunteer for seasonal cleanup efforts, such as picking up litter and maintaining shared spaces. She emphasized her desire to help keep the neighborhood attractive and offered her gardening knowledge to assist others, suggesting the formation of a committee to collaborate on landscaping decisions and support residents in maintaining their properties.

Tim Leonard, a resident of Emerald Terrace, stated that his street was incorporated into the park district with the expectation—based on the developer's representation—that an entrance sign would be installed. However, he noted that this has not occurred, leaving residents feeling they are contributing tax payments without receiving corresponding benefits. He explained that a nearby green space at the entrance to their street, which residents believe would be an ideal location for a sign, has been identified as a water retention basin, limiting its use. Leonard added that he has learned of similar situations in other neighborhoods where exceptions were granted, allowing entrance signage despite such constraints. He expressed frustration over the lack of clarity on whom to contact within the Town to pursue this matter and noted that residents are even willing to fund the construction of the sign themselves if the town would maintain the landscaping. He concluded by emphasizing that the street feels overlooked and is seeking guidance and equitable consideration within the park district.

Darnell Warba offered three brief comments. First, she recalled that in the past the park district distributed an annual printed letter outlining completed projects, future plans, and the budget, which she found very helpful. She suggested reintroducing this type of communication, possibly in digital form on the website, even if tailored by individual park districts. Second, she emphasized the importance of balancing cleanup efforts with environmental preservation, cautioning against over-clearing natural areas such as those around Murphy Pond. She noted that maintaining some wild spaces supports local wildlife and is valued by residents, despite

occasional nuisances. Third, she stressed the need for prudent financial planning, recommending that the district maintain a budget surplus or contingency fund rather than spending all available resources. She pointed to increasing storm severity, potential flooding, and occasional vandalism as examples of unexpected events that require available funds for timely response and cleanup.

Joe Roman shared several comments regarding park conditions and safety. He began by commending the park district for significant improvements to the pond since he moved to the neighborhood in 2016, noting that it was previously overgrown with algae and weeds but is now clean and well-maintained, including the use of specialized equipment to remove debris. He then raised concerns about litter around the pond, stating that while he and others frequently pick up trash such as bottles and cans, there is only one trash receptacle currently available. He suggested adding additional receptacles in other areas, such as near the causeway or peninsula, to help address the issue. Roman also supported the installation of dog waste stations along the trails. Finally, he expressed concern about safety due to the presence of e-bikes, dirt bikes, and four-wheelers on the trails, noting the potential risk of accidents involving pedestrians, children, and pets, and suggesting that clearer rules or enforcement may be needed.

**Deputy Supervisor Reid** responded to concerns about e-bikes by noting that the Town has already been actively addressing the issue through recent public forums and hearings, and encouraged residents to participate in those discussions. She acknowledged that e-bike usage is an ongoing and growing concern, as their popularity increases and they are not always used appropriately or in permitted areas. **Deputy Supervisor Reid** explained that there are different classes of e-bikes, and stated that certain types—such as Class 3 e-bikes—are not permitted locally and are generally restricted to larger cities. She also highlighted that e-bikes are not intended for use by individuals under the age of 16, which has become another issue in the community. While recognizing these challenges, she noted that the Town cannot control what individuals purchase, but emphasized that officials are aware of the problem, have opened dialogue through multiple public hearings, and plan to continue addressing the issue moving forward.

Laura Brothers expressed appreciation for the park district staff, specifically recognizing their hard work and dedication in maintaining the neighborhood, including watering and upkeep efforts. She also referenced prior discussions about the Locust Lane playground, noting that equipment had been removed due to safety concerns despite its value to the community, particularly for older children. Ms. Brothers mentioned her involvement, along with others, in advocating for replacement equipment with town leadership, and asked for an update on whether new playground equipment has been received and what the anticipated timeline is for installation.

**Dan Clemens** provided an update on the Locust Lane playground equipment, confirming that the new equipment has arrived but was delivered after the ground froze. It is currently with the contractor, and once the weather improves, Dan Clemens will coordinate with the contractor to schedule installation. The team will need to meet on-site to determine the exact placement of the equipment. He indicated that the assembly is planned for spring and should be completed within the next month or so.

**Supervisor Barrett** thanked Deputy Supervisor Reid for organizing the forum and noted the importance of resident participation. Reflecting on his 27 years of service, he acknowledged that community engagement varies over time as people move or have less availability, but he expressed appreciation for the leadership and involvement shown by neighborhood volunteers. Barrett emphasized the value of reaching a general consensus among residents regarding park improvements, new equipment, and other projects, noting that coordinated input helps the Town Board, which serves as the commissioner for all park districts, make more effective decisions. He addressed a concern raised about a “swamp” in the neighborhood, clarifying that the areas in question are ponds. Supervisor Barrett explained that pond levels are actively managed based on precipitation, seasonal changes, and irrigation needs to maintain balance, noting past interventions to prevent flooding in residents’ basements. He highlighted that the town strives to keep the ponds attractive and functional, using equipment to help regulate water levels efficiently. Supervisor Barrett also reminded residents that all budget and spending information is publicly available online, and his office can provide printed copies for those who do not use computers. Finally, he assured residents that updates on the timeline for the installation of new playground equipment would be shared once available.

James Gurley raised two primary concerns during the meeting. First, he expressed safety concerns regarding the neighborhood speed limit, noting that the current 30 mph limit feels too high given the presence of many children. He suggested lowering the limit to 20 mph to improve safety, slow traffic, and enhance enjoyment of the neighborhood and its parks, pools, and lakes. Second, Gurley addressed the issue of a privately installed security camera in the peninsula area between the two ponds. He found it unnerving that a camera, seemingly installed by a private citizen, was monitoring public spaces, especially since it had a motion-activated light. He questioned the legality and protocol for such installations, expressing concerns about privacy, oversight, and the potential storage and use of the recorded footage. He noted that the camera appeared to have initials not associated with the park district, and while it is now removed, it had been a concern for several months.

**Dan Clemens** clarified that the camera James Gurley noticed was installed by the Mill Creek Park District. He explained that it was funded by a past advisory committee to monitor the holiday tree, as there had been issues with people cutting the tree's wires. Dan Clemens noted that the camera only captured about two feet of the base of the tree and confirmed that it has been removed now that the holiday lights are no longer up.

Mr. Gurley suggested fostering stronger social connections within the neighborhood, noting that modern technology often isolates people despite platforms like Facebook. He recalled that in the 1980s, the neighborhood thrived with social events, ballparks, pools, and community gatherings, creating a strong sense of connection. Gurley proposed organizing a neighborhood-wide block party or similar event to help residents get to know one another, extending beyond individual blocks to be more inclusive. He emphasized the importance of small gestures, like waving or knowing neighbors' names, as a way to build community, and suggested leveraging existing spaces such as pools or the golf course to host these social activities.

**Supervisor Barrett** responded that several park districts occasionally host block parties, and residents are welcome to coordinate similar events. He emphasized that if a street is to be blocked off for a gathering, the town should be notified and approval obtained to ensure safety and proper coordination.

Mr. Gurley also inquired about recreational use of the neighborhood lakes, noting that residents enjoy ice skating in winter and fishing from the docks. He asked whether there are any rules or restrictions against using boats, such as canoes, on the ponds.

Kim Spath stated that efforts are underway to revive the civic association, which became inactive during COVID. The group has resumed meetings, established an email address, and is actively seeking community involvement. She emphasized a desire to restore past activities such as block parties and seasonal events. Residents were encouraged to reach out via email ([ckmcparksdistrict@gmail.com](mailto:ckmcparksdistrict@gmail.com)) and share the contact information with others who may be interested.

Spencer Wohlers asked whether any unspent portion of a budget carries over from one year to the next.

**Mark Heggen** confirmed it does carry over.

Spencer Wohlers asked whether unspent budget funds carry over from year to year and if they can accumulate over time to support larger projects.

**Mark Heggen** explained that unspent funds typically accumulate over time, particularly in park districts, to help finance larger capital projects. He noted that while smaller expenses may be modest, larger projects can be significantly more costly. Historically, the Clifton Park District borrowed funds in the late 1990s for park improvements, which were repaid over several years. More recently, however, projects—including equipment purchased in 2024 and planned improvements later this year—have been funded through accumulated cash reserves rather than borrowing. He also noted that the fiscal year runs from January 1 through December 31.

Spencer Wohlers asked about the prior dissolution of the Clifton Knolls Park committee and whether there are any plans to reconstitute it, as well as the process for doing so.

**Attorney Dailey** stated that, as previously noted by Supervisor Barrett, the Town Board serves as the park commissioners and holds ultimate responsibility for all park districts. Attorney Dailey stated that the majority of park districts are operating adequately, with the Clifton Knolls/Mill Creek Park District identified as needing attention. He explained that the Town Board prefers park district affairs to be managed by resident committees and emphasized the importance of reconstituting the local committee. He noted that the current meeting was organized in part to encourage community involvement, and that the Town Board is seeking volunteers interested in helping to reestablish the committee.

Supervisor Barrett explained that park district committees have historically been informal groups of volunteers whose level of activity varies over time. He noted that in the past, the committee was highly active, holding regular monthly meetings, recruiting members, and providing organized recommendations to the Town based on community input. He emphasized that reestablishing a similar structure would be beneficial to both the neighborhood and the Town, while noting that in the absence of such a group, the Town will continue to proactively manage and maintain park district assets.

Spencer Wohlers asked whether representatives from Buildings and Grounds attend park district committee meetings to provide guidance on what projects or initiatives are most feasible.

**Dan Clemens** stated that he has never been invited to attend park district committee meetings. Typically, he receives updates afterward, similar to Supervisor Barrett, and collaborates with the committee to carry out the projects they prioritize.

Spencer Wohlers expressed concern about the removal of perennials, noting that having a mix of perennials and annuals provides continuous flowering, visual interest, and varied height. He acknowledged that reestablishing this combination may take years and suggested that phased planting in certain areas may be necessary due to the higher cost of quality perennials, which was part of his rationale for asking about the budget.

Rob Osterhoudt expressed appreciation for the work of Dan Clemens and the Buildings and Grounds team in maintaining the neighborhood, and thanked the Town for providing the forum to discuss neighborhood improvements. He raised several items for consideration, including clarification on which trails and ponds fall under the Town general fund versus the park district. He voiced concerns about sediment accumulation and poor water quality in the first pond along Par Del Rio, noting it serves as a sediment basin and has negatively affected fish habitat, and suggested long-term consideration for dredging to improve pond conditions. Osterhoudt also highlighted the need to replace shade trees in Locust Lane Park and other parks, as many have died over time, and recommended planting new trees to restore the canopy. He raised safety concerns at crosswalks due to sun glare, suggesting additional measures to improve visibility, and proposed screening or cleanup at the Barney Road playground and maintenance area to shield the playground from nearby commercial uses and stored materials. He expressed support for dog waste stations throughout the neighborhood and noted the need for maintenance of plantings at neighborhood entrances, including pruning crabapple trees and controlling vines to improve aesthetics. Overall, Osterhoudt emphasized the importance of long-term planning and neighborhood enhancements while acknowledging the ongoing efforts and responsiveness of Town staff.

**Councilwoman Bellamy** suggested that installing a silt trap—similar to the one used during construction on Maxwell Road—could help prevent sediment from flowing into Bear Brook. She noted that, in the past, the highway department regularly removed collected silt from such a trap, which helped protect the stream and aquatic life.

Rob Osterhoudt, a civil engineer, agreed that silt traps would be effective in reducing sediment. However, he emphasized that mitigation should occur upstream through multiple features along the stream, combined with dredging and regular maintenance to ensure long-term effectiveness.

Emily Gold raised concerns about invasive species and poor land management practices contributing to silt runoff. She noted that clearing vegetation up to the edge of waterways increases erosion and recommended maintaining a natural buffer (about 10 feet) to help reduce silt. She emphasized the need to balance developed and natural areas, manage invasive plants

(including some perennials), and support biodiversity. She also suggested forming an advisory board to involve community members in managing invasive species and preserving natural spaces for long-term environmental health.

**Deputy Supervisor Reid** encouraged community involvement, welcoming volunteers and noting that a group is already beginning to form. She suggested organizing into subcommittees based on interests and expertise, and recommended restarting regular park district meetings, potentially on a monthly basis. She also advised appointing a point person to communicate the group's ideas and questions to Town officials.

**Supervisor Barrett** stated that the Town will have its stormwater technician evaluate the wetland area, but noted that regulatory constraints make dredging and maintenance difficult, as the area is considered environmentally sensitive. He also clarified that the Town does not own the parking lot by the pool and building, which explains why commercial vehicles are sometimes allowed there. While the Town owns the golf course and leases certain facilities (garages, bathrooms, and parking use), there is a mix of public and private property. He added that he has proposed constructing a new Town-owned building on the golf course and is gathering information on costs, timeline, and approvals to explore that option.

A resident and frequent park user shared feedback based on extensive use of local trails and parks. He praised the town for maintaining parks well overall, particularly Kinns Road Park, but raised several concerns. He noted ongoing trash management issues, including overflowing dog waste bag stations, a lack of sufficient garbage cans—especially during the summer—and litter left behind by visitors and fishermen. He also described conflicts with cross-country groups that can limit access to trails for other users. Additionally, he pointed out poor trail conditions and unclear markings on newer paths, which create safety and navigation challenges, particularly for families with children. He expressed concern about pet waste not always being properly disposed of and highlighted general cleanliness issues in certain areas, including parking areas and nearby properties with unmanaged garbage. He suggested that the town consider adding more trash receptacles, improving trail marking and maintenance, and addressing littering and enforcement to enhance overall park conditions.

**Supervisor Barrett** advised that if garbage accumulation becomes a public safety issue, residents should report it to the Town's code enforcement office. He explained that code enforcement can investigate and address such situations, noting that a formal mechanism is in place for handling these concerns. Supervisor Barrett announced that residents will be invited to a future meeting to discuss a proposal from a company seeking to install two cell towers on public property. He explained that the Town Board will ultimately decide on the proposal, but noted that the targeted locations currently have poor cellular coverage. The proposed sites include one on the local golf course and another in a Town park (Northwood Preserve). He emphasized the importance of community input and said a dedicated meeting will be held for nearby residents, where the company will present details, answer questions, and explain the process if the town moves forward with a lease. He also noted that plans are available for review through the planning department and encouraged residents to share their concerns so they can make informed decisions.

Ann Connolly noted that the "Weedoo" equipment, which is environmentally friendly and runs on vegetable oil, could be useful for maintaining waterways. She added that an attachment is available to address silt removal, though permits would still be required due to regulatory constraints. She also raised a separate concern about difficulty removing persistent plantings and requested assistance with their removal during maintenance work.

Darnell Warba suggested that reducing lawn fertilizer use could help improve conditions in the swamp and nearby waterways. He explained that runoff from fertilizers contributes to excessive plant growth in ponds and reservoirs, and proposed that if residents reduced fertilizing their lawns by even one application per year, it could help decrease nutrient runoff and improve water quality.

**Deputy Supervisor Reid** thanked attendees for their participation and input, noting that the open dialogue was productive and generated many useful ideas and concerns. She stated that all comments from the meeting will be reviewed alongside last year's plan to determine how new suggestions can be incorporated and how the plan aligns with community concerns. She

emphasized the goal of developing a new plan that maintains neighborhood aesthetics, remains cost-effective, and preserves a financial surplus for larger future projects. She also expressed appreciation for residents who volunteered and encouraged continued engagement to build on the initial momentum.

No one else wished to be heard.

End 8:05 PM

MOTION BY Councilwoman Bellamy, seconded by Supervisor Barrett, to adjourn the meeting to the next regular meeting or any other meeting necessary for the conduct of Town business.

Motion carried at 8:06 PM

Caitlin Fantini  
Town Clerk

DRAFT