



**City of Framingham
Parks and Recreation Department
Policy.**

Policy for Use of Parks and Athletic Fields

Issue date: 12/1/2023

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Level: Department (x) Division () Town Wide ()

Policy Statement

The City of Framingham Parks and Recreation Department's overall intent is to maximize the recreational opportunity for the City's residents and the community at large and to preserve facilities from overuse and abuse. It is not the objective of Framingham Parks and Recreation to issue permits for organized activity that generates revenue for the permit holder.

This policy supersedes all prior policies regarding using the City of Framingham Parks & Recreation properties.

References

Definitions:

- **Permit Holder/Event Sponsor** – the person responsible for organizing the event in which they are submitting a permit request. The main person of contact for the event.
- **Framingham Resident** – one who has established residency in Framingham and has the intention to reside therein.
- **Framingham Business** – a business organization located in Framingham that creates revenue for profit. Businesses with DBA require a business certificate from COF.
- **Framingham All-volunteer Non-profit Organization**– an organization, based in Framingham, run by unpaid volunteers, which holds a current 501c3 certificate.
- **Framingham Volunteer Organization** – an organization, based in Framingham, run by all volunteers.

- **New Permit Request** – is a permit request from a resident or representative of an organization who has not been issued a permit in the past and/or for an activity that has not been permitted to them in the past.
- **Block Permit** – a permit request for a large block of time used at the discretion of the permit holder.
- **Historic Use Permit** – an activity that has been permitted continuously for more than 8 years and approved by the previous administration.
- **Spring/Summer Season** – is from April to the 2nd week of August.
- **Fall Season** – is from the 3rd week of August to December 31.
- **Special Events** – any organized gathering for community, religious, celebratory, or expressive purpose, family outings, corporate field days, events with multiple activities planned, or activities creating revenue for the event sponsor.

Policy Description

Park and Athletic Field Use Policy

Organized group use of property under the management of The City of Framingham Parks and Recreation Department requires a permit issued by the Department. Permit requests may be submitted electronically or in person by filling out a formal permit request. Verbal requests for permits will not be accepted. Please call (508-532-5960) or email the field scheduler (parks.recreation@framinghamma.gov) for further instructions.

Parks and Athletic Field Use:

1. Public parks under the management of The City of Framingham Parks and Recreation Department are open for use from dawn until dusk, except where facility lights are available until 10pm.
2. Parks and Field Permit requests may be submitted by Framingham residents, schools, youth organizations, volunteer organizations, non-profits, and businesses based in Framingham. Proof of residency is required, which may include documents such as a property tax bill (in good standing), utility bill, and vehicle registration.
3. City of Framingham public parks and fields are available for usage by non-profit organizations that operate solely on a volunteer basis. These organizations must demonstrate that they are entirely volunteer-run, with no paid staff members. Priority consideration will be given to volunteer-based organizations that align with the city's mission of community engagement, youth development, and promoting health and wellness.
4. While volunteer-based organizations received priority consideration, paid-staff non-profits will be evaluated based on their impact, inclusivity, and alignment with the City's

goals. These organizations must demonstrate their commitment to community service and provide details of their programs and initiatives.

5. Parks and Recreation properties are intended for public use to support the Parks and Recreation Department's Mission.
6. Requests for athletic fields are reserved for sporting activities as a priority.
7. Permits will be issued based on each facility's intended use and design.
8. City of Framingham Parks and Recreation reserves the right to limit the amount of activity when deemed in the facility's best interest, including maintenance and field preservation.
9. Permit applicants are prohibited from using athletic fields before receiving an approved permit.
10. Pets must be leashed (8 foot maximum) at all times while on public property. Please clean up after your pet.
11. Loud music is not allowed in public areas. Please use personal listening devices.
12. The City of Framingham will not be responsible for any articles lost, damaged, or stolen.
13. Smoking or Vaping of any kind is not allowed in public areas.
14. Please use a carry-in/carry-out method for personal trash.
15. Cooking or distributing food on City of Framingham Parks and Recreation property is only allowed with proper permitting, which may include additional approval from the Framingham Fire Department (use of Propane or flammables), Framingham Health Department (food service), and/or Framingham Licensing Department (selling).
16. Activities generating revenue without a permit are prohibited from all City of Framingham Parks and Recreation properties.
17. Health and wellness activities may require instructors' proof of certification and proof of insurance.
18. **PROHIBITED USE** of public parks managed by The City of Framingham Parks and Recreation Department includes the following. (Including but not limited to, all park facilities, playgrounds, dog park, athletic fields, buildings, picnic areas, and walking trails)
 - Use of charcoal grills, open flame, or fireworks is prohibited from all City of Framingham Parks and Recreation properties.
 - Use of motorized vehicles (including dirt bikes and all-terrain vehicles) is prohibited from all City of Framingham Parks and Recreation properties.
 - Consumption, possession, or distribution of alcohol is prohibited from all City of Framingham Parks and Recreation properties. Local law enforcement is authorized to enforce this policy. Individuals found in violation may be asked to leave the park and may face additional legal consequences as determined by local laws. Repeated violations may result in suspension of park privileges.
 - Overnight parking or camping, including the setting up of tents, trailers, or any other temporary sleeping arrangements, is prohibited from all City of Framingham Parks and Recreation properties.

- Loitering (remaining in or around public parks engaging in behavior that disrupts, or interferes with the use and enjoyment of the park by other visitors) is prohibited from all City of Framingham Parks and Recreation properties.
 - Dumping of hazardous or household trash is prohibited from all City of Framingham Parks and Recreation properties.
19. The proposed use or activity must follow federal, state, and local laws, regulations, ordinances, or bylaws.

Bowditch Field Complex

Location: 475 Union Ave, Framingham, MA 01702

The Parks and Recreation professional staff uses a comprehensive approach to scheduling events at Bowditch Field. Use of Bowditch Field may require three or more Parks Attendants to support the event. This requirement will be set by department professional staff based on the event's type, size, and length. The cost associated with the on-site Parks Attendant is the event sponsor's responsibility. Bowditch Field is reserved for the most prestigious events with significant community interest, programming that returns revenue to the City, and events that maximize the use of the unique facility features, including:

- Large seating capacity.
- Ability to control gate and attendance.
- Night lighting.
- High-quality track and field surfaces.

Cushing Memorial Park

Location: 60 Dudley Road, Framingham, MA 01702

Cushing Memorial Park presents the residents of Framingham and surrounding communities with a unique central park experience. The Park was developed with three specific considerations as identified in the approved Master Plan: promotion of open space and recreation, health, and local history. The Park's primary purpose is to provide informal passive recreation for users. The department does not intend to schedule the Park with organized activities. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Director or the Mayor only when the Park contributes to events of widespread community interest compatible with the surroundings and the Parks and Recreation Mission Statement. Cushing Memorial Park is open from dawn until dusk.

Farm Pond Park

Location: Dudley Road, Framingham, MA 01702

Farm Pond Park offers 26 Acres of open green space with a staging area that can hold small scale ceremonial, religious, and cultural gatherings. The Park is open to the public for passive recreation (walking, running, biking, etc.) from dawn until dusk. Special features of this park include:

- Multi-use recreational pathway (paved).
- Wooded trails.
- Views of Farm Pond.
- Shaded areas with picnic tables (seasonal).
- Enclosed Dog Park
- Skate Park
- Snow Shoeing and Cross-country Ski trails (Seasonal, weather dependent).

Fuller Synthetic Turf Fields

Location: 31 Flagg Drive, Framingham, MA 01702

Fuller Synthetic Turf Fields are permitted based on the historic use of school fields. During the school year, Framingham Public School athletics and programs are prioritized.

Permitting Priority Levels:

The Framingham Parks and Recreation Department shall issue permits based on the priority levels below and historic use by the group/person. Returning permit requests take priority over new requests. Permit approval does not guarantee approval of future permits.

1. Level 1: Framingham Parks and Recreation Programs; City of Framingham sponsored events; Framingham based Public Schools; Framingham based Colleges.
2. Level 2: Framingham Youth and Adult Organizations; Framingham residents; Framingham All-volunteer Organizations.
3. Level 3: Framingham Organizations (for-profit).
4. Level 4: Non-Framingham organizations with previous permits (historic use).

Seasonal Sport Permits:

1. Permit requests for practices and games shall be requested by submitting a formal request to the Department at least 4 weeks before the start of the season.
2. Spring/Summer permit requests are accepted beginning February 1. Spring/Summer Season is April to mid-August.
3. Fall permit requests are accepted beginning August 1. Fall season is late-August to December 31.
4. Group requests part of a league must provide league game schedules showing reciprocal use in other communities, team rosters with a minimum of 50% Framingham residents, and a Certificate of Insurance.
5. Framingham Corporate League requests require 75% of the roster must be employed at the business' Framingham location and the team must represent the Framingham Business.
6. Proof of compliance with roster requirements will be the responsibility of the permit holder and may be requested by the Parks and Recreation Department at any time.

Special Event Permits:

The Framingham Parks and Recreation Department will permit special events in areas deemed suitable by the department's professional staff. Special events may include community events, religious events, celebrations, family outings, corporate field days, expressive events, events with multiple activities planned, or activities creating revenue for the event sponsor.

1. The Framingham Parks and Recreation Department may require permit applicants to have prior experience or proven capability in effectively managing the proposed event. References from past events may be requested at the department's discretion. Permit applicants must also have a positive standing, supported by references from past events.
2. Ceremonial, religious, and cultural gatherings are scheduled at the Farm Pond Amphitheatre area only.
3. Event sponsors are responsible for facility costs depending on the location, size, time, date of the event or type of activity planned. These costs may include but are not limited to, Parks and Recreation staff to monitor the site, assist with parking, facility maintenance and restoration, trash removal, access to the facility, use of City services (ie. electrical, equipment), police details, porta potty rentals, equipment rental, and key deposits.
4. Special Events may require additional permits and licenses from other City Departments, depending on the intended activity.

Certificate of Insurance requirement:

The permit holder is required to provide a certificate of insurance (COI). The COI shall name the City of Framingham as additionally insured for a minimum of \$1,000,000 General Liability. Certificates of insurance will be required before the Parks and Recreation Department issues an approved permit.

Grounds for Denial of Request:

To maximize the recreational use of Parks and Recreation properties, ensure the safety and convenience of the applicants and the general public, and preserve parks and fields from overuse and abuse, access to Parks and Recreation properties must be regulated. Framingham Parks and Recreation Department may deny a request, if deemed in the City's best interest or for the following reasons:

1. The applicant is not a Framingham Resident or representative of a Framingham Organization (see "Parks and Athletic Field Use").
2. Permit application is incomplete or submitted on short notice.
3. The proposed use or activity would conflict with previously planned programs/events. An alternate date and/or location may be proposed, if available.
4. The proposed use or activity is prohibited by federal, state, or local laws, regulations, ordinances or bylaws.
5. The proposed use or activity would present an unreasonable danger to the health and safety of the applicant, attendees, or general public or would cause damage to the property. History of the applicants' use of City property will be taken into consideration.
6. The application contains misrepresented or false information.
7. The applicant fails to provide prior event experience.
8. The applicant fails to submit satisfactory references from previous events.
9. The applicant fails to provide the required insurance certificate, if requested.
10. The applicant fails to obtain additional permits as required from other City departments.
11. The anticipated event is likely too large for the available venue.
12. Previous event was misrepresented, caused property damage, caused unsafe conditions for attendees or the general public, or was the source of excessive noise or disturbance.

Cancellation Policy: Framingham Parks and Recreation reserves the right to cancel any permitted activity due to field/park condition, weather condition, or if in the City's best interest. Permit holder is required to cancel their activity at least 48 hours in advance in order to avoid charges for previously scheduled City resources.

Applying for a permit:

1. Submitting a permit application does not guarantee the Parks and Recreation Department will issue an approved permit.
2. Framingham Parks and Recreation suggests that applicants submit a permit request at least (minimum):
 - 30 days in advance of the planned event or activity for complex events.
 - 7 business days in advance of the planned event or activity for straightforward events.
3. Requests for Parks and Field Permits may be submitted by Framingham residents, schools, youth organizations, volunteer organizations, non-profits, and businesses. Proof of Framingham residency is required, which may include documents such as a property tax bill (in good standing), utility bill, and vehicle registration.
4. All permit requests shall be accompanied by a completed permit application. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
5. Framingham Parks and Recreation Department may request additional information from the applicant as deemed necessary by professional staff.
6. Permits may only be requested by the person who will be responsible for all aspects of the permitted activity. Permits cannot be transferred to another person or group, location, or activity other than indicated on the approved permit.
7. Permits may be issued immediately or at a later date, depending on the circumstances surrounding the permit request and the facility required.
8. Spring permits are released as fields become available for use. The Parks and Recreation Field Coordinator will notify permit holders when their permit is released.
9. Although Permits are not valid until signed by the permit holder and approved by the Framingham Parks and Recreation Director, the date will be held until final approval.
10. The Framingham Parks & Recreation Department Field Scheduler or professional staff must approve all permitted-use changes.
11. All permit holders shall comply with all standard conditions and any special conditions established in connection with their permits.
12. Additional permits from other City Departments may be required depending on the permitted activity (examples: food service, large tents, use of generators or propane, mobile animal shows, entertainment, etc.). The permit applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary permits. See Special Event Permit Requirements.
13. Block permits are prohibited.
14. Permits for all fields on Framingham Public School property are subject to limited hours during the school year. Framingham Public School activities and events will be prioritized over other permit requests.