

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting REGULAR

Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 7:00 PM

REMOTE ACCESS ONLY

To Join Via Zoom Meeting Go To:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89610019456>

Alternatively you can Call In by Dialing: 1-929-205-6099

For both remote options, the Meeting ID is: 896 1001 9456

Members: Eric Gilbertson (Chair), Robert McCullough (Vice Chair), Paul Carnahan, Bryan Jones and Linden Chozinska

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comments [~5 minutes]
3. Approval of the Agenda [~5 minutes]
4. Comments from the Chair [~5 minutes]
5. Section 106 Review: New Mountaineers' Clubhouse at Elm Street Recreation Fields determined eligible for listing as contributing
6. Review and Approve Minutes: 02/10/2026 [~5 minutes]
7. Other Business - Suggestions for March agenda items?
8. Adjournment

Meetings are open to the public. For questions about accessibility or to request accommodations please call (802) 223-9506.



EXISTING BEER
GARDEN

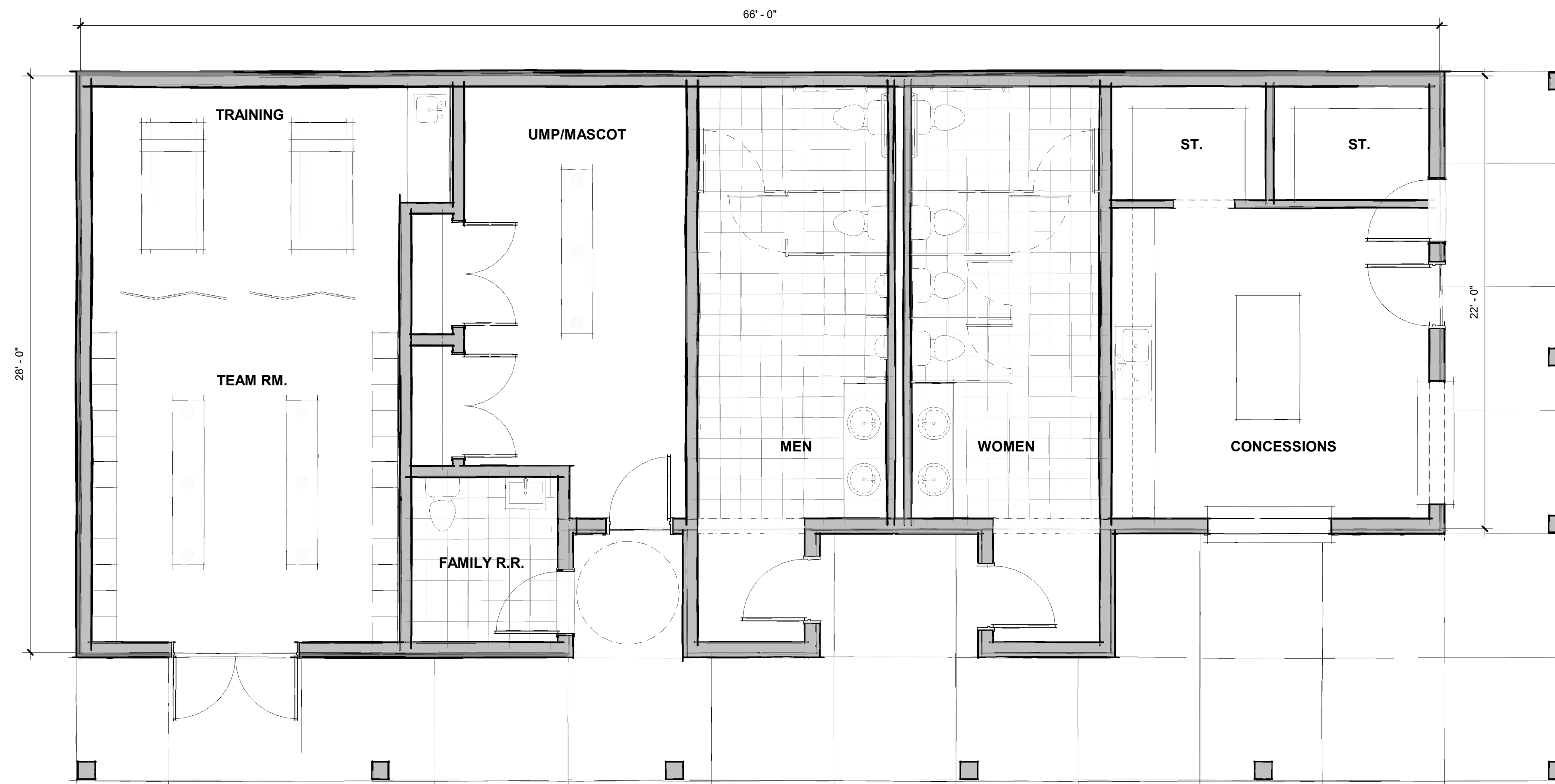
APPROXIMATE LOCATION
OF PROPOSED SUPPORT
FACILITY

1 SITE PLAN
SCALE: NTS



June 2, 2023

MOUNTAINEERS SUPPORT FACILITY



1 FLOOR PLAN - LEVEL 1
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



2 ELEVATION FACING BALL FIELD
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

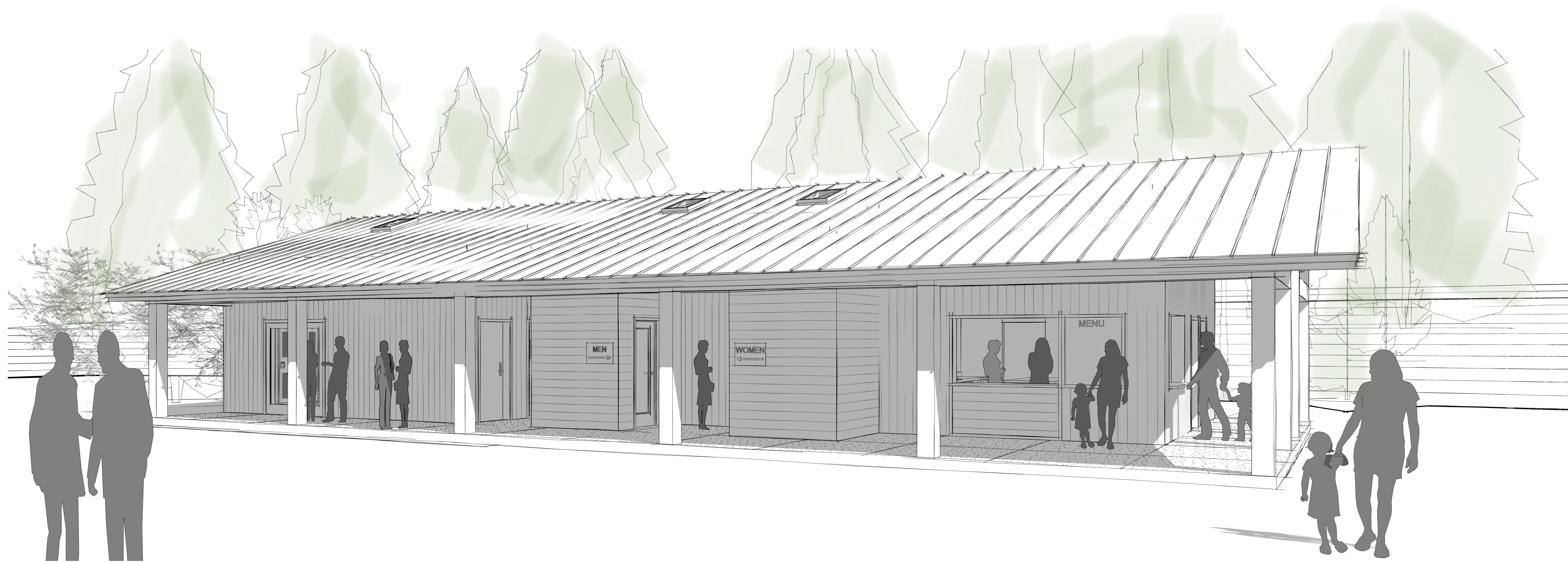


June 2, 2023

MOUNTAINEERS SUPPORT FACILITY

FLOOR PLAN

gbArchitecture



1 PERSPECTIVE
SCALE: NTS

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation Determination of Eligibility (DOE) Form

A “Determination of Eligibility” is a decision regarding whether a district, site, building, structure, or object meets the State or National Register Criteria for Evaluation, although the property is not formally listed in the State or National Register.

Section I

Property Name: Montpelier Recreation Field

Property Address:

Elm Street

Montpelier, VT 05602

Property County: Washington County

Latitude: 44.278128 **Longitude:** -72.572279

This DOE is for the: National Register of Historic Places - Federal project – Section 106 review

Agency (if applicable): National Park Service

Does the project involve demolition of the whole building/structure? (if applicable):

Who is making this request? Robert McCullough

Do you work for the Division for Historic Preservation? No

Title (if applicable):

Organization: University of Vermont, Emeritus Faculty

Email Address: robert.mccullough@uvm.edu

Phone Number: 802-272-5136

Are you the property owner? No

Is the property owner aware of this request (if applicable): Yes

Property owner name and best contact information (phone number/email address):

Owner: City of Montpelier.

Project contact: Vermont Mountaineers. Dawn Angney Dangney@optonline.net

Section II

Eligibility Recommendation:

Meets the Criteria for Evaluation and is eligible for the State/National Register of Historic Places

If property is determined eligible do you wish to pursue listing the property in the State or National Register of Historic Places? Maybe

Approximate acreage of property being evaluated: 17.56

Number of Resources:

Number of Buildings: 12 Number of Sites: 8 Number of Structures: 35 Number of Objects: 10

Evaluated Under:

Criterion A: Event - (✓) Criterion B: Person - () Criterion C: Design/Construction - (✓)

Criterion D: Information Potential - ()

Criteria Considerations:

None

Integrity:

Setting - (✓) Location - (✓) Design - (✓) Materials - (✓) Workmanship - (✓) Feeling - (✓) Association - (✓)
No integrity - ()

Period of Significance: 1938-1976

Level of Significance: Local

Justification for Eligibility Recommendation:

Montpelier's Recreation Field, dedicated November 11, 1939 and described as "Municipal Field" on a granite site marker commemorating the role of the Federal Works Agency, Public Works Administration (PWA) in funding construction of the project, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and is locally significant as a designed and engineered recreational landscape for its contributions to the broad patterns of history relating to park planning and to Depression-era New Deal programs implemented during the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The site is one of Montpelier's most important New Deal projects and represents themes of park design, social history, recreation, and entertainment. Its prominent original features—a baseball grandstand and ballpark, swimming pool, bathhouse, and football field—are all well preserved, and all but the football field (currently a soccer field) continue to be used for their originally intended purposes. Notably, completion of the field marked the inauguration of Montpelier's Recreation Department and the development of year-round recreational programs. Separately, the grandstand is also locally significant under Criteria C as a good example of an architectural type, is Montpelier's only such structure, and is one of six historic grandstands identified in Vermont to date and listed on the State Register of Historic Places. The others are Manchester Grandstand (1887); Centennial Field, Burlington/UVM (1922); Rutland Fairgrounds Grandstand (1939); Gardner Park Grandstand in Newport (1939); and Tenney Memorial Field Grandstand, Brattleboro (1948). The period of significance for both Criteria A and C is 1938-1939, representing the years of construction for the park plan and New Deal programs, but the period of significance for Montpelier's recreation and entertainment history under Criteria A continues to 1976, the date of construction of the tennis courts---fifty years ago.

Section III

Division for Historic Preservation Determination or Concurrence:

Eligible - (✓)

Not Eligible - ()

Insufficient Information for Determination - ()

Survey Number:

Criteria:

A - (✓) B - () C - (✓) D - ()

Criteria Considerations:

Integrity:

Setting - (✓) Location - (✓) Design - (✓) Materials - (✓) Workmanship - (✓) Feeling - (✓) Association - (✓)

Number of Resources:

Buildings - 12 Structures - 35 Sites - 8 Objects - 10

Staff Comments:

State Archaeologist Review:

Given the area's proximity to the North Branch of the Winooski River, there is a significant likelihood that one or

more Precontact Native archaeological sites exist in areas that have not been disturbed by modern development. Further study would be needed to evaluate if undisturbed areas or sites are present.

Requires Vermont Advisory Council Review?

Advisory Council Finding:

Recorded by: Elizabeth Peebles, State Architectural Historian

Date: February 10, 2026

Signature: Elizabeth Peebles

STATE OF VERMONT Division for Historic Preservation VERMONT CULTURAL LANDSCAPE INVENTORY	VDHP Staff Use Survey Number: CLI-WA-002 Listed in State Register ☐ Date Listed: MM.DD.YYYY Eligible for State Register Yes ☒ -or- No ☐ Determination Date: 02.10.2026
The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation has adopted the National Park Service definition of a cultural landscape as, "a historically significant property that shows evidence of human interaction with the physical environment." For more information about inventorying cultural landscapes, visit the NPS webpage or see the Historic American Landscape Survey outline .	

IDENTIFICATION		
PROPERTY NAME: Montpelier Recreation Field		
CURRENT PROPERTY USE: Sports / Recreation		
PROPERTY ADDRESS: Elm Street		
TOWN: Montpelier COUNTY: Washington LAT: 44.278128 LONG: -72.572279	SIZE (in acres): 17.56 TAX PARCEL ID: 043-601000 PROPERTY OWNER: City of Montpelier	
BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Montpelier Tax Parcel 043-601000		
RESOURCE COUNT: 12 Building(s) 35 Structure(s) 10 Object(s) 8 Site(s)	OWNERSHIP: ☐ Federal ☐ State ☒ Municipal ☐ Private ☐ Unknown	ACCESS: ☒ Unrestricted ☐ Permission required
CLASSIFICATION		
LANDSCAPE CLASSIFICATION: <i>Select all that apply.</i> ☒ Historic Designed Landscape <i>(landscapes designed according to a recognized style, design principle, or tradition)</i> ☐ Historic Vernacular Landscape <i>(landscapes that provide insight into everyday life and culture in a particular place and time)</i> ☐ Ethnographic Landscape <i>(landscapes associated with contemporary groups who use and value the land in ways that continue established cultural practices)</i> ☐ Historic Site <i>(landscapes associated with important events, activities, and persons)</i> ☐ Other: Enter text.	LANDSCAPE TYPE: <i>Select all that apply.</i> ☐ Garden ☐ Park ☐ Green/Common/Plaza ☐ Trail ☐ Transportation ☐ Agricultural ☐ Exhibition/Fairgrounds ☐ Mine/Quarry ☐ Other Industrial ☐ Campus ☒ Sports/Recreation ☐ Camp ☐ Cemetery ☐ Commemorative/Memorial ☐ Natural Landform/Geological Formation ☐ Other: Enter text.	

DESCRIPTION

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

Provide a physical description of the landscape and its current condition. Note any archaeological sites and their associated Vermont Archaeological Inventory site numbers.

: Montpelier's Recreation Field, constructed during 1938 and 1939, is a significant, seventeen-acre, designed and engineered, recreational landscape with three principal sectors: baseball field and grandstand; football field, and swimming pool with bathhouse. The fields and pool are located between Elm Street (also Route 12 and formerly known as the Worcester-Branch Road) and the North Branch Winooski River, not quite one and one-half miles northerly from the intersection of Main and State Streets, the center of the city's downtown. Original plans and old photographs show two drives sloping downward toward parking areas, one between the swimming pool and football field (Poolside Drive), and one on the northerly side of the grandstand (Ballfield Road); both drives remain in use today. Original plans also show steps leading downward from Elm Street, and old photographs show informal walkways from the road. Today, however, a fence bars pedestrian access from Elm Street except along the entrance drives and via a continuation of the Elm Street sidewalk that descends to the bathhouse and a playground. In 1952, the city added a Little League field, and in 1976 installed tennis courts that were part of the original plans but never built, however placing them in a slightly different location. That year, too, the city acquired a two-acre parcel on the easterly side of the river for use as a picnic area and constructed a small footbridge to join the two parcels. Recreation Field retains strong integrity in terms of design, setting, location, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Among features shown on the original plans, only the cinder track has not survived.

1. Grandstand. 1939. Constructed with steel framing and a sloping shed roof of corrugated sheet steel. The grandstand shelters wooden steps and seats, and its exposed structural system is designed to minimize obstructions to views toward the baseball field. The building is shaped by three distinct units, with center unit flanked on each side by secondary units that extend outward at shallow angles from the center unit. Each unit is framed by pairs of vertical, wide-flange, rolled I-beam posts that rise to roof height at points set well back from the front and back edges of the roofs for all three units, creating substantial structural overhangs, front and rear. Each vertical post supports, in turn, three Warren trusses that extend across all three units at the roof's front structural overhang, and three similar trusses that extend across all three units at the roof's rear overhang. Each truss has parallel top and bottom chords, and webs have vertical struts at panel points and mid-panel points. Those trusses in turn support a series of nine large, Warren roof trusses with polygonal bottom chords that extend from front to back at each unit's roof edge. Each truss has four panels, and each bottom chord has a different length and angle in relation to its top chord. Roof trusses thus create an upward taper that minimizes obstructions toward the field from the grandstand's highest seats. Truss chords are built-up members with rolled angles paired and riveted, and the truss webs are rolled angles riveted to the chords with gusset plates. Roof rafters are rolled I-beams, and angle tension bars reinforce rafters at strategic points. The grandstand shelters an enclosed wood-framed press booth, original to the building but enlarged c. 2004, as well as rooms and concession stands located beneath the grandstand at its rear elevation. Contributing building.

2. Baseball field. 1939. Regulation size ballfield with grass outfield and loam infield base paths, pitcher's mound, home plate area, and batters' boxes; recent chain-link outfield fencing with panels to advertise sponsors products. Contributing site.

3. First base dugout. 1939. Open wood frame structure with shed roof, enlarged after 2003. Contributing building.

4. Third base dugout. 1939. Open wood frame structure with shed roof, enlarged after 2003. Contributing building.
5. Soda booth concession stand with souvenir addition. C. 2004 with 2010 addition. Small wood frame structure with shed roof. Addition is also a wood-frame structure but with gable roof. Non-contributing building due to age.
6. Ticket booth. C. 2004. Small wood-frame structure with shed roof. Non-contributing building due to age.
7. Baseball field light standards and floodlights (9 identical structures). C. 1970. Very tall tree boles that support floodlights for night games. New floodlights installed c. 2004. Contributing.
8. Scoreboard. C. 2004. Wood-frame object, non-contributing due to age.
9. Radar camera and electronic broadcasting unit. 2024. Located beyond center field and mounted on a thirteen-foot pole. Non-contributing object due to age.
10. Maintenance garage and public toilets. 1976 and c. 2004. Concrete block building and later addition, both with flat roofs, the former space for storage of equipment, the addition containing toilet facilities and fixtures. Located behind the grandstand. Non-contributing building.
11. Batting cage. 2011. Metal framed enclosure with netting, 70' by 40'. Non-contributing object due to age.
12. Electrical meter shed. C. 2004. Small, wood-frame building with gable roof adjacent to Ballfield Road and used by the city's Department of Public Works. Non-contributing due to age.
13. Little League Field. C. 1952. with grass outfield and loam infield base paths, pitcher's mound, and home plate area and batter's boxes; chain-link outfield fencing. Contributing site.
14. Little League third-base dugout. C. 1952. Small, wood-frame, open dugout with shed roof. Contributing building.
15. Little League first-base dugout. C. 1952. Small, wood-frame open dugout with shed roof. Contributing building.
16. Little League scorekeeper's booth. C. 1952. Two-story, wood-framed viewing and scorekeeper's booth. Contributing building.
17. Little League scoreboard. C. 1952. Wood framed panel located behind outfield fencing. Contributing object.
18. Little League bleachers. C. 1952. Two sets of movable metal framed open seats. Contributing structure.
19. Swimming Pool. 1939. Saucer shaped pool, 350 feet long, 150 feet wide, and 11.5 feet deep at center; asphalt surface; and 850,000 gallon capacity. New drainage system installed in 1984. Contributing structure.
20. Swimming pool platforms (2). 1939. Wood frame structures that support diving boards or platforms and establish regulation length for swimming lanes used in meets.

21. Light standards and floodlights (8 identical structures) surrounding the swimming pool. C. 1947. Improved in 1976. Contributing structures.
22. Bathhouse. 1939. A low, one-story, frame and concrete-block building with broad gable roof, novelty siding, concrete floors, and long rows of identical window openings on both westerly and easterly elevations. Most window openings are evenly spaced and contain six/six double hung sash, some with opaque glazing that reveals the locations of locker and shower rooms. A single-bay porch with shed roof (a continuation of the gable pitch) and paired vertical posts shelters the principal entrance on the building's westerly elevation, roughly centered, which is accessible from the Elm Street sidewalk continuation. The building's easterly elevation facing the pool is divided into three blocks, with a large central block recessed beneath the sheltering gable roof and flanked on each side by smaller blocks. Window openings on that elevation, evenly placed, are joined by door openings on both the central and flanking blocks. Those three units reveal the building's interior plan, with the central block largely open space, in turn flanked by the units devoted to separate lockers and showers for men and women. Concrete block walls establish the interior divisions in plan. The roof is supported by sets of evenly-spaced, paired rafters framed in a double-pitch to create a strengthened interior gambrel roof that supports the broad gable, in turn concealing that double-pitch. New sewerage system installed in 1984. Contributing building.
23. Playground. C. 1962. As shown on the original plans, located between the football field and pool. Relocated to a small plot adjacent to the bath house on the building's southerly side and enlarged in 1962; improved in 1976. Contributing site.
24. Playground equipment. C. 1976. Equipment shown on original plan included swings, see-saws, and slides that have not survived. Current equipment consists of three individual units that combine various play activities into single structures of polyethylene thermoplastic. Non-contributing objects (3) due to age.
25. Football field / Soccer field. 1939. Originally designed with east/west orientation and located between the baseball field and swimming pool. Movable bleachers used for the baseball field were also used for football but have since been replaced. Tennis courts constructed in 1976 were placed at the easterly end of the football field, and the latter's orientation and use changed to north/south and soccer, respectively. Field is also used for children's baseball or T-ball. Contributing site.
26. Tennis courts. 1976. Original plans placed tennis courts to the east of the baseball field, but old photographs show that area used for parking instead. Four courts were eventually built at the easterly end of the football field in 1976 and include asphalt surface, posts for nets, and chain link fencing. Contributing site.
27. Tennis court light standards and floodlights (14 identical structures). 1976. Metal posts supporting boxed floodlights. Contributing structures.
28. Basketball court. C. 2011. Originally located near the pool, the court was enlarged or modified in 1962 and subsequently removed and relocated c. 2011. Today the courts are situated in an area once used as parking for the baseball field and adjacent to tennis courts. Non-contributing site due to age.
29. Skateboard park. C. 2011. Located between tennis courts and basketball courts. Non-contributing site due to age.

30. Pedestrian footbridge. C. 1976. Rolled I-beam superstructure with wood frame guardrails. Provides access to lands acquired by the city in 1976, originally intended as a picnic ground on the easterly side of the North Branch Winooski River as well as access to the city's extensive North Branch Recreation Area. Contributing structure. 31. Picnic pavilion. 2011. Open, wood frame building with gable roof and concrete floor surface, located between the swimming pool and the North Branch Winooski River. Non-contributing due to age. 32. Granite entrance marker, Elm Street south of Poolside Drive, 1939. Contributing object. 33. Historic site marker, Elm Street at Ballfield Road, c. 2010. Incorrectly attributes funding for Recreation Field to the Works Projects Administration. Non-contributing object due to age. 34. Parcel acquired as picnic area in 1976. 2.06 acres of open land included as the same tax parcel as the original Recreation Field. Contributing site.
NATURAL FEATURES: <i>Describe how each of the following have influenced the development, form, and use of the landscape</i>
Topography: Montpelier Recreation Field is situated on a level topographic site to accommodate playing fields, swimming pool, and related automobile parking. Proximity to the city's downtown is also a factor. Hillsides provide sylvan and pastoral backdrop to recreational activities.
Vegetation: Grass for playing fields represents the most significant vegetation. Plantations of spruce trees along Elm Street screen the fields from traffic along that road.
Water: In a City of hills and river valleys riparian/floodway land is the majority of level space
Geology: Level valley floor contributes to the site.
Ecology: Open space relating to healthful recreational activities.
Climate: Site provides recreational activities during warm spring, summer, and fall months.
Other: None
DESIGNED/CULTURAL FEATURES: <i>Describe how each of the following have influenced the development, form, and use of the landscape.</i>
Land use patterns: Open fields are designed for recreational activities, primarily baseball, football and soccer. Parking areas adjacent.
Planting patterns: Sod is the principal plant material requiring planting and replanting, particularly on the baseball field.
Boundary demarcations: Bounded on the east by the North Branch Winooski River; west by Elm Street; and south and north by privately owned parcels visually separated by informal vegetation.
Spatial organization/layout: Baseball grandstand and baseball field on the north; football / soccer / tennis in the center of the site; and a swimming pool in the southerly sector.

Circulation networks: Two entrance drives from Elm Street, Baseball Road and Poolside Drive. Pedestrian bridge leading to North Branch Recreation Area on the easterly side of the North Branch Winooski River. Circulation from one sector to another is informal and generally unimpeded, except the baseball field and swimming pool are encircled by fences that are locked when facilities are closed. A continuation of the Elm Street sidewalk provides access to the bathhouse and swimming pool.	
Views and vistas: Grandstand designed to provide views of the baseball field and hillsides beyond, the site's most significant visual element.	
Water features: Designed swimming pool.	
Buildings, structures, and objects: Baseball grandstand and field; Little League baseball field; football and soccer fields; swimming pool and bathhouse; tennis courts; basketball court; skateboard park; picnic pavilion; pedestrian bridge;	
Small-scale elements/art features: Playground equipment; site markers; light standards; fencing.	
Other (including ephemeral qualities such as sounds, smells, and activities): None	
HISTORY	
HISTORIC NAME (if different from current): Montpelier Recreation Field	
HISTORIC USE (if different from current): Outdoor recreational activities, including baseball, football, soccer, tennis, basketball, and swimming.	
DATE OF DEVELOPMENT: 1938-1939	DATE SOURCE: Montpelier Annual Reports.
DESIGNER/BUILDER: Robie Construction Company; Peck Brothers; and Blanchard Electric. ☐ Attributed ☒ Documented	DESIGNER/BUILDER SOURCE: Montpelier Annual Reports.
HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: <i>Include information about the people, trends, and time periods that have shaped the landscape over time, such as previous owners, changes in land use, and dates of construction and alteration. Discuss the landscape within the larger context of national, regional, or local history and design.</i> Summary Statement of Significance Montpelier's Recreation Field, dedicated November 11, 1939 and described as "Municipal Field" on a granite site marker commemorating the role of the Federal Works Agency, Public Works Administration (PWA) in funding construction of the project, is locally significant as a designed and engineered recreational landscape for its contributions to the broad patterns of history relating to park planning and to Depression-era New Deal programs implemented during the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The site is one of Montpelier's most important New Deal projects and represents themes of park design, social history, recreation, and entertainment. Its prominent original features—a baseball grandstand and ballpark, swimming pool, bathhouse, and football field—are all well preserved, and all but the football field (currently a soccer field) continue to be used for their originally intended purposes. Notably, completion of the field marked the inauguration of Montpelier's Recreation Department and the development of year-round recreational programs. Separately, the grandstand is also locally significant under Criteria C as a good example of an	

architectural type, is Montpelier's only such structure, and is one of six historic grandstands identified in Vermont to date. The others are Manchester Grandstand (1887); Centennial Field, Burlington/UVM (1922); Rutland Fairgrounds Grandstand (1939); Gardner Park Grandstand in Newport (1939); and Tenney Memorial Field Grandstand, Brattleboro (1948). The period of significance for both Criteria A and C is 1938-1939, representing the years of construction for the park plan and New Deal programs, but the period of significance for Montpelier's recreation and entertainment history under Criteria A continues to 1976, the date of construction of the tennis courts---fifty years ago.

Historical Context and Significance

A New Deal for Vermont.

The readiness with which Vermont and its cities and towns greeted federal assistance as the country's economy worsened during the decade of the 1930s is an important part of the context in which the distinctiveness of Vermont's approach to New Deal social aid programs, as well as the success of projects such as Montpelier's Recreation Field, become clear.

Recreational Use of Natural Resources

Ironically, the two years preceding the stock market crash of 1929, a period during which the state struggled to rebuild after the devastating flood of 1927, had reinforced Vermonters' long-standing convictions about the value of independence, self-reliance, and refusal of charity in the face of adversity. However, the sense of public confidence that grew from that rebuilding campaign also encouraged civic initiatives that addressed the state's enduring troubles caused by declining population and weakening economy. A progressive, humanitarian effort to improve rural life gained ground when the Vermont Commission on Country Life formed in 1928, charged with studying a sweeping spectrum of challenges affecting the state. The commission published its report in 1931, offering an array of recommendations including improvement to education, the formation of farm cooperatives, promotion of the state's natural resources for recreation, and the marketing of tourism and purchase of summer homes by non-residents to spark the economy. In sum, the report served best as a planning primer for assessing the state's future needs, which in turn prepared the state for aggressively tapping and channeling the forthcoming federal assistance, rooted in similar humanitarian goals.

More specifically, the report's emphasis on promoting tourism and recreational use of natural resources pointed toward federal initiatives traceable to the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation in 1924, convened by President Calvin Coolidge, who proclaimed the promotion of outdoor recreation for as many people as possible to be a federal function. Coolidge called for a national policy that fostered opportunities for all forms of open recreational activities, equating the importance of that national program with the country's educational agendas, and a second National Conference on Outdoor Recreation convened in 1926. Both conferences helped to launch a movement for open spaces that included expansive regional reserves but also small local park areas, all promoting the core themes of open space, recreational use of natural resources, and healthful outdoor activities, and all remaining fundamental to federal policies and programs implemented during the New Deal. Those themes also resonated enthusiastically among Vermonters throughout the decade of the 1930---and the many decades to follow.

The emphasis on healthful outdoor activities as essential for public (and national) health, a formal part of federal policies after the 1924 and 1926 conferences, also led to changes in local park planning and design, contributing to what park historian Galen Cranz has described as the "recreation

facility era” that began during the 1930s. By that time, park facilities had become an accepted feature of urban life and a required function of government. Park commissioners sought to meet the growing public demand for leisure activities by increasing the types of recreational facilities offered and by emphasizing more comprehensive recreational programs. Swimming pools, baseball fields, and tennis courts became universal devices to achieve those goals, as did efforts to coordinate with other city agencies, particularly school departments. Montpelier’s Recreation Field exemplifies those trends as well as the broader theories of recreational use of natural resources fundamental to New Deal programs.

Effects of the Depression in Vermont Towns

Notwithstanding Vermont’s slow rural economy of the 1920s, the stock market crash in 1929 and the national economic collapse that followed affected every segment of the state: economic, social, political, agricultural, commercial, and industrial. In Vermont, providing relief for unemployed citizens remained the responsibility of towns, but the demands for public relief from overseers of the poor were countered by public demands to reduce taxes. As unemployment levels increased, tax base dwindled and towns faced insolvency; in many locales, a community barter economy grew to meet the need. By 1933, circumstances in Vermont towns had grown so dire that proposals to restructure the hallowed town unit of government began to circulate. That year, with the Depression reaching its greatest severity in Vermont, charity-driven costs prevented nearby Barre from meeting its city payroll, and Montpelier was only marginally better.

Federal Program Origins

By then, however, federal assistance already had begun to trickle to state and local governments in Vermont. In 1932, the Hoover administration passed legislation creating the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, an agency authorized to provide loans to banks in order to stabilize the availability of credit, followed soon after that same year by the Emergency Relief and Construction Act, which permitted loans directly to state and local authorities. Some Vermont towns applied successfully for these funds, paving the way for access to more comprehensive relief programs to follow. When Franklin D. Roosevelt assumed the presidency in March 1933, marking the beginning of the New Deal, he launched dozens of new programs classified as relief, recovery, or reform, with legislation adopted in two phases, the first between 1933 and 1934 and the second between 1935 and 1938.

Civilian Conservation Corps

Among Roosevelt’s first programs, the Civilian Conservation Corps, authorized by the Emergency Conservation Work Act of March 1933, and created by executive order in April of that year, continued until 1942 and proved especially valuable to Vermont and its local governments, including Montpelier. The CCC, described by historian Richard Judd as a “Green Mountain Institution,” engaged young men to undertake soil conservation and reforestation projects, work that the state’s forest commissioner, Perry Merrill, viewed as an opportunity to implement his long-held plans to open the state’s forests to proper management, conservation, fire protection, and recreation. Remarkably, within a week of Roosevelt’s order, Merrill had secured approval of numerous CCC camps in Vermont, including nearby Waterbury and, very soon after, Montpelier. Moreover, Merrill resided in Montpelier, where he served as mayor between 1935 and 1936, and thus he positioned the city strategically to take advantage of CCC labor as well as other New Deal programs that followed. For example, in 1933, during the tenure of his predecessor, Mayor Riley C. Bowers, Montpelier’s CCC camp was voted best in New England after workers had improved Hubbard Park under the supervision of the Vermont Forest Service by planting trees and by grading, draining, widening and surfacing park roads, a project that reinforced themes of recreational use of natural resources and open space. Other very important CCC projects for Montpelier included the Wrightsville Dam on the

North Branch Winooski River and the Bailey Dam in the city's downtown.

Public Works Administration.

Vermont's success in tapping federal funding for CCC labor provided valuable schooling in the methods needed to secure assistance from other federal programs, notably projects authorized by Title 2 of the National Industrial Recovery Act, adopted in June 1933. The law established the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works to improve employment opportunities by building large public works projects such as dams, bridges, hospitals, and schools, in turn reviving the economy by stimulating consumer buying power and business enterprise. The agency changed its name to Public Works Administration (PWA) in 1935 and continued to fund projects until 1943, including Montpelier's Recreation Field. As with CCC projects, Vermont jumped ahead of other states in securing projects quickly, aided by a governor-appointed Advisory Public Works Board, which screened applications.

The New Deal in Montpelier.

Vermont's capital city successfully secured funding from a variety of federal programs including the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), created by Roosevelt in 1933 but previously authorized by President Hoover's Emergency Relief and Construction Act of 1932 and supplemented by the Vermont Emergency Relief Act (VERA), adopted in 1933. Prior to FERA's replacement by the Works Progress Administration in 1935, unemployed Montpelier women were given federal aid indirectly through municipal government and employed to sew garments, knit socks and mittens, assemble mattresses, and engage in laundering. The short-lived Civil Works Administration (CWA), also formed by Roosevelt in 1933 but rooted in Hoover's 1932 law, provided temporary employment for construction workers, to the benefit of Montpelier's unemployed until 1934, when it closed.

The great majority of Montpelier's projects, including subsequent work on the baseball and football fields, were funded through the Works Progress Administration (WPA), created in 1935 to continue providing employment opportunities on the types of public-works construction projects begun by FERA, typically streets, sewers, bridges, and airports. The agency's name changed to Works Projects Administration in 1939, and the program continued to function until 1943. In Montpelier, WPA funds paid for improvements to Barre, Berlin, Hill, Marvin, North, Prospect, and a number of other streets; new seats in City Hall and the repointing of brick on its tower; repairs to bridges on Granite, Langdon, Pioneer, School and Taylor streets; as well as sidewalk and sewer projects throughout the city. Notably, in 1941, following completion of the Recreation Field project, Montpelier received WPA funds to rebuild the baseball diamond to the satisfaction of the Montpelier Baseball Association and to install 445 feet of drainage tile from the baseball field to the North Branch of the Winooski River.

Montpelier's Recreation Field (PWA No. VT-1088F).

Among Montpelier's most ambitious New Deal undertakings, Recreation Field advanced with PWA funding rather than WPA resources, suggesting that city administrators had acquired proficiency in tapping an assortment of federal assistance programs. Reinforcing that supposition, in 1933 the city became the country's first to complete a project with PWA funding---the installation of water mains on Barre Street and Terrace Street. The expertise of city council members who specifically sought PWA funds also bolsters that supposition, especially that of Arthur D. Bishop, a bridge engineer with the Vermont State Highway Department, who daily worked on projects with costs shared by federal, state, and local governments. So, too, did the prominence of participants at dedication ceremonies, marked by a parade led by American Legion Post No. 3, followed by ceremonies at Recreation Field and City Hall that included Governor Aiken, Lieutenant Governor

Wills, PWA Engineer Homer L. Challiaux, and, notably, Col. M. F. Gilmore, Regional Director of the PWA based in New York City, who uniformly declined such invitations.

As early as 1934, the city had acknowledged the need for a swimming pool and athletic field, including a query in its warrant for the annual town meeting that year asking whether voters would authorize the purchase of lands for that purpose. Voters acquiesced in September 1935 but specified Hubbard Park as the preferred site. However, after studying several park sites, commissioners concluded that the water supply was inadequate, and almost three years elapsed without result. However, events began to advance rapidly in 1938. Early that year the city reached agreement with the federal government concerning three projects funded together as PWA VT-1088F: a new school, which became Union Elementary School; a recreational field; and water system improvements. In May, the city acquired the Elm Street property, known as Burnham Meadow; the water system work was dropped; and with voter consent the city council requested a PWA grant of \$100,000 for the recreation field in August, stipulating that the city would furnish one-half the cost by issuing bonds and notes. A contract with Robie Construction Company of Manchester, New Hampshire, followed on November 14th, the date of ground-breaking as well, and construction continued throughout the winter with plans to open the pool in June 1939. The city specified use of local labor and materials to the extent possible, and sub-contractors included Peck Brothers and Blanchard Electric. Even before the dedication on November 11, 1939, the city council committee had recommended applying for WPA funds for sodding the banks at the field and other landscaping the following spring.

Although Recreation Field is significant for its association with the PWA, the subsequent requests for WPA funding for landscaping work at the recreational field are also important to the history of recreation in Montpelier because WPA officials initially turned down the city's requests for the funding due to the absence of a year-round recreation program. Ultimately, WPA agreed to pay for regrading the football field in 1940, which had been damaged by automobile parking, and for dressing rooms under the grandstand, but officials made that funding conditional on a promise by the city to open Community Hall in the downtown district for recreational use, to buy more recreational equipment, and to develop a year-round program. Thus, the city's Recreation Department, seeded by PWA funds at Recreation Field in 1939, also owes its origins and increasingly prominent role in city affairs to those continuing negotiations with WPA. Confirming that trend, the city appointed its first Superintendent of Recreation, Richard Westgate, in 1945.

Town reports from that period are silent concerning the merits of the Elm Street property as a recreational field, but availability, level topography, sufficient size, and proximity to city neighborhoods almost certainly became the primary considerations. Similarly, there is little evidence that the city's oversight committee or principal contractor sought to incorporate traditional theories of landscape architecture or design into the project, which places the three principal features in a facile north-south alignment in the narrow river valley: baseball field, football field, and swimming pool, respectively. For example, there are no ornamental plantings (which would have been inconsistent with use of the fields anyway); sod became the primary plant material; and parking (ultimately paved) was placed at river's edge, minimizing use of that landscape feature. Nevertheless, the scenic hillside of woods and fields on the river's opposite side would not have gone unnoticed by any of those who engaged in design of this recreational landscape. Plans for the grandstand, in particular, were thoughtfully executed in terms of location at the base of the slope below Elm Street, and engineering of the structure itself maximized views of the playing fields as well as the sylvan or pastoral backdrop beyond left and center fields. Spectators at football games and users of the swimming pool could enjoy similar vistas. Similarly, proximity of the river to the fields added scenic effect, and the eventual planting of spruce trees along Elm Street to shield the fields from motor

traffic confirms an awareness of the setting by project planners.

In any case, Recreation Field, especially its swimming pool and grandstand, immediately became the center of recreation in Montpelier, and in 1940, despite cool summer temperatures, more than 40,000 people used the pool between May 31st and September 1st. At the field's opposite end, the grandstand sheltered 30,000 people who watched baseball teams from Burlington, Montpelier and Barre (Montpelier Senators and later the Twin-City Trojans), Rutland, St. Albans, Plattsburg, Saranac Lake, and Malone compete in the Northern League, which drew large crowds and talented players, including pitcher Robin Roberts for two seasons before he rose to the major leagues where he won 286 games, initially for the Philadelphia Phillies, and eventually landing in the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York in 1976. Attendance at football games in the fall also achieved success. By 1944, both a children's playground and a basketball court had been added near the pool.

The grandstand, a distinctive building defined as a permanent, roofed structure with tiered rows of seats for people watching events, is distinguished from more primitive structures called bleachers by its sheltering roof. Montpelier's grandstand is significant for its complex and carefully engineered truss systems that minimizes visual obstructions to the field and hillside beyond. As built, the sheltered building seated about 1250, with bleachers placed along the first and third base lines seating an additional 1000 each; sheltered dugouts for players flanked each side of the grandstand. A one-half mile cinder track surrounded the baseball field, and the bleachers could be moved to the football field during the fall season. By 1949, permanent concession stands had been added with funds provided by the Washington County Athletic Association. During the 1950s, a period of continuing growth in city recreation, the grandstand and baseball field served the men's softball league; men's baseball; American Legion baseball; Little League; Babe Ruth League; as well as high school baseball and track practice fields. To ease the crowding, Montpelier converted a portion of the parking area behind the field to a Little League field in 1952. That year, too, the baseball field's scoreboard was rebuilt and painted, and workers repaired seats and connecting irons on the bleachers. Use of the bleachers had become so heavy that the city's insurance company condemned them in 1964. Replacements are metal.

If Recreation Field served as the center of recreational activities in Montpelier, the swimming pool became its epicenter, at least during warm summer days. The city's annual reports chronicle frequent repainting of the bath house, its lockers and showers; and asphalt sealing of pool surface followed by coats of aluminum paint. Planned activities included swim lessons and meets, water ballet, and water carnivals. Although dedication of Montpelier's new high school in 1956, with expansive football, soccer, baseball fields, and quarter-mile track alleviated some of the competition for use of the Recreation Field's baseball and football fields as well as its running track, the pool area continued to be the city's most popular recreational attraction. By 1982, major improvements had become necessary, and the city approved a bond issue of \$59,700 to pay for one-quarter of the project, the balance to be provided by state and federal funding. Completed in 1984 and guided by a rehabilitation study prepared by the Allen Organization in 1979, the project provided a new sewerage and drainage system; repaired cracks in the pool surface and added protective paint; made hydraulic improvements; and installed a correct chlorinator and filter.

Following construction of its new high school in 1956, Montpelier continued to adapt Recreation Field to meet the city's evolving recreational needs. In 1962, The Smilie Fund donated \$1800 for construction of a basketball court adjacent to the swimming pool, and the city increased the size of the nearby playground that same year. In 1969, the Kiwanis Club paid for paving the pool parking

lot and walkway to the bath house, and with funds donated by James Seivwright the city constructed two, 146-foot, asphalt runways used for pole vaulting, long jump and triple jump. In 1973, the city voted to apply for Bureau of Outdoor Recreation funds to pay for a number of new recreational features, supported by a city bond issue. Completed in 1976, the project added four lighted tennis courts, new parking area for 120 cars, improvements to the playground area near the pool, a new maintenance garage, public restroom facilities, acquisition of new sign at the field entrance, and a two-acre parcel of land on the easterly side of the North Branch Winooski River for use as a picnic area, connected by a small footbridge. By that time, too, the city's Recreation and School Departments had begun coordinating activities at both locations, and with construction of the tennis courts, orientation of the football field changed, in turn leaving room for a youth soccer field and a children's baseball or T-ball field and backstop. Changes or additions to recreational activities have all been consistent with the site's original plans or purposes.

Today, the swimming pool and bath house continue to be used much as they have throughout the history of Recreation Field, but in 2003, the grandstand and baseball field entered a new and important era, as home field to the Vermont Mountaineers of the New England Collegiate Baseball League, with teams representing thirteen towns and cities in all New England states. The list of improvements made after that year is a long one, but all are consistent with the building's original intended purpose, and all will give the grandstand extended life. New features include improved floodlights mounted to the existing poles; enlarged press box at the top of the grandstand; walled granite plaques at the field entrance commemorating player rosters; concession and storage areas under the grandstand; new and larger dugouts; a souvenir stand, and ticket booth; wireless scoreboard; outfield and ballpark perimeter fencing with safety caps, as well as fencing along Elm Street; pavement of the entire parking lot and areas around the grandstand and concourse; picnic tables along the first base line; an outfield warning track; ADA seating along the first-base side of the grandstand; batting cage; radar feature on the scoreboard; new lights for evening games; beer garden beyond left field; a concession building behind the third-base dugout; installation of Trackman and video camera beyond centerfield for ESPN and NECBL broadcasts; safety screens; new bullpens, mound, and home plate areas; laser grading with new sod and clay; replacement of all infield and outfield surfaces as needed; and regular repainting of the grandstand.

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FORM COMPLETED BY: City of Montpelier
ORGANIZATION: Bob McCullough / Historic Preservation Commission
DATE RECORDED: December 30, 2025

ATTACHMENTS: *Please insert maps and photographs on the following pages.*

Site Plan/Maps: *Please include a site plan below. To insert additional maps, please copy and paste the format provided.*

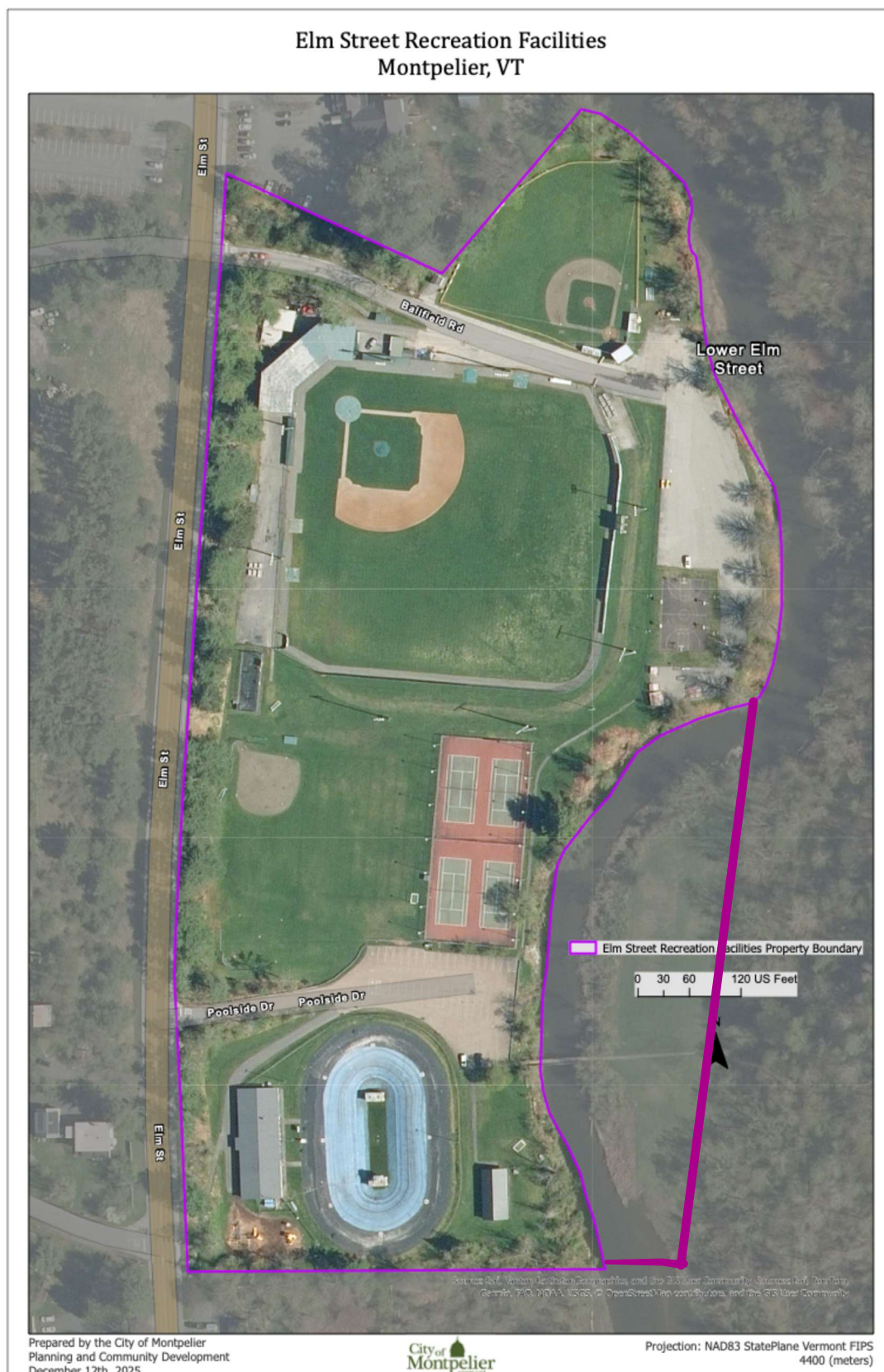


Figure 1. Montpelier Recreation Field

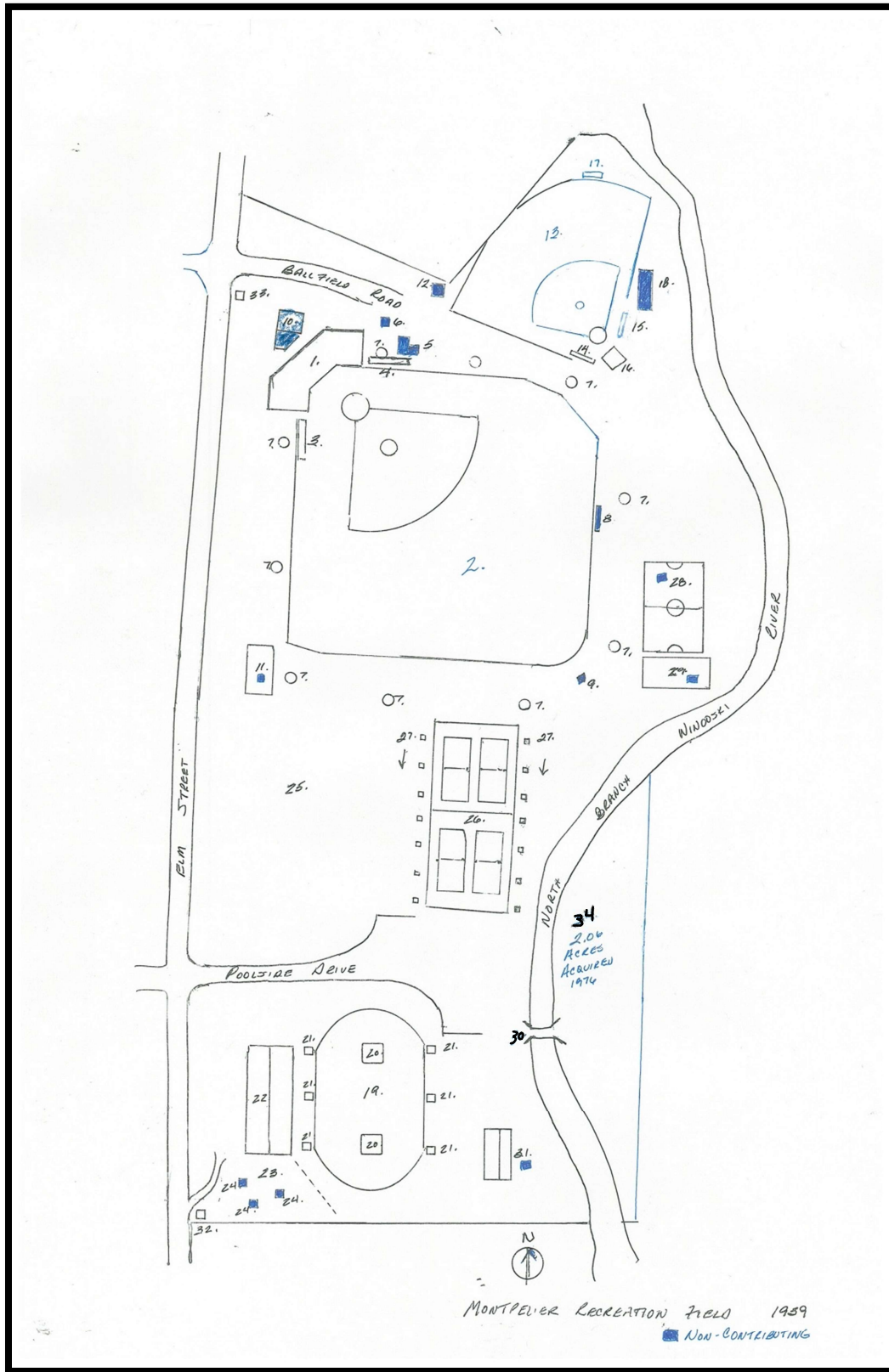


Figure 2. Montpelier Recreation Field

Photographs:

Include a maximum of one or two photographs per page. To insert additional photographs, please copy and paste the format provided.

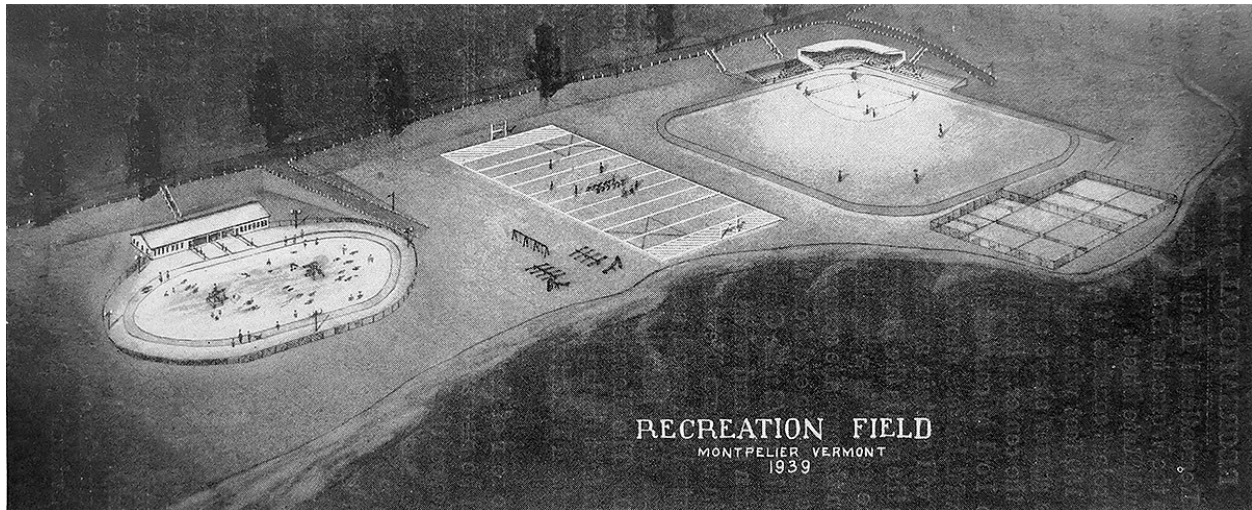


Figure 3. Recreation Field, Montpelier, Vermont

Date: 1939

Credit: Montpelier Annual Reports, 1939



Figure 4. Recreation Field, Montpelier, Vermont

Date: c. 1940

Credit: Living New Deal. Vermont Sites.
<https://livingnewdeal.org/us/vt/montpelier-vt/>



Figure 5: Grandstand and Baseball Field, Montpelier, VT	
Date: Opening Day, 1940	Credit: Brian Gallagher Collection



Figure 6. Grandstand and Baseball Field, Montpelier, VT:	
Date: Opening Day, 1940	Credit: Brian Gallagher Collection



Figure 7. Montpelier Senators:	
Date: C. 1940	Credit: Brian Gallagher Collection

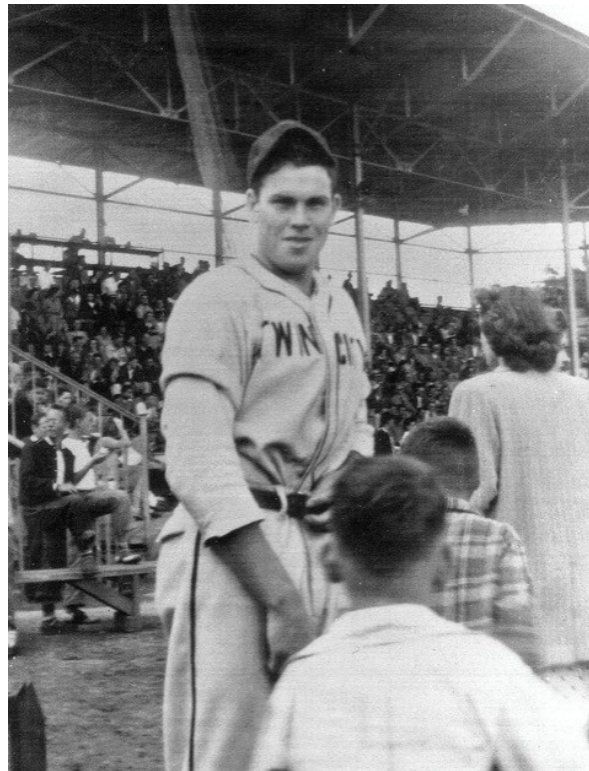


Figure 8. Robin Roberts	
Date: 1947	Credit: Brian Gallagher Collection

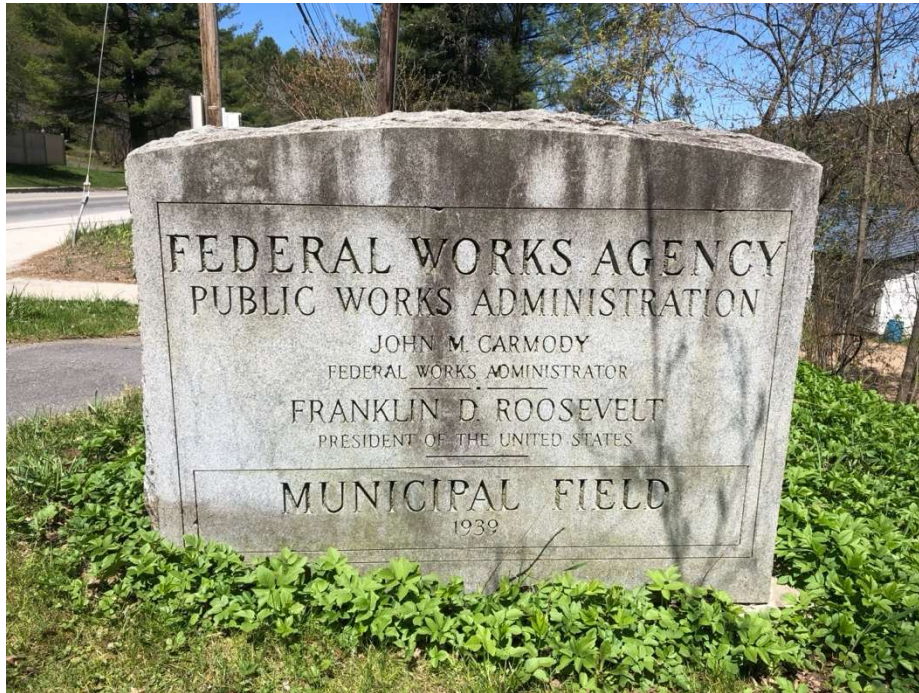


Figure 9. Commemorative Marker, Recreation Field, Montpelier, VT	
Date: 1939	Credit: Devin Colman

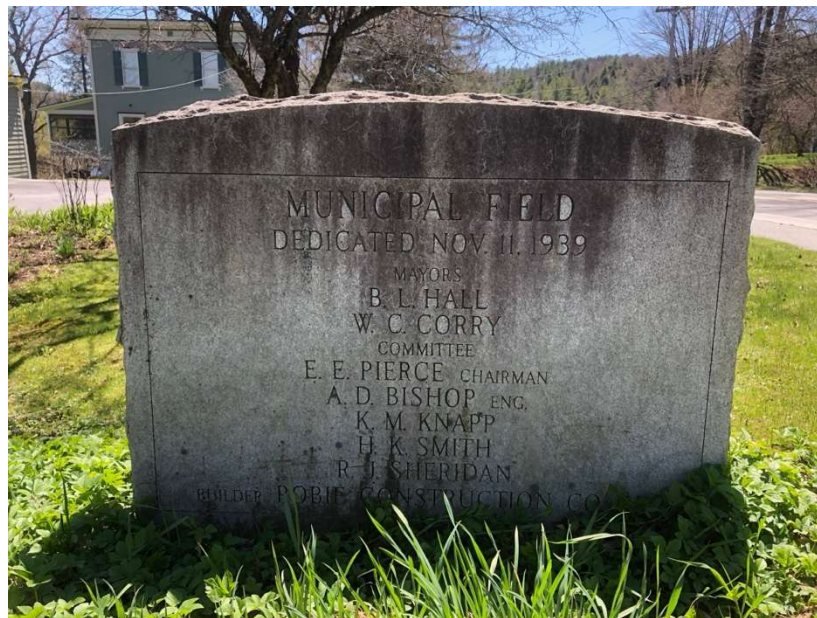


Figure 10. Commemorative Marker, Recreation Field, Montpelier, VT	
Date: 1939	Credit: Devin Colman



Figure 11. Grandstand, Ticket Booth, and Concession and Souvenir Stand, Recreation Field, Montpelier, VT

Date: 2025

Credit: Bob McCullough



Figure 12. Maintenance Garage and Public Toilets, Recreation Field, Montpelier, VT

Date: 2025

Credit: Bob McCullough

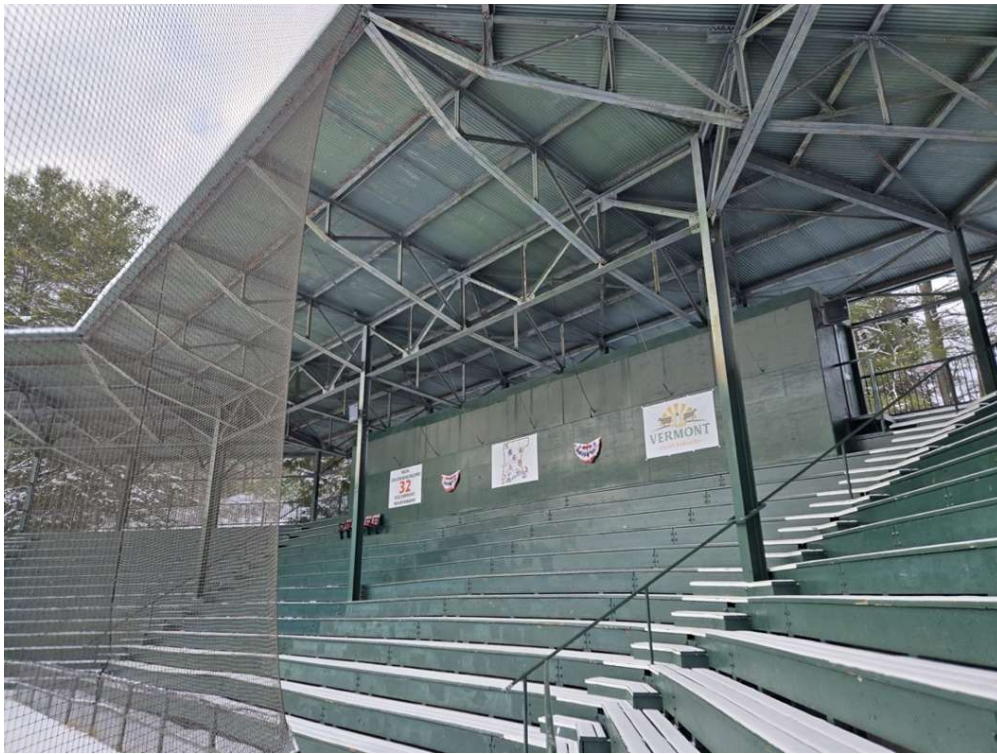


Figure 13. Grandstand, Recreation Field, Montpelier, VT	
Date: 2025	Credit: Bob McCullough



Figure 14. Grandstand and Baseball Diamond, Recreation Field, Montpelier, VT	
Date: 2003	Credit: Brian Gallagher Collection



Figure 15. Tennis Courts, Swimming Pool and Bathhouse, Recreation Field, Montpelier, VT	
Date: 1976	Credit: Montpelier Annual Reports, 1976



Figure 16. Bathhouse, Recreation Field, Montpelier, VT	
Date: 2025	Credit: Bob McCullough



Figure 17. Bathhouse, Recreation Field, Montpelier, VT	
Date: 2025	Credit: Bob McCullough



Figure 18. Bathhouse, Recreation Field, Montpelier, VT	
Date: 2025	Credit: Bob McCullough



Figure 19. Playground, Recreation Field, Montpelier, VT	
Date: 2025	Credit: Bob McCullough



Figure 20. Picnic Pavilion, Recreation Field, Montpelier, VT	
Date: 2025	Credit: Bob McCullough



Figure 21. Pedestrian Bridge, Recreation Field, Montpelier, VT	
Date: 2025	Credit: Bob McCullough

March 10, 2026

Mr. Niels Rinehart
Lands Administration & Historic Resources Coordinator
Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation
1 National Life Drive
Davis 2
Montpelier, VT 05620
Niels.rinehart@vermont.gov

**Re: Montpelier Historic Preservation Commission Comments
Montpelier Recreation Field, Elm Street, Montpelier, VT—Section 106 Review of
Mountaineers Support Facility Project**

Dear Mr. Rinehart:

I'm writing in response to your February 18, 2026, request for comments on the planned construction of a support building for the Vermont Mountaineers baseball team at the Montpelier Recreation Field off of Elm Street in Montpelier, VT.

As you are aware, there has been a determination that the Recreation Field facilities, including the baseball grandstand and ballpark, are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and the City of Montpelier is a recognized Certified Local Government pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq.). Therefore, Montpelier's Historic Preservation Commission has a responsibility under Federal law to reply to your request.

Montpelier's Historic Preservation Commission met on this matter during its March 10, 2026, meeting, reviewing the project plan for its potential effects on the Recreation Field facilities. After careful review, the Commission [will not have an adverse effect] on the historic characteristics of the Recreation Field or otherwise affect its eligibility for listing on the National Register.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposal. We look forward to continuing to work with you on future reviews.

Sincerely,

Eric Gilbertson, Chair
Montpelier Historic Preservation Commission

Cc: Vermont State Historic Preservation Office via email (ACCD.ProjectReview@vermont.gov)
Elizabeth Peebles, Vermont State Architectural Historian (elizabeth.peebles@vermont.gov)
Brian Gallagher, President/GM Vermont Mountaineers (gmvtm@comcast.net)
Arne McMullen, Director of Montpelier Recreation Dept. (amcmullen@montpelier-vt.org)

Historic Preservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Subject to review and approval
Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 7:00 PM
via Zoom Video Conference
REMOTE ACCESS ONLY

Commission Members Present: Eric Gilbertson (Chair), Robert McCullough (Vice Chair), Paul Carnahan, and Linden Chozinska,

Member Absent: Bryan Jones

Others Present: Meredith Crandall (Administration); Britta Tonn, Matt Moore, Nicola Anderson, and Greg Montgomery representing Evernorth, Downstreet Housing and Community Development, and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board concerning 87 Elm Street, North Branch Apartments.

1. Call to Order: 7:02 PM
2. Public Comments. None
3. Approval of the Agenda. Approved unanimously.
4. Comments from the Chair. Reserved

5. 87 Elm Street: Request for Preliminary Comments on Flood Mitigation Plans. Downstreet Housing and Community Development non-profit presented very preliminary review of alternatives for the historic Elm Street Apartments to address the problems caused by past flooding and the likelihood of recurring floods. Ultimately, plans will require Section 106 review if (as is nearly guaranteed) they use federal funding for the work.

Nicola Anderson introduced the project, outlining Downstreet's mission of offering affordable housing located in walkable downtowns, and preserving historic buildings. Proposed funding for their project is through federal CDBG, with an application deadline of February 27th, what remains of disaster recovery funding specific to Vermont, with 40 million devoted to housing. Downstreet's priority is to make sure that the remaining families currently in the building have safe and adequate housing, which is problematic because the building's utilities remain in the basement and the first floors are allow below the base flood elevation.

Britta Tonn then provided historical background for the Elm Street buildings, with emphasis on 87 Elm Street. Dates of construction for the buildings that have been merged over the years to result in 87 Elm Street range from 1880 (Building A) to 1908 (Building C), with rehabilitations during the 1990s and a major rehabilitation in 2009. Commission asked for greater clarity about the various dates of rehabilitation in future, in order to keep discussions clear during Section 106 review.

Greg Montgomery then provided analysis of the requirements for flood-proofing and the numerous problems associated with various options that must be examined under the Section 106 review, emphasizing that the report being developed for the CDBG grant application will provide an assessment of all available options. The success of the funding application will depend on a financially viable option that leaves no person in harm's way. The dilemma is that the CDBG application must demonstrate the financial viability of safe and affordable housing in terms of flood mitigation, in order to attract investment, but so far the options for preserving the historic building does not appear to meet that test of financial viability. Thus, the success of the funding application may depend on whether demolition of the building(s) is permitted as part of the review process for Section 106. Britta noted that a 2021 Programmatic Agreement specifies the Section 106 process for CDBG funding. Options are:

1. Do nothing.
2. Site and landscape adaptation.
3. Do the bare minimum.
4. Elevate the building.
5. Elevate the interior structure
6. Abandon the lowest floor.
7. Move the historic building.
8. Unconventional adaptation.
9. Partial demolition.
10. Full demolition.
11. Sell the property.

A long discussion about the various options followed without result, pending completion of the more thorough analysis of the costs and problems with each of the options. The commission noted that a clear explanation of why elevating the building as a whole, elevating the interior of the building, or abandoning the first floor would be cost prohibitive or not practical will be necessary before a decision about demolition could be reached by the Commission. The Commission also encouraged Downstreet to investigate whether demolition of one of the buildings would open opportunities for creative ways to provide flood mitigation for the remaining buildings in a financially viable manner, thus forestalling loss of the entire lengthy block of buildings on Elm Street, which would create a dramatic gap in the streetscape. The Commission also asked for more information about the difference in cost between building new apartments and elevating the existing buildings.

The practical constraints are that if Downstreet's funding submission—a competitive process—is not successful, the non-profit may be forced to abandon the project, which would create an uncertain future for the buildings. Whether that uncertain future is preferable to the certainty of the adverse effect caused by demolition is a question for the Commission to determine in the future.

6. Election of officers. Bob nominated Eric for Chair, and Paul seconded. Paul nominated Bob as the Vice Chair, and Linden seconded. Both were re-elected to their positions unanimously.

7. Continue Planning for Lyssa Papazian Presentation. Postponed pending better information about possible sources of funding. It might be best to think about scheduling the presentation in the fall. The discussion will continue at the March meeting.

8. Review and Approve Minutes: 12/9/2025 & 1/13/2026. Both unanimously approved on motion by Paul, seconded by Bob.

9. Other Business. Alex Brown donated a large collection of slides of Montpelier photographing many buildings, both downtown and residential, and depicting a number of events from the 1990s. Discussion revolved around ways to scan the slides, possibly by developing a program with the high school.

10. Adjournment. 9:00 P.M. Next meeting March 10th, 2026.