



SAYBROOK POINT

Town Land Acquisition & Pavilion Restaurant Lease
Public Hearing – February 2, 2026



“Connecticut. Aren’t we lucky? We have wonderful wildflowers — parks — hills — lovely old houses. We have a pace that we like — sometimes slow — sometimes fast. Rivers — reservoirs — Long Island Sound. A wonderful climate — trees — gardens — snow — rain. And it’s a good size — not huge — not small. Well, it’s home to me...”

— *Katharine Hepburn*



Land Acquisition & Pavilion Restaurant Lease

- Saybrook Point is already a community destination, and this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity would allow the town to transform this site into a 25-acre waterfront park and conservation area for generations to enjoy.
- This is an opportunity to connect the town's properties and improve public access for all to the waterfront.
- We will make environmental improvements including, reducing runoff, adding native plantings, and expanding the tree canopy.



Acquisition Proposal Overview

*Swap 145 College Street property for
Vicki Duffy Pavilion lease for restaurant*

- 2.2-acre waterfront parcel
- 350 feet of waterfront
- Connecting sidewalk link to the causeway
- Existing deck and dock infrastructure
- Previously unavailable generational opportunity



Restaurant Lease Overview

- Year-round casual dining restaurant
- Experienced restaurateur with 24-year successful history in OS
- 25-year, \$1/year lease with option for three renewals
- Shared public parking
- Indoor/outdoor seating



How did we get here?

- Dock & Dine restaurant was born in 1940 and was purchased in 1987 by Jon Kodama who operated it until October 2012 when it was destroyed by Superstorm Sandy
- Sand Bar restaurant was constructed in 1966 (the building now known as the Vicki Duffy Pavilion) and operated until 1989 when the town purchased the building and land along with the mini-golf course
- Options to rebuild Dock & Dine and, later, to create an outdoor dining venue, are unsuccessful
- Discussions begin with the town and Parks & Rec Department



Property Overview

Saybrook Point parcels, including town-owned land and privately owned property.



**Area that town
would gain for
revitalization**

**Area that would be
converted back to a
restaurant**



Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan - March 2021

Nearly 10% of town residents provided input for this study to provide a vision for improving OS's park system.



- Create a complete trail network connecting all parks and facilities within the site and provide wayfinding signage.
- Relocate designated fishing areas and add regulatory signage.
- Provide historic tours or features highlighted by updated interpretative signage, technology, and more.

Saybrook Point Masterplan: Option with Dock & Dine Property

What will this project look like?

That's up to you, with the guidance of professional designers who will help us to make the most of this beautiful property. Here's one idea.



Additional ideas:

- Three-season 32' x 86' pavilion
- Riverfront swings
- New seating
- Public art
- Native plantings & added trees
- Great lawn
- Historic signage
- Support for seasonal activities



Alternative Spaces Available

- **The Estuary** – Two rooms available: 1) main event space overlooking the marsh; 2) location of the former thrift store.
- **Acton Public Library** – New renovations to the library include plans for additional public spaces, including public use beyond normal library hours.
- **The Kate** – Potential renovations to this building may offer some flexible public spaces.
- **Open-air Pavilion** – This is a potential three-season amenity in the proposed park at 145 College Street, which would be available for public use.



Past Legacy Acquisitions

The following decisions of the Old Saybrook electorate have and will continue to have lasting value for generations.

- **1989** \$3.2m purchase of 2.3 acres at Saybrook Point including mini-golf and Sand Bar restaurant
Result: 35-40,000 people a year play mini-golf at this location today, supporting Parks & Recreation programs and park maintenance
- **2005 and 2009** \$multi-million renovation of the Town Hall campus
Result: Reimagining of our downtown and creating a destination
- **2013** \$1.6m purchase of 3.8 acres at 36 Lynde Street
Result: This area has transformed Main Street, not only is it home to a modern police station, but a public parking area and landscaping have been added as well as 3 pickleball courts, a public park, 2 bocce courts and a sidewalk connecting Main Street to Lynde Street
- **2015** \$3m toward purchase of the Preserve, a 1,000-acre coastal forest, along with other entities
Result: This is a popular hiking, recreation, and conservation area



How would the town pay for revitalization of this property?

The town has identified four possible sources of funding:

- The town's capital non-recurring fund
- Potential surplus funds that would be calculated at the end of fiscal year 2026
- State of Connecticut grant funds
- Town debt issuance



Process

- Parks & Recreation Commission review - √
- Board of Selectmen referral - √
- Planning Commission C.G.S s. 8-24 - √
- Public information discussion - √ √
- Purchase and sale agreement and lease agreement - √
- Referendum Vote: **3/31/2026 noon-8pm at Old Saybrook High School**
- Town permitting
 - a. 155 College Street – restaurant
 - b. 145 College Street – public amenities





Thank you!

**Town Land Acquisition & Pavilion Restaurant Lease
Referendum Vote - March 31, 2026**

