

THE WESTERLY SUN
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Here comes the sun



Kat Madden and baby Cooper enjoy the warm weather beneath the shade of a tree as spring fever hit Westerly and Wilcox Park on Tuesday, the warmest day of 2026 so far.

Photos by Harold Hanka | Special to The Sun

Brutal winter finally gives way as RI gets early taste of summer

By Joseph Volpe
 Sun staff writer

WESTERLY — A 76-degree day—the warmest of 2026 so far—drew residents to Wilcox Park on Tuesday, where they emerged from a long winter with dog walks, painting, and time in the sun.

Westerly resident Elizabeth Morisseau, who frequently walks at the park, appreciated the sunshine and was making the most out of her lunch break.

“I’ve been looking forward to taking a walk around the park, I was out here snowshoeing through all the blizzards. I always come and take walks around here,” she said. “I’m working from home and I’m on break, so I got a coffee and a cookie from Nana’s, I got the L.A. latte, it’s very good.”

Other townspeople like Kat and Harold Madden were enjoying their day off, taking their almost 14-month-old son, Cooper, to play in the grass and get some

fresh, spring air after being stuck inside all winter.

“We just wanted to get outside because it feels like summer out today, it’s really wild. Some of the other days have been nice, but today was our first day off that felt actually warm,” Kat said. “He’s [Cooper] just starting to take his first steps, so we just like letting him play in the grass and be outside.”

Residents from neighboring communities also came to the park to enjoy the day, with two friends Amy and Lisa from Waterford and North Stonington catching up with each other. Lisa was taking her very friendly 9-month-old black Labrador, Jubilee, for a stroll.

“We’re just walking around the park, getting her [Jubilee] some socialization,” Lisa said. “It’s time to get outside, whether it’s my

See Weather, A2



Elizabeth Morisseau, of Westerly, strolls through the park with her lunch and iced coffee on a warm day in Westerly on Tuesday.



Groundskeeper Martin Neiberg spruces up the grounds of Wilcox Park on Tuesday.



John Haiduk, artist in residence at Wilcox Park, works on an art project Tuesday.

Board keeps fee waivers for nonprofits, but lowers cap

By Ryan Blessing
 Sun staff writer

STONINGTON — Nonprofit organizations in Stonington can still get their fee for a building permit waived, but with a slight change by the town’s Board of Selectmen.

The board on April 8 voted to modify a 2023 policy that gives the nonprofits the ability to have their building permit fee waived once in a 20-year period. The time frame is the same, but the amount able to be waived was reduced, from up to \$10,000 to a \$5,000 cap.

In discussing the change, the three selectmen said they wanted to keep the incentive and benefit for nonprofit organizations, and noted that few projects would ever incur the kind of fees that rise more than \$5,000. Those that do, they said, typically involve large, well-funded organizations undertaking large building projects.

“My thought is, especially for the larger nonprofits, we don’t collect property taxes, we don’t collect anything,” First Selectman Bill Middleton said. “For the larger ones, you’re potentially giving up \$10,000 per.”

Among those larger organizations in town that benefit are the Mystic

See Fees, A2

Hoops courts at Cimalore to be resurfaced

By Ryan Blessing
 Sun staff writer

WESTERLY — The basketball courts at Westerly’s Louis J. Cimalore Sports Complex are closer to getting a much-needed reconstruction after the April 6 Town Council meeting.

The council voted unanimously to authorize the town to contract with Cape and Island Tennis & Track, of Pocasset, Mass., on the \$209,495 project.

“This has been a capital request, it’s been funded for the last four years and we’re reaching the threshold to get it done at this point,” Town Manager Shawn Lacey said.

Cape and Island provided a proposal for asphalt basketball courts construction at a cost of \$161,052.89, and surfacing of the basketball courts for \$48,442.86. The existing courts cover an area of 124 feet by 100 feet.

The work would involve resurfacing and re-striping the existing courts, and replacing the four basketball hoop assemblies. The proposal also shows a proposed water bottle filling station, two proposed light

See Courts, A2

