

***Shelburne Parks and
Recreation Commission***

Annual Report

2001

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Introduction

The 2001 Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Report has been prepared to provide an overview of the operation of the Parks and Recreation Department of the Town of Shelburne for the 2001 calendar year.

This Report is a supplement to the reports submitted monthly to the Parks and Recreation Commission and Town Council by the Parks and Recreation Director.

Additional information on any of the items mentioned in this Report is available from the Parks and Recreation Office, 168 Water Street, Shelburne.

Items mentioned in this Report are in no specific order or priority.

Parks and Recreation Commission members

2000

Deputy Mayor Tony Mahaney, Chair
Councilor Al Keith, Vice Chair
Councilor Bernie Nickerson
Councilor Barbara Huskilson
Marina MacLellan
Al Mahaney
Doug Langley
Liam MacLellan, SRHS student representative
Mayor P.G. Comeau, ex-officio

Parks and Recreation Department Staff

Jerry Locke, Parks and Recreation Director
George Acker, Parks Supervisor
Mary Lee Gonzaga, Office Clerk

2001

The year in review

The Shelburne and Area Recreational Fields Committee's consultants presented their report in February. The report provided specific information on each of the facilities included in the study and a number of recommendations for improvements. There was quite a bit of interest generated in the report from the users of the facilities as well as their owners and managers. The Committee quickly lost steam when the implementation phase of its work began. Many of the recommendations were quite manageable and were well within the grasp of the Committee. There has been a marked lack of interest, however in pursuing them. Subsequent Committee meetings were poorly attended and there was not a lot of interest in continuing. Efforts to work on the cooperative projects that involved little or no financial commitment were even stalled. The approval by the golf course of its aerator, and the Parks and Recreation Department's offer to provide a trailer to transport it to various sites had no takers. All they had to provide was a tractor to attach the aerator to for their use. The Committee has been put on hold until enough interest is developed to continue.

In November, Mike Harris made his annual donation of a Christmas tree to the Town for the park at the corner of King and Water Streets. The 20 foot fir tree and the park area were decorated before the annual Christmas Parade by Town staff and volunteers. We have received a number of favourable comments concerning the decorations this year.

There have been more problems than usual this year with the lights. We added more lights to the tree and the wall and (we think) this created too much of an electrical load on the usual power source. This necessitated reducing the number of lights in the park and another temporary measure to provide power. The electrical load continued to cause problems with plugs. Next year a better (bigger) source of power needs to be planned. Unfortunately this may lead to increased costs for the project. This will be explored well in advance of the next Christmas season.

This year's Santa visit to the tree was very successful. The Kinsmen, Air Cadet band, Reenactment Regiment, Coastguard newspaper, volunteers

and the Town all cooperated to make it very successful. A number of those involved have already suggested plans for next year.

The Shelburne County Heart Health Action Team expanded its presence during the year. The results of the SRHS smoking survey that had been taken there in mid-2000 were released at information sessions for the students in February 2001. A number of the initiatives suggested from the information sessions have been acted on by the school's committee and have been implemented or are still in the planning stages.

The smoking survey was conducted among the Junior High students at Lockeport High in the spring. The results were tabulated by staff from this department over the summer months. They will be presented to the school early in 2002. There is less of an interest in developing the program at LRHS, due to limited staff resources. The local Parent Support Group has come on board to provide assistance with the project.

The Heart Health project at the Barrington School has seen a big change in staff and student participation. They have decided to re-group for the 2002/2003 school year.

The County Heart Health Action Team has begun

discussion on new or continued direction for the Team in the future. Several options have been discussed, but no clear action has been established as yet. The County Team needs to ensure that it has the energy and resources to continue before it moves on.

The Town's web page is administered by the Parks and Recreation Department. The site has received a modest amount of interest in the past year. There have been over 3300 "hits" counted on the site in the past year. This is 77% higher than last year's hits! We have received a number of favourable comments via email and other sources concerning our site. A number of local businesses and organizations have requested that we post a link to their site on ours. We often receive requests for tourism information from potential visitors to the area. Information on the site is kept up-to-date on a regular basis. In 2002 we will be adding more information on attractions and events in the community. Press releases from the Parks and Recreation Department on a number of programs and events is already included.

The Parks and Recreation Department provided assistance in the development of an information package that is being used to promote Shelburne as a cruise ship destination port. The information was taken to a trade show

in Miami and has been modified since then to be used for a number of other promotional opportunities. The Department provided assistance with the layout and printing and assembly of a number of pieces of information that were included in the packages.

The Parks and Recreation Director is a member of the community-based committee that is involved with the replacement of the present Shelburne Regional High School facility. The Site Selection Committee and the School Steering Committee have both been involved in discussions and planning that will see the new school open in 2004. The committees have experienced a number of delays in the planning process that have proven to be quite frustrating. There seems to be a great deal of difficulty in obtaining accurate information on a number of aspects of the process. Discussions with other groups who have been in this process seems to confirm our feelings.

The opportunities for community involvement in the design process and enhancements in the actual physical plant can provide a facility that will serve the needs of both the students and the community.

The Parks Supervisor painted most of the walls in the “community” side of the building last winter. Painting in the “fire” side is scheduled for early in 2002.

The Community Centre was a busy spot this year. The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for managing the schedule of bookings for the various rooms in the building. Last year there were 488 bookings made. This is up about 15% over last year. The table below lists bookings for the last 5 years.

1997	- 270
1998	- 346
1999	- 411
2000	- 424
2001	- 488

The number of bookings show the need for the facility in the community.

Founders' Days 2001 was very successful, despite a sharp decrease in its operating budget for the year. The events were reduced from 4 to three days and a number of items were either reduced or dropped from the budget. Attendance figures were very good for all the programs and events and most people seemed very pleased with the results. The overall financial picture for the weekend was the best it has been for a number of years. A commitment of fiscal responsibility and caution by the Committee resulted in a very small deficit.

Finances continues to be the key to our success. The funds necessary for the various needs of the program must be committed early in the planning process, to ensure a

program that will meet the expectations of the community. The Committee still struggles with finding a person (or persons) who have the time and talent necessary to tackle the corporate sponsorship work.

The entire community needs to feel - and take - ownership in Founders' Days in order to make it a true community event. This is the only way that it will be successful and achieve any growth.

The Annual Youth Activity Fair was held on February 17, 2001. This year there were 29 exhibitors in attendance. There was good attendance throughout the day. Most booths provide activities for people to sample or take part in. This provides a good bit of interaction between exhibitors and the public, and allows people to get a better understanding of the organization's program and activities. The Fair continues to be popular. Many of the exhibitors and the public say that they look forward to the Fair every year. We still need to try and develop a "main event" to attract even more people.

The Shelburne County Active Team (SCAT) launched its "SCAT PAK" in May. The SCAT group was formed to encourage and develop physical activity opportunities in the County. The Paks were assembled - one in each end of the County - with funding from the Physical Activity for Children and Youth (PACY) program through the Community Health Board. The Paks were heavily used following their launch, by a number of groups throughout the County. They have proven to be very popular and have a lot of potential for use by most groups in the County. The SCAT group has developed some promotional material for the Paks. Distribution of the material will begin in the new year.

The Katimavik program had two groups of participants in Shelburne this year - one in the spring and one in the fall. Each group had three sets of participants who came and stayed here about 3 months. The Katimavik house was located at #12 John St. The Katimavik participants worked for a number of community groups and organizations in and near the Town during their stay here. Usually only one or two worked for each sponsor. The entire group worked for the Parks and Recreation Department - usually only one day a week, and only when the weather cooperated. Most of their work for us was on

the trail, the ballfield or other park areas. It provided them with a nice change of pace from their "regular jobs" and allowed us to get some work done faster than originally planned.

The Department also provide the loan of various pieces of equipment to the Katimavik groups during their visits. The Department is also a member of the Local Katimavik Committee. This group represent various work sponsors and help the Katimavik Project Coordinator.

Volunteer Week was April 22 - 28. This year was also International Year the Volunteer. In recognition of this, volunteer nominees had the names posted on our Special Events signs - three at a time - for a month and those who were posted received a special Recognition Certificate at the next monthly meeting of Council. Harold Hart was selected for provincial recognition to represent the volunteers who serve the Town of Shelburne. The local Volunteer Reception was held at the Community Centre, with about 100 people in attendance.

The Town's Waterfront Development Committee

initiated discussions toward developing a swimming area on Dock Street in the spring. In their proposal, the WDC would develop the proposed area and the Parks and Recreation Department would provide the staff for supervision. Representatives from the Nova Scotia Lifeguard service provided some advise and preliminary costs on contracting the service through them. The project did not get implemented this year, but indications are that their plans should be ready for next year. Town Council still has to give final approval for the project to proceed. Issues such as the level of supervision to be provided, equipment required and the Town's liability in the program need to be addressed. These need to addressed well in advance of a program start date.

The Department's Summer Program was very successful this year. A number of new programs were initiated. The Girls Day Out program proved to be very successful. It was part of a number of similar programs in Shelburne and Yarmouth Counties. Other special short-term program for children were also started and very popular. Attendance figures were very good. Registrations fees for the programs were very low, but still off-set costs. The soap-box derby sponsored by the Kin Club is very popular. The Special Events Coordinator prepared an extensive report on all the summer programs. Numbers are dropping in the swim program that is sponsored in cooperation with the Municipality of Shelburne. Declining

enrollments in the elementary school indicates that there are simply less children to take the lessons.

The Department coordinated the selection, preparation, cutting and loading of the Town's Christmas tree to Gloucester again this year. The 40 foot spruce tree was cut on Prince Street again this year, not far from where last year's tree was cut. Staff from the Water Treatment Plant and the Public Works Department assisted with the operation.

The Department made a number of changes to its storage arrangements this year. The start of development of the Osprey Theatre in the former Dorothy and Gail building meant that all of our equipment that was stored there had to be moved out. We received permission to use the old planer building on the Cox Shipyard property for storage. Some of the material that was stored in our workshop was moved there and the D&G material was split between the shop and the planer building. While we now have less storage space overall, it is more manageable than before. This is only a

stop-gap measure. Our workshop is bulging at the seams. We need a bigger space for storing our equipment that allows access without having to jockey things around to get at it.

The Department's Haunted House was very successful this year. A number of the games and activities that were associated with the Haunted House were quite popular. Moving the House out into the Community Centre Auditorium this year increased their exposure. There were a good number of volunteers who turned out to help with decorating and dressed up for characters for the games and the Haunted House. Every year we try and change the design and characters for the House to keep it just scary enough for elementary school-aged children.

The Department was involved in providing information and increasing awareness of activities in the community through the year. Our Summer and Winter Fun Guides were published and distributed. The Department provided information to the Coastguard newspaper's annual Community Guide on local community groups, programs and events. We had booths at the Youth Activity Fair, a

Senior's Wellness Day, and assisted the Department of Health with their KATS training program. Information was added to our website, press releases, posters and brochures were made and distributed. Interviews were given to the local newspaper and radio stations. Event information was posted on the Special Events boards on King Street and Falls Lane.

Parks

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for 17 different park/facility areas within the Town. They range in size from small planters in the downtown area to the Roger Grovestine Recreation Complex.

The Department is now able to borrow the golf course's aerator. It is used on the back of the Public Works Department's small tractor (sidewalk plow). We are able to aerate most of the turf areas under our responsibility. Only some of the very small park areas can't be accessed. This should improved the soil conditions and the effectiveness of our lime and fertilizer programs. Aeration is done twice a year. The golf course's willingness to help us is greatly appreciated.

This year the Waterfront Development Committee constructed several planters on Dock Street. These have been added to the Department's responsibility. Their high visibility will mean that they will have to receive a considerable amount of attention throughout most of the year.

Most of the downtown park areas and planters are holding up well. The long dry summer stressed most of the plants considerably and necessitated a frequent watering program, especially with the flowering plants. Most of the established shrubs held up well and did not require a lot of watering.

Some concern has been expressed about the planters on John St. and the tall grasses blocking the view plane at the intersection. That intersection has a bad view plane in several directions, especially if there are vans or trucks parked close to it. The grass, at its peak height does add the requirement for additional caution, but only in one direction. The grasses in the planter are quite spectacular when they are at their peak and they provide a non-traditional effect that may well be influencing other gardens in the community.

The George Street Playground continues to see quite good use of both the basketball courts and the playground area. Some of the playground equipment is beginning to show its age. A proposal to replace one piece was dropped from this year's capital budget. Additional pea gravel was added to the playground area this year for increased fall protection.

The Roger Grovestine Recreation Complex had a decrease in use this year. The Loyalist Baseball Team was not able to continue in the Southwest NS Baseball League this year and a drop in use during August due to playoff locations, etc. contributed to the decline. The following table shows bookings for the last 5 years.

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
May	25	43	36	34	30
June	35	49	50	44	34
July	39	55	58	46	40
August	32	25	54	40	24
September	17	3	32	9	3
total	148	175	230	173	131

The use of the ballfield lights dropped even further this year. Only 18 hours of light time was booked! Last year there were 33 hours booked. In 1999 there was 71 hours booked. This is nowhere near the potential for use for the lights.

During last winter, the bleachers on the right field side were rebuilt. This winter the left field bleachers will be done. The frames are scraped and painted, the bracing is repaired and the planks will be replaced. In the fall additional material was added to the infield to raise its grade and improve drainage. Work on this will continue in the spring.

The Rail line trail continues to be a very popular walking spot. The link to the sidewalks and streets in Town provides a nice series of loops of varying distance. The trail has been listed on a number of provincial and national information web sites. Maintenance on the trail consists

mostly of grass cutting, garbage pick-up and cutting the occasional fallen tree. Once or twice a year more extensive clearing of brush takes place to keep the trail bed clear. In the fall the Katimavik group provided assistance with a significant clearing project. There is occasional vandalism, mostly to the signs at intersections. Concern has been expressed about unleashed dogs on the trail. It is posted that leashes are required and additional signage was placed on the trail in the fall.

The Department's Parks equipment is in good condition. The new bushsaw purchased this year will provide relief to the ones presently in use. The extension to the mower trailer deck allows for better loading and unloading of the two mowers. The two-mower system begun last year works very well and provides efficient use of staff time. Our only concern is with trucks. Our 1988 Dodge would not pass inspection to get us through this fiscal year as planned, without significant cost. As an interim measure we have acquired the 1992 Dodge that was formerly with the Sewer Department.

Looking ahead to 2002

In the coming year the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Department will be involved in a number of projects and programs that will certainly make the year very interesting and challenging.

Discussions will be held on the possibility for additional facility development in the Town. When the George Street Playground was completed a number of years ago, there was an expectation that the Commission would be looking for another project to develop. Since then the lighting of the ballfield at the Roger Grovestine Recreation Complex and the development of the section of rail-line trail in the Town have been accomplished. There is now a feeling that the Town should be "moving on" to something else. The Parks and Recreation Commission will begin discussion toward this early in the new year. No clear direction has yet been established. It may take a while to figure out where we want to go - if anywhere. Clear, careful thought needs to precede any decisions in this area.

The Waterfront Development Committee will be continuing its Dock Street swimming project. Council needs to give clear direction to the project, and provision of the budget funds to accomplish it. With the commitment to provide a service, comes the responsibility of doing it right.

The Parks and Recreation Department will be proposing funds to contract these services in its budget, at least in the early stage of the program.

The Department will be developing a set of transportable bleachers. We have acquired two sets of aluminum bleachers from the local RDA. They will be fitted with axles and a trailer hitch so that they can be easily transported to special events throughout the area. This will allow many events in the community access to additional spectator seating capacity with a minimum of setup time. Plans have been obtained for the conversion of the bleachers.

The Kids Fair Play FUNd will be embarking on a new fund-raising campaign this year. The SMILE campaign has the potential to develop into a major source of revenue for the program. It will also significantly increase its exposure throughout the County. The Fund provides financial assistance for children to participate in sport and recreation program in the County.

The Shelburne County Heart Health Action Team will be continuing its project work at County schools to reduce the number of children who start smoking or are smoking now. The group will also be considering future

direction in health-related projects, after careful consideration of the team's resources.

The Recreation Nova Scotia Annual Conference will be held in Yarmouth October 24 - 26. The Yarmouth/Shelburne Municipal Recreation Association has been asked to take on a significant share of the responsibilities for hosting the Conference. This includes providing Conference Committee co-chairs and extensive involvement in several Conference committees. The location will provide an excellent opportunity for many local Recreation Committee/Commission members and Councillors to attend the Conference and network with others involved with community recreation around the province.

The Parks and Recreation Department will be upgrading the office computer systems. A proposal will be submitted early in the new year to improve the operating systems and improve data storage.

The process toward a replacement facility for

Shelburne Regional High School will continue. From what we have learned from similar projects, things will become a lot more intense as the project develops. Finalizing floorplans, decisions on specific community enhancements (and the funding for them), monitoring construction, establishing policy for community use, etc. will all have to be done before the facility is even open. Right now we are still dealing with finalizing a site. When that opening day does come, the Steering Committee wants to be pleased with its efforts, and the facility that will be used by the community for education, culture and recreation.

A proposal will be submitted to increase the usage of the lighting system on the ballfield at the Roger Grovestine Recreation Complex. The proposal will be submitted in an effort to increase physical activity through formal baseball and softball leagues and informal group activities in the community.

In April the Parks and Recreation Department will be requesting replacement of the 1992 Dodge truck for its Parks operations. The use of this truck was arranged as an interim measure.

A plan will be developed for signage for the trailhead on King Street. A sign marking the start of the trail needs to be placed. There is the possibility of using some existing material to provide the base for a sign.

As the year progresses the usual programs and events will come along - the Youth Activity Fair, Volunteer Week, Lobster Festival, Founder's Days, summer programs, Terry Fox Run, Haunted House, Christmas trees, lights and Parade, and so on.....

The Department receives many requests for assistance from community groups, organizations, volunteers and other government agencies and departments. We do our best to meet these requests and people are kept quite happy - most of the time.

We are finding, however that our resources - human and fiscal - are being stretched more and more every year. In some cases we have been given added responsibilities, with no increase in resources. Each request - and the response we give - depends on its timing and our situation in terms of workload and other commitments at the time.

As 2002 unfolds, we anticipate a year that will be both exciting and challenging.

