

***Shelburne Parks and
Recreation Commission***

Annual Report

2002

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Introduction

The 2002 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 2002 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.

2002 Highlights

Parks and Recreation Commission members

2002

Deputy Mayor Tony Mahaney, Chair
Councilor Al Keith, Vice Chair
Councilor Elizabeth Acker
Councilor Barbara Huskilson
Marina MacLellan
Al Mahaney
Doug Langley
Liam MacLellan, (Corey Huskilson)
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

The proposed Dock Street swimming area was on the agenda for every Parks and Recreation Commission meeting for the year. The plan had been initiated by the Waterfront Development Commission and turned over to the Parks and Recreation Commission for implementation. The project would establish a small beach, with a roped off swim area and a raft at the inlet just north of the Bill Norman Park on Dock Street. The number of permits, approvals, surveys and leases that must be obtained from a host of government departments and agencies at various levels is staggering. The project has been slowed considerably, pending all of these requirements. The costs for a survey for lease requirements will have to be addressed early in the new year, in order for the project to proceed.

Once the swimming area is established, its maintenance will be the responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Department.

The portable bleacher project that had been under discussion last year was completed. The bleachers have been operational since May. One or two people can load and unload each set from the low trailer that was constructed. It only takes a few minutes to position and level them. The 3 sets of bleachers will seat a total of 150

people. They have been used on a number of occasions throughout the area already.

Membership on the Parks and Recreation Commission remained quite stable during the year. Councillor Bernie Nickerson was replaced by Councillor Elizabeth Acker for the 2002 term and Liam MacLellan the SRHS Student Representative was replaced by Corey Huskison in the Fall of 2002.

Councillor Tony Mahaney was re-elected Chairman for the year. Councillor Al Keith served as Vice-Chairman.

Joyce Bruce was selected from among the volunteers nominated for recognition to represent the Town's many volunteers during Volunteer Week this year. The local volunteer reception was hosted by the Municipality of Shelburne at the Birchtown Community Centre.

The Annual Youth Activity Fair was held on February 16. This year there were over 230 visitors counted through the doors and 32 different booths were on hand.

Interest in the Fair continues to be high. We still need to find a "hook" for older youth to get them to attend. The booths that are inter-active, with things for people to take part in have the most interest. Many of the exhibitors use a lot of imagination in the planning and design of their space. Booth people find that the Fair is an excellent opportunity to "network" with other groups and

organizations.

This year the Department was involved in two different Katimavik projects - one early in the year, the other at the end of the year. The Katimavik program provides an excellent opportunity for youth to be involved in service-learning projects in communities throughout Canada. The participants that live here become a part of each sponsor's workforce, learn new skills and contribute to their workplace and the community.

The Steering Committee for the Shelburne Regional High School replacement was very active during the year. The Committee reviewed several potential sites and submitted recommendations. The site has been selected and purchased. The Committee has been busy discussing design features, site orientation and community enhancements for the facility. The Steering Committee has experienced considerable frustration in the course of its meetings with various government departments.

A sub-committee has been formed to develop a proposed community-use agreement for the school. This will detail the administration and operation of community activities in the school. It will also identify the specific

community enhancements and their funding.

The Parks and Recreation Commission has been involved in informal discussions concerning the future development of recreation facilities in the Town. No decisions have been made yet. The discussions have no urgency for a result, and the Commission is taking its time to determine the direction that future development will take. Decisions that are made will have long-term implications and careful thought needs to go into the process.

This year's summer program was very successful.

This year the Parks and Recreation Department did not provide a swim instructor to the Municipality's swim program at Welkum Park. Instead a Program Coordinator position was created. This person worked with the Special Events Coordinator to expand and increase the number of short-term programs that the Department offers through the summer. The Program Coordinator also helped the Special Events Coordinator with other activities and events.

The results proved to be very popular. Attendance was up, the number of programs offered increased and the quality of supervision improved. Many favourable comments were received from parents and participants alike. The Program Coordinator's role in programming

will be expanded next summer.

Program staff filed a Program Report at the end of August. This report forms the basis for planning next summer's program.

"Hits" on the Town's website continue to rise. This year there were over 6500 counted - last year there were over 3300! The following tables lists our site visits for the last three years:

Year	# of hits
2000	1865
2001	3300
2002	6560

Much of the website's information is static - history, operation information, directories of staff and Council members, links to other related sites, etc., but it still attracts attention. We have heard comments from a number of visitors to the area, or event participants that they have checked it out. The site also has sections for Parks and Recreation Department press releases, schedules for many special events, and this year we had a Founders' Days "scrapbook" online with over 60 pictures - thanks to the loan of the SRHS digital camera for the summer.

Several format changes were made to the site last year. It now loads faster and is easier to edit. More local businesses have asked for a link to their sites to be posted, and several links to provide tourists with information have

been added. Tourism-related emails that are received are forwarded to the Town's Visitor Information Centre, or to Discover Shelburne County.

The Shelburne County Trails Association decided to abandon their trail development project this year. The Association had been developing the sections of trail from the Roseway River to the Island Park (about 1.1km) and the section from the Park to Birchtown (about 8.3km). The Association's volunteers were having difficulty with the size of the project with the small size of their group, and frustrating negotiations with the Department of Natural Resources regarding development standards and conditions. The Association has begun the process of withdrawing their organization's status with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies. They will be sending a request to the Municipality of Shelburne, asking them to take over the section of trail from the Roseway River to the Islands Park.

Their decision came as a complete surprise. The trail section from the Roseway River to the Islands Park is used by locals and tourists regularly. It was almost finished - the bridges have been completed for a number of years - and only some trailbed work remained. If development of that section of the trail is not finished and maintained it will

quickly deteriorate and become hazardous.

The Parks and Recreation Commission has discussed this issue on a number of occasions and will continue to monitor the situation.

The Annual Haunted House saw a large turnout again this year. The House was designed and built by Parks and Recreation staff and volunteers. Students from SRHS provided assistance with the decorating and dressed in costume for the various characters that "roamed the halls". The local Katimavik group provided help with the games and passed out treats. The extra help from both these groups was greatly appreciated. The House and the games are geared to elementary school-aged children.

Christmas preparation usually begin in October for the Department and continue right up to mid-December.

The lights for the poles in Town need to be overhauled - bulbs and sockets replaced, etc. - then they are put up just before the Christmas Parade.

The tree for Gloucester has to be found, tied up for shipping, cut and loaded. This year's tree was 39 feet tall.

The tree for the park has to be located, cut, loaded, put up, and decorated. This year's tree was the biggest yet - about 25 feet tall. The park itself is decorated with lights.

Bulb theft is a popular activity and replacing them is continual.

The Department plays a key role in the planning, design and construction of the Town's float for the Annual Christmas Parade.

The Town Hall is decorated with lights and decorations.

Assistance is given to the volunteers who plan Santa's visit to the park on the corner, and all of the activities that are associated with that.

Founders' Days was very successful this year. The Nova Scotia Schooner Association's Annual Race Week was hosted by the Shelburne Harbour Yacht Club during Founder's Days. This added a "bonus" event to the weekend and contributed to the good attendance numbers.

Despite its appearance of success, Founders' Days is struggling. Finances is the major issue. In order to ensure an attractive program, the Committee needs to have a secure - and large enough - budget to operate. The Committee has traditionally tried to obtain funding from local businesses to add to the funds it receives annually from the Town and other, lesser sources. The Committee believes that the local businesses benefit from Founders' Days through either direct or indirect spending by locals and tourists around the events. The Committee has not been successful in getting wide-spread support. Some local businesses contribute, but most do not, or else their contributions are not enough to give the Committee the

budget it needs to operate and the level expected by the public.

Efforts to get funding occupy a lot of the Committee's time, not allowing for enough time to concentrate on developing the program. Delays in notification of funding causes problems with booking entertainment. For the last several years the Committee has had to reduce its original budget sizably - cutting entertainment and publicity - two areas that directly affect attendance.

The Committee has requested a meeting with the Finance Committee of Town Council to explore several options to secure an adequate level of funding in order to continue. This meeting needs to be held early in the new year in order for the Committee to get direction and make plans accordingly.

The Founders' Days Committee numbers are still not good. While there is a lot of interest in what will take place, and attending the events, the interest in helping to do all the work necessary for the events to take place is very limited.

The Community Centre saw another year with increased bookings. The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for managing the schedule of booking for the various rooms in the building.

The table below lists the bookings for the last six years.

Year	Number of bookings
1997	270
1998	346
1999	411
2000	424
2001	488
2002	546

Parks

There was a considerable amount of storm damage done on the waterfront in January. The most severe damage was done at the Bill Norman Park. Sections of the boardwalk were torn up, turf and fill were washed away and sections of the cribwork disappeared. The boardwalk was fixed quite easily, but rest of the damage is of concern.

The cribwork is rotten and only minor "cosmetic" repairs were done. The entire cribwork needs to be replaced. This will be a very expensive project - beyond the

scope and responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Some additional work was done on our trail this year to reduce encroachment on the walking surface. More will be done next year. A "new" trailhead sign board was installed late in the year. It is actually the bulletin board that was removed from the carpool parking lot at Exit 26. It was not being used there. As the trailhead sign board it will contain a trail map, information on the trail and posters about local events. There is still a section for community use. It is located on King Street.

A piece of playground equipment at George Street has deteriorated to the point where it needs to be replaced. Funds were approved in the capital budget, proposals from suppliers were reviewed and the piece was ordered. It should arrive in February.

One of the Department's ride-on mowers was replaced this year. This was part of an equipment exchange proposal made by the Cemetery Commission. The old

mower was transferred for their use.

The present system of using two ride-on mowers has proven to be very efficient. They are used together on larger areas, and split up for smaller ones.

Late in 2001 the Department's 1988 service truck was temporarily replaced with a 1992 truck. The 2002/2003 capital budget included a proposal to purchase a new truck. The proposal was not approved. It will be re-submitted in the 2003/2004 budget.

The Roger Grovestine Recreation Complex's ballfield use increased slightly last year - with most of the increase early in the season. Teams not making playoffs, or end-of-season tournaments being held in other areas made for slow use in August and September again this year. The following table showing bookings on the ballfield for the last 6 years:

1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
------	------	------	------	------	------

May	25	43	36	34	30	48
June	35	49	50	44	34	29
July	39	55	58	46	40	42
August	32	25	54	40	24	23
September	17	3	32	9	3	2
total	148	175	230	173	131	144

Use of the ballfield lights since 1999 is shown below:

1999	71 hours
2000	33 hours
2001	18 hours
2002	13 hours

The Parks and Recreation Commission approved a "no charge" policy for the ball field lights this year. The results are clear. Use actually dropped. The policy should be continued next year. It will be expanded to promote use by groups other than Minor Baseball. A number of bulbs and ballasts were changed in the spring. More are needed to be done in the next year. It is difficult to justify conducting repairs more than once a year to the lights, based on their use.

Work was done on the ballfield in the spring. Quite a bit of infield material was added to fill low areas, improve drainage and raise the overall grade of the infield.

The third base bleachers were rebuilt and new planks added.

There was considerable damage done around the property by ATV's this year. During wet weather large ruts were made in the swampy area on the east side of the

property and tracks were made all around the playground, walkways and grass areas. The RCMP patrol the area but no one has been caught yet. Some of this is even being done while people are using the facility. This adds the possibility of someone being injured.

2003 promises to be an interesting and challenging year for the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Department.

Construction will begin on the SRHS replacement facility before mid-year. The Steering Committee and its Community Use sub-committee have a lot of work to accomplish in the next year. There is still a lot to be decided, negotiated and planned as the facility unfolds. September 2004 will come before you know it.

The Founders' Days Committee needs to get its finances secured for the year as early as possible. Without solid backing at an adequate level, Founders' Days will never move past its present state. It will probably even face further reductions in program - and quality. The phrase "go big or stay home" may well apply here.

Looking ahead to 2003

A proposal to replace the Department's oldest service truck will be included in the budget again this year. Approval will depend on the "bigger picture" of the Town's financial plan for next year. Budget approval will probably not happen till August.

Facility development discussions will continue. Decisions that are made will have long-term financial implications for the Town in terms of both development and maintenance costs.

The Dock Street swimming project will still be on the Commission's agenda. The mountains of red tape that are required for the project have created numerous delays in the project. These all need to be cleared before the actual work can be done to develop the site.

After all that, we move to the operation/management phase. It is still inconclusive as to whether the swimming area will be used to the extent that has been suggested, and whether or not it will solve the problems around the small wharf. It may just move them to a new area.

The condition of the cribwork at the Bill Norman Park, and other area on the waterfront needs to be addressed. The entire area will soon be unsafe and this will force changes in public access to these park areas.

The new playground equipment for George Street will arrive in February and be installed as soon as possible. It should provide an attractive addition to the facility.

The issue of storage will be discussed early in the new year. A proposal to use shipping containers for storage is already under consideration. It will be explored further. The Department had been experiencing storage problems for some time, employing stop-gap measures when the need, and the opportunity arises.

The Province's new Physical Activity Strategy will begin to gather steam as the year progresses. We will keep abreast of developments and provide

support when and where possible. Groups such as the Shelburne County Heart Health Action Team are excellent examples of various agencies and institutions in a community working toward a common goal.

Our roles in promotion, leadership and the provision of programs and services to the community will continue. Our most effective role is supporting community-based volunteers.
