

***Shelburne Parks and
Recreation Commission***

Annual Report

2003

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Introduction

The 2003 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 2003 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.

2003 Highlights

Parks and Recreation Commission members

2003

Deputy Mayor Tony Mahaney, Chair
Councilor Al Keith, Vice Chair
Councilor Elizabeth Acker
Councilor Barbara Huskilson (Councilor Bob Snelgrove)
Marina MacLellan
Al Mahaney
Doug Langley
Corey Huskilson, (Patricia MacDougall)
SRHS student representative
Mayor P.G. Comeau, ex-officio

Parks and Recreation Department Staff

Jerry Locke, Parks and Recreation Director
George Acker, Parks Supervisor

The School Steering Team (SST) for the new Shelburne Regional High School has been quite active during the year. The school's design was completed and construction began. The SST has been involved in many aspects of the school project. This includes consultations and input on the design, floorplan, site plans, color schemes, etc.

Considerable work has been done in planning the enhancements that will be included in the facility. Funding was received from the Province through a Recreation Facility Development grant. A number of other sources of funding have been confirmed to round out the funds necessary to complete all of the enhancements that had been identified for the school. All of the enhancements will benefit both the educational and community use of the school.

The management of the community use of the new school has been under discussion for a number of months. A formal agreement between the Town and the Municipality and the School Board is required to clearly define the roles and responsibilities in this endeavor. Discussions will continue into the next year. The school is scheduled to be open in September 2004.

The Founder's Days Committee, after a lot of deliberation and consideration, canceled events for 2003. The decision was not made easily or hastily. Issues such as community support, funding and volunteers all were considered. 2003 would have been the 20th year for the event.

Interest in revitalizing Founders' Days began in the summer. By late fall a group of people had begun to talk about forming a committee to examine the possibility of Founders' Days happening in 2004. A new Founders' Days Committee has been formed, with a considerable number of volunteers who are dedicated to seeing the event happen. They have a good start toward 2004.

The Shelburne and Area Bike Boards and Blades Association was formed at a meeting in January 2003. The Association was formed primarily to establish a skateboard facility in the area. The group was seeking both short-term and long-term locations, with the Association playing a lead role in their development. Difficulties with obtaining liability insurance forced a change in strategy for the group. The proposed direction now would have the Town own and

operate a facility with the Association providing some input on design and funding. A committee with representation from the Association and the Parks and Recreation Commission is developing a proposal for the Town to consider.

The Tri-County Volunteer Partnership held its first meeting on January 13, 2003. It was formed to bring non-profit groups together for cooperative efforts in the Digby-Yarmouth-Shelburne area. Recreation Departments from these three counties are represented on the group, as well as a number of other volunteer groups and agencies. The Partnership initiated "Volunteer Showcases" in the region. One was held in Shelburne on May 24. Volunteer groups from across the County participated on the Planning Committee for the event. Many groups participated and displayed information on their programs and services. Another Showcase will be held in the Barrington area in 2004.

The Partnership plans to develop a Volunteer Strategy to deal with volunteer and organizational challenges. A survey has been distributed in the region to determine needs and get feedback on issues. The possibility of hiring a staff person to analyze the data and develop the Strategy is being explored.

Volunteer Week was April 27 - May 3. Tom Gray was selected to represent the volunteers for the Town of Shelburne at the provincial reception in Halifax. The local reception was held in Lockeport. More than 100 people were in attendance.

The Department purchased a used 40 foot shipping container for storage. It was placed at the Town's storage area near the sewer treatment plant. Equipment and other items from various locations were moved in. Several storage locations were rearranged and shifted due to a reduction in storage space in the Department's shop. The container has served well. It provide clean, dry, secure storage for many small to medium sized items in our inventory, as well as the Fire Department's Bazaar booths.

In April the Shelburne Area Festivals and Events (SAFE) Committee was formed. The group is comprised of people in the community who are involved in planning and organizing events on a regular basis. The group was formed to try and coordinate an optimum schedule of events for the area. This would maximize opportunities for good attendance, promote cooperation and minimize conflicts in scheduling. The group received and publicized information on events that were already planned. The meetings also provided opportunities to give advise to event organizers on

best dates, contacts, program suggestions, etc. when "new" people attended.

The group began with very good intentions, but quickly ran out of steam. It needs input from the community on a regular basis in order to make event information available to the public. Most of the group have very busy schedules and attendance at meetings was not consistent. An evaluation of the future of the Committee will be undertaken in 2004.

The last Katimavik group left Shelburne in March. Katmiavik is continuing in another location in the province. Shelburne had more than its fair share or Katimavik projects in the past few years. The groups of youth will be missed. They contributed a lot to the community, both from their volunteer work and their presence as residents. The possibility exists to submit a proposal to sponsor another project in the future.

The Shelburne County Lobster Festival was very successful again this year. There were many events throughout the County to celebrate a successful lobster fishery. The success of the Festival is due to the efforts of the many groups that plan, promote and run their own individual events. The Lobster Festival Committee tries to

coordinate all the events, plan the opening ceremonies and provide some overall publicity to the Festival. This year the Committee's success was due more to good luck than good planning. Other commitments, work loads, etc. caused a number of problems for the Committee. A late start in planning resulted in cramped timelines and some rushed work to pull things together. The Committee has already discussed this matter and resolved to do better next year.

The Department experienced a reduction in staff for a significant portion of the year. The Office Clerk was seconded to the Town Office for a number of special assignments in April. The secondment continued till December before approval was given to hire a temporary replacement, beginning in January 2004. The reduction in staff caused a number of problems in the Department as work was delayed, canceled or reassigned. Bookings for the Community Centre are now made through the Town Office.

Visits to the Town's website were down slightly from last year's dramatic rise. The table below shows the numbers:

Year	"Hits"
2000	1865

2001	3300
2002	6560
2003	6205

The website is updated by Department staff periodically. The basic format is unchanged. Since we acquired a digital camera a "scrapbook" section has featured pictures from a number of programs and events. A section was added this year with pictures and floorplans of the Community Centre. People who are not familiar with the building can see what it looks like when they are planning to book a room.

Summer programs were very successful this year. With no Founders' Days to plan for, there was more time to spend getting ready for other programs. Several programs were increased in frequency. Summer staff prepared a complete report on their activities at the end of August.

Senior Games were quite well attended this year. A number of new people registered. A Powerpoint presentation for the Games was developed by Sherry Hopkins, a Community College student who was on a work experience term with the Department. It can be used with a laptop computer and LCD projector to promote the Games.

The Halloween Haunted House was held again this year. Numbers were down - the same was said for trick-or-treaters around town. The House and the games associated with it are geared for elementary school-aged children. We receive a lot of help from high school students who need community volunteer hours for a Grade 9 course. Each year we try and come up with new ideas.

Parks and Facilities

A piece of playground equipment at the George Street Playground was replaced in 2003. The original piece was quite old and beginning to show signs of wear and become unsafe. It was removed from the site until the new piece was installed. Installation was done by Department staff. The new piece is very popular and has received a lot of use by younger children.

The Municipality of Shelburne has agreed to take responsibility for maintenance of the section of trail from

the Roseway River to the Island Park. That section had been developed by the Shelburne County Trails Association. The Association disbanded.

The Town's trail continues to see good use. The trail is used by people of all ages for recreational use and as an alternate transportation route. Damage through the year was normal. Trails signs burned or pulled out, cut trees, ATV use, and horses on the trail all happen to various degrees throughout the year. The trail is regularly inspected. In March a significant clearing and thinning was done with the help of Katimavik labour. Rocks were removed and holes filled with gravel on the trail bed by summer Parks staff.

An extension of the trail from King Street to Charlotte Street was approved as a capital project this year. The Department has submitted a construction plan to the Department of Natural Resources. As soon as the plan is approved, work will begin on Phase 1 of the project.

The swimming area on Dock Street was opened in July. All the red tape, approvals, permits, etc. were finally secured. A raft was built, a buoy line placed and the

swimming began. The area is inspected daily by staff and the water is tested regularly. Numbers of users vary during the day, from just a few to dozens. There were relatively few complaints raised in the first season. Next year the raft will probably be put in around the first part of June, depending on the weather and water temperatures.

The weather played havoc with park maintenance work for much of the spring and summer. A rainy spring delayed fertilizer and lime applications and a lot of preparation work at most parks. When the weather did clear, all the delayed work had to be squeezed in with the grass cutting - which had to be increased because the wet weather cut short the amount of time to do this work and increased the growth rate of the grass!

Facility development was discussed regularly at Parks and Recreation Commission meetings. No definite plans have been made. Discussion have been wide-ranging and the possibilities for future development are very open-ended at this time.

While these discussions are still very much up in the air, there have been some other facility development issues addressed:

- The Town will be providing funds for enhancements at the new SRHS;
- Phase One of the trail extension has been funded;
- The proposed development of a skatepark is under investigation.

Many of the park areas in Town have a significant weed infestation - mostly chickweed. Some remedial action was taken this fall on several smaller parks. Next year we will be switching to a “weed and feed” fertilizer to try and correct the problem. Some overseeding may also be required.

The Roger Grovestine Recreation Complex ballfield lights needed a lot of work this year. A number of bulbs and ballasts had to be replaced. The parts are expensive and the cost of the boom truck and the electrician to do the work soon makes the cost soar. Ballfield light use has remained about the same for the last two years, based on power consumption. Figures for the last three years are:

Year	kWh used
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2001	1534
2002	1839
2003	1923

The number of bookings on the field has dropped sharply. The wet weather, less teams, teams not making the playoffs all contributed. Ballfield bookings, by the month are listed below:

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
May	25	43	36	34	30	48	28
June	35	49	50	44	34	29	25
July	39	55	58	46	40	42	42
August	32	25	54	40	24	23	19
September	17	3	32	9	3	2	2
Total	148	175	230	173	131	144	116

The field is in good shape. More infield work will be required next spring. ATV use around the site is growing. Damage to the pathways, stonewalls, etc. is increasing.

The Dock Street park areas get a lot of use, especially in the summer and fall. These areas are checked daily and every effort is made to keep them in good condition. They reflect our community to visitors and ourselves. Some of the waterside park area are experiencing erosion. Some minor repairs were done at the Bill Norman Park this year. A major renovation for that area is under discussion by the Waterfront Development Committee. The

Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for maintenance of that park. They need to be consulted with regard to the maintenance implications of the work that is being planned.

Looking ahead to 2004

2004 will be a year of opportunities and challenges for the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The new SRHS facility is scheduled to open in September. The opportunities for community use of this brand new, state of the art facility will depend upon the structure that is put in place to manage that use. The school itself cannot be expected to administer all of the programs that have the potential to be developed and monitor all of the requests for use that will come from the community. A proposal to hire a Community Use Coordinator for the facility will be discussed by the Town and Municipal Councils early in the year. The benefits to the overall community could be tremendous.

A Community Use Agreement will have to be developed to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved.

The Parks and Recreation Commission will be examining the feasibility of establishing a skatepark in Town. The working group established with representation from the local skateboard association and the Commission will play a key role in determining the direction that this facility takes.

The declining population of the area will continue to present a number of challenges..

Recreation programs for all ages feel the effect of reduced numbers. Minor sports, summer programs, adult leagues, Senior Games are all experiencing declining numbers. The shift to an aging population presents

challenges to existing facilities, programs, activities and organizations as they attempt to keep interest levels up. Many groups will have to rethink traditional programming in order to stay in step, or at least control losses.

These challenges are not unique to Shelburne, and impact on the quality of life in the entire community, not just recreation aspects. Education, health care, the local economy, etc. are all affected

The proposed extension to the rail line trail should be nearly completed by the end of the year. It will be done in two phases. It will provide more opportunities for recreational use and an opportunity for a safe active transportation route to residents in that area. The expansion will increase the maintenance responsibilities of the Parks and Recreation Department to a certain extent. The new section of trail may face more challenges in management that the entire existing section. ATV use in that area appears to be quite extensive.

The newly formed Founder's Days Committee will be busy making plans and preparing for July 16-18 2004. There are a lot of skilled volunteers interested in seeing Founder's Days succeed - this is a great thing. The new

group will need to develop good lines of communication among its various committees to keep the volunteers informed and interested. The opportunity to develop Founders' Days is tremendous - so is the challenge to get the support it needs from the entire community.

The Parks and Recreation Department will support the efforts of the Committee in any way it can. Activities that were usually sponsored by the Department as part of Founders' Days will be continued. We will provide advice, experience and assistance when and where need. Logistical support during the actual weekend will be given.

The Town Christmas lighting will have to be refurbished in time for the next Christmas season. Difficulties have been experienced in getting materials from the manufacturer. A different boom truck to install the lights on the poles will have to be located.

The end of Carleton Street next to the ballfield at the Roger Grovestine Recreation Complex will be fixed up. Large rocks were buried last year and the fill generated

from this work was more than enough to cover the area. There are some areas that have settled and need to be filled. Class A gravel will be spread to finish the area after the rest of the fill is trucked to the Town's pit. This will increase the parking area at the ballfield.

Repairs will be done to the wall on the South end of the Tourist Bureau Park. The window is broken and needs to be replaced. The wall itself is starting to rot and needs repair. Discussions are underway with Parks Canada to have this work done.

The wall in back of the park area on the corner of King and Water Streets will have to be repaired. Portions of the top of the wall are rotten.

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association's annual conference will be held in Halifax in 2004. The Recreation Nova Scotia Conference will be blended into it. This will provide a opportunity to take part in a national conference in our own backyard.

This year's Parks and Recreation budget will

present a number of challenges. The Department is facing replacement of a number of pieces of equipment. Some of it is hand-me-downs that have finally worn out, some is equipment that has served us well and needs to be replaced.

A replacement for the oldest service truck will be submitted again. Our newest truck is now 9 years old.

Additional capital allocations will probably be submitted for Phase 2 of the trail expansion and development of a skatepark.

The Department's operating budget should remain fairly stable. Some slight increases to offset cost increases will no doubt be included.

The cooperative efforts of Municipal Recreation Departments in Yarmouth and Shelburne Counties will continue. Departments work together on projects when it best serves the needs of the broad community. In other instances one leads and the others follow. The common goal of each is to meet the needs of the recreation community.

NOTES