

***Shelburne Parks and
Recreation Commission***

Annual Report

2004

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Introduction

The 2004 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 2004 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.

2004 Highlights

Parks and Recreation Commission members

2004

Deputy Mayor Tony Mahaney, Chair
Councilor Al Keith, Vice Chair
Councilor Elizabeth Acker
Councilor Bob Snelgrove
Marina MacLellan
Doug Langley
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
Rhonda Henneberry, Office Clerk

A temporary replacement for the Office Clerk began in January. The Office Clerk had been seconded to the Town Office since April of 2003. The temporary position was reinstated to permanent part-time later in the year. This has allowed for the Department to gear back up to speed in terms of administration and smooth operation of the office. Bookings for the Community Centre that had gone to the Town Office for most of last year, have stayed there.

The Shelburne Regional High School replacement and all of the various considerations related to it continued. The school was scheduled to be finished in July and open in September. The School Steering Team was informed that a number of construction-related issues had forced delays in the time line. The latest forecast will have the school open at the end of the first semester of classes. The SST has started making regular “tours” to the school to monitor progress. The delays are certainly disappointing, given the lengthy planning process that it took to get construction started, and the spirit of cooperation and enthusiasm that existed between the SST and the various government departments involved in the project.

Another whole phase of the new school planning process that really came to the forefront this year was the planning and preparation for community use of the new facility. The Community Use Agreement Committee prepared a draft Joint Use of Schools Agreement for approval by the Town of Shelburne, the Municipality of Shelburne, the School Board and the Department of Education. After several drafts, it appears that the document is nearly ready for signatures.

Agreement was reached - with funding from the Sport and Recreation Division - for a one year pilot project to hire a person to administer community use of the new facility.

A Community Use Policy Committee was formed to explore all of the issues related to implementing the program. This group will assist the Community Use Coordinator in developing policies, programs and administration related to community use. That person will start work in January.

The second annual Shelburne County Volunteer Showcase was held in May, this year in Barrington. There was a very good turnout - 31 booths, and attendance by the public was quite good. In 2005 the Showcase will move

back to Shelburne, early plans call for it to be held in April.

The process toward establishment of a skatepark for the Town continued through the year. The Committee that had been established with representation from the Shelburne and Area Bikes, Boards and Blades Association and the Parks and Recreation Commission met and began exploring options. A site on the Albert Acker Field property was under consideration. Another group, formed with support from Our House Youth Wellness Centre, made representation to Town Council for another site. Through discussions among the three groups and the Town Council, a site on King Street, at the former Shelburne Academy grounds is being developed. Our House is coordinating the major effort of the project, with involvement from the youth as a cornerstone of the planning and implementation. This will help to develop a sense of “ownership” and responsibility for the site. The Town received funding from the Sport and Recreation Division of the Office of Health Promotion toward the project, there has been fund-raising by the youth and several businesses have made or pledged donations of materials and services to the project. A concrete pad was formed and poured on site in September. Various ramps will be constructed and placed on the pad. There have been some delays in construction. A half-pipe was donated for

use at the site. It is anticipated that the site will be finished by early spring.

The Town's Christmas lights were totally refurbished during the summer. The frames were stripped off, cleaned and painted. New garland and lights were installed on the "rings", and the fixtures in the center were overhauled. This work was done as "rainy day work" by Parks staff. The lights look great!

When they were installed in November (a week late due to the weather) a different bucket truck was used. Another, possibly cheaper and more efficient means will be tried in January when they have to come down.

Summer programs were successful again this year. New program staff, some new program ideas and the return of some programs from previous years provided a good variety. Reports and evaluations were made on all programs. They will be considered when making plans for

next summer. The declining population in the area - both children and adult - is having an impact on recreation programs at all levels. It is always challenging to develop programs that will appeal to a variety of people, and be offered at times that are suitable to their schedules.

Corey's Guy's assistance with programming through the Skill Link Program that sponsored him was greatly appreciated. The experience he gained should help him as he pursues a career in recreation

The Parks and Recreation Department continues to develop and maintain the Town's "official" website. There were 6,616 "hits" on the site for the year.

The table below shows comparative numbers:

Year	Hits
2000	1865
2001	3300
2002	6560
2003	6205
2004	6616

The website is updated periodically. Parks and Recreation Department press releases, news items and other

information is added when appropriate, and if time permits. The “scrapbook” section features pictures from Department programs and events, etc.

Plans are underway for a new section to be added next year.

Founders’ Days was held July 15 -18 this year. With a much expanded volunteer base and new leadership, this year’s events were greatly anticipated by the public. They were not disappointed. All the events were well attended, the quality of entertainment and attractions was excellent and the weather cooperated.

The Municipality of Shelburne provided the momentum to get the machine rolling this year. There had been some public reaction to the cancellation of events in 2003, and volunteers in the community came out to help put the events together, with the encouragement and support shown by the Municipality and its staff.

The Parks and Recreation Department provided support to Founders’ Days in a number of ways. At the committee level meetings were attended and advise was given on past operations and we took an active part in

planning most aspects of the event. The Department provided logistical support to many of the events that took place. Equipment setup, electrical connections, garbage cleanup, troubleshooting and advise on last-minute situations that developed are some examples. We also organized and sponsored several events that took place over the weekend.

The renewed success of Founders’ Days is due in large part to the efforts and enthusiasm of the volunteers who attended meetings and staffed booths and events that were part of the entire event. The work that goes into planning an event long before it happens is just as important as the work that takes place during the event.

The proposed expansion to the trail has been delayed. Most of the bollards, sign posts, etc. have been prepared for installation, but actual site work has not taken place. The delays have been caused by the weather and lacks of staff time to do the work. We will try and get started on the trail over the winter if the weather cooperates and staff can free up some time. Safety on the site requires at least two people to be working on most aspects of the clearing. This causes problems with other work commitments.

Wet spring weather delayed some park-related work, and resulted in a longer growing season for most of our grass. Normally, hot and dry weather in late July and August slows down grass growth and allows for other work to get done. This year the grass grew steadily all summer, right into October and the time normally available to do this sort of work did not materialize. Staff spent nearly all their time cutting grass. Once the summer staff were gone, there were not enough people available to do both the grass work and projects that had been planned.

The Special Events signs have near-continual use year round. Special events in the community are featured annually. Other one-time events and announcements are also posted. A schedule of items for the signs is kept.

This year Shelburne hosted the annual Volunteer Week reception for the three eastern Shelburne County municipal units. There were about 115 people in attendance on April 20. Annie Bower represented out local volunteers at the provincial reception in Halifax on April 13. We received 32 volunteer nominations for recognition.

Maintenance of the Cemetery, and supervision of

the staff there became a responsibility of the Department in March. A new Cemetery worker was hired. The Cemetery experienced some problems with equipment at the beginning of the maintenance season. The equipment will need a thorough assessment when the next season begins.

This summer the Parks and Recreation Department assumed responsibility for watering the hanging flower baskets on Dock Street. We watered the baskets 5 days a week, Waterfront Development Committee volunteers did the weekend watering. The hanging baskets are provided by the WDC. We were able to reduce the equipment demands of this work by making watering system that could be towed by a ride-on mower.

The Recreation Departments on the South Shore put together a cooperative media strategy for the new “June is Recreation Month” promotion this year. Radio and local newspaper advertising was purchased for the entire South Shore. The cost was divided among all the departments. Cost of promotional materials were shared. This resulted in an increased exposure for the program, added exposure for each of the departments, and better value for the dollars spent.

This year's Gloucester tree was donated by Wendell Jeffrey on Wright's Road. The tree was about 55' feet tall, cut to about 50 feet for actual shipping. Department staff coordinated the work necessary to tie up, cut and load the tree. Public Works staff provided a lot of assistance. The group that comes every year from Gloucester is here for only a short time, and they are a pleasure to work with. We really enjoy seeing the pictures of "our" tree as it is decorated and lit in their city.

The number of suitable trees is dwindling fast in the Town. This year's choice was made after a lot of searching. The Department will be developing a process to have public assistance in finding "candidates".

Department staff continue to work cooperatively with many volunteers, community groups and agencies and levels of government as we work toward making our community a better place to live.

We work with individuals and organizations to help them provide programs and events, train leaders, seek funding and improve the quality of the valuable service they provide to our community.

We work together with agencies like the Department of Health, Addiction Services, Southwest Shore Development Authority, Our House Youth Wellness Centre, the Sport and Recreation Division, etc. on numerous programs, special projects and committees that allow us to share resources, skill and information.

Our work with other municipal recreation professional in Shelburne County, and the Yarmouth/Shelburne region allows for programs to be offered on a regional basis and provides opportunities to do things that each individual department could not even begin to consider.

The relationships that we develop at each of these levels will ultimately result in better service to our own local communities.

Parks and Facilities

Use of the ballfield at the Roger Grovestine Recreation Complex was up this year, over last. The

ballfield is in pretty good shape. Additional work will need to be done next spring to the infield. Comparative ballfield booking numbers are:

	1997	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04
May	25	43	36	34	30	48	28	37
June	35	49	50	44	34	29	25	30
July	39	55	58	46	40	42	42	35
August	32	25	54	40	24	23	19	35
September	17	3	32	9	3	2	2	2
Total	148	175	230	173	131	144	116	139

The ballfield lights are still not being used to their potential. However, based on power consumption, their use is up slightly over recent years:

Year	Kwh used
2001	1534
2002	1839
2003	1923
2004	2073

Repairs to the lights cost about \$2,500.00 this year. As the light get older, this cost will likely increase. This spring when the lights were repaired, a number of glass covers had to be replaced. They were broken by rocks thrown at them. There are still some to be replaced next spring.

ATV damage is the biggest problem at the facility. People, mostly younger ones, on ATV's are climbing and breaking down the stone walls, tearing up the grass areas around the horseshoe pits and on the playground, spinning and rutting up the gravel walkways, flattening the bushes around the property, leaving beer bottles, getting through the small gates onto the ballfield, damaging buildings, causing ruts in the wet areas or the swamp, and even driving among the people who are using the facility. The possibility of an ATV user injuring themselves or someone else at this facility is very real.

The tool shed received considerable damage late in the year probably as a result of vandalism associated with ATV's. The sills and the floor of the building need to be replaced.

The trail continues to have good use. Some minor clearing work was done this year at various times though the year. A fairly major clearing back is in order for some sections. Some sections of the trail bed need additional gravel placed to correct drainage changes. This may pose

problems, given the staff resources available and the other demands on their time. The need for resources to take on the extension that has been delayed further compounds the issue. It is important to keep the trail well maintained.

A proposal to allow horseback riding on the trail on specific days at set times is under consideration.

An inspection and structural assessment has been done on the Black's Brook bridge. This new requirement was included in the revised Letter of Authority that was issued for the trail to cover the extension from King Street to Charlotte Street.

ATV use continues to be a problem on the trail. ATV use is not authorized. Some users are trying to get around or between the bollards placed at trail intersections. Spacers placed between the bollard posts have been torn off and trees and bushes have been cut or run over to clear a path around the sides. Sturdier spacers with long lag bolts have been used on the bollards and large rocks have been placed on the outside of them. This still does not stop some who go way out around, or gain access from their own (or someone else's) property along the trail.

The Dock Street swim area was in place again this year. Daily inspections were made and water samples were taken every two weeks.

There was some vandalism at the site this year, but none of it was too serious. The condition of the cribwork at the Bill Norman Park is deteriorating rapidly and will soon pose a serious safety hazard to people who use the facility.

Looking ahead to 2005

The completion and opening of the new high school facility - a long awaited day - will mark a significant advancement in community recreation this year.

The new facility will provide increased and updated opportunities for the community to take part in a variety of recreation-related activities. SRHS has a long history of involvement in community use and plans have been underway for a long time for this to continue. Since the building was in the very early planning stages, use by the local community has been a consideration. Funds from the Town, the Municipality, the Province, the private sector and the community have been allocated to enhancements to the facility.

The establishment of the Community School Coordinator position will take the process to the “next level”. A person to coordinate use, plan and administer programs and ensure safe, secure operation of the facility will benefit both the community and the school. The one year pilot project will evaluate community use and provide information for decisions on future direction.

The issue of disposal of the old school property will have to be faced by both the Town and the Municipality in the coming year. Included in this are some implications for the Parks and Recreation Department.

The field adjacent to the old school, the former Shelburne Academy grounds in now maintained by the School Board because they use it for an “outdoor classroom”. A portion is being used for the new skatepark. When the old school building is closed, maintenance of the property will again become the responsibility of the Town. Since the skatepark is there, and it is a greenspace owned by the Town, the Parks and Recreation Department will no doubt assume responsibility for its maintenance.

The Albert Acker Field, located on Elliott Street is also a part of the old school facility. It is jointly owned by the Town and Municipality from the “old days” of Municipal School Boards. This property will also likely become surplus to the present Board’s needs when the move is made to the new school. Responsibility for maintenance of the field will have to be discussed, and plans made. The site is used for non-school recreational use now, and the issue has been briefly discussed at the Parks and Recreation Commission level.

Both properties have merit for addition to the Town’s parks and facilities inventory, but there are a number of factors to consider in advance.

Assuming responsibility for maintenance and development of either or both of these sites could have serious implications on the workload of the Department’s Parks staff. The increase, simply in terms of additional

square footage of grass area to cut is enormous. The condition of the Albert Acker Field is not good. An extensive renovation program would have to be developed in order to improve it. There are regular vandalism problems (vehicle and ATV access) there. Keeping both areas cleaned up and safe will take time and effort that would have to be added to existing workloads and responsibilities.

The Parks and Recreation Department does not have the staff and equipment to take on these facilities with our existing resources. The Parks and Recreation Commission and Town Council must address these matters early in the year, and be prepared when the School Board acts.

Department equipment will be checked and assessed in preparation for the upcoming budget. Some replacements have already been requested for a number of years. A new truck and a new copier are two major ticket items that will be included again this year. The possibility of additional equipment to meet increased requirements will also be considered.

Plans are underway for some additions to the Town's website . A new section with information for community groups and volunteers is being developed. The pages would feature links to many other sites on the Net that could provide useful information for the many volunteers who serve in our community. There is a great deal of information available that could be used to improve the quality of recreation programs and activities. Information on local volunteer groups and opportunities to volunteer in the community will also be available through some sites. Local groups will be able to raise their community profile and also express their needs through electronic means. The Department's Community Groups email referral list may also be expanded through publicity associated with the new pages, and an opportunity to sign up through the website.

Repairs to the commemorative wall at the Tourist Bureau Park were awarded to a local contractor last April. The work has not been done yet. We have been assured that the work is still "on his list".

Founders' Days planning for 2005 have begun before 2005 even started. The Municipality of Shelburne staff are still providing the major impetus and a dedicated group of volunteers will need to form with them to match or surpass the quality of last year's events. Their 150th Anniversary will no doubt be a central theme this year.

The Parks and Recreation Department will continue to play a key role in this event, on planning, program and operational levels. The event has tremendous potential for growth.

Parks and Recreation Commission membership is slipping. The number of volunteers offering to serve on the Boards and Commissions that the Town has is shrinking. Some Commission members who have left over the last few years need to be replaced. Efforts must be made to recruit new volunteers and encourage those already serving to stay on. We need input from the citizens of the Town.

The Roger Grovestine Recreation Complex will need a fair bit of work done in the next year.

The ballfield infield will need quite a bit of work to bring it back into shape. Even "normal" wear & tear can have a cumulative effect over time. Every couple of years extra effort is needed to bring things back into shape.

The toolshed will need a new floor and damage to the property from ATV's will have to be repaired. This unauthorized use must be brought under control to ensure safety of the people who use the property and reduce the amount of time spent in repairing needless damage.

There are a number of dead trees on the property that need to be cut down and removed.

Ballfield light repairs will have to be down again in the spring. Damaged glass covers, burned out bulbs and ballasts will have to be replaced. One fixture that is beyond repair has been removed from a pole. Usage levels don't justify its replacement.

A program needs to be implemented to ensure a good inventory of trees for the Town's annual gift to Gloucester, Mass. The Department has proposed a program to solicit public input in the selection of possible trees. There are virtually no suitable trees left within the Town's boundaries. We need additional help to identify potential

trees that are suitable, available and accessible.

The trail will need quite a bit of work this year, in a number of areas.

Consideration will have to be given to the structural assessment report prepared on the Black's Brook Bridge. The recommendations in the report will have to be examined and costed for budget consideration.

The extension of the rail-line trail from King street to Charlotte Street is way behind schedule. Efforts must be made this year to get the project completed so that it can be used.

The "old" sections of the trail will need a fair bit of attention this year. Brush clearing, and trail bed repairs are both required. While neither of these jobs are complicated or required on the entire trail, they are labour intensive and will be difficult to fit into an already cramped work schedule during the spring and summer.
