

*Annual Report*

*2006*



*Shelburne  
Parks and Recreation  
Commission*

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Recreation Commission***

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***Introduction***

The 2006 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 2006 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

2006

Councilor Elizabeth Acker, Chair  
Councilor Bernard Nickerson, Vice Chair  
Deputy Mayor Tony Mahaney  
Councilor Alan Reid  
Marina MacLellan  
Doug Langley  
Kara Nash SRHS student rep.  
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

## 2006 Highlights

The “Take the Roof off Winter” program this year was very successful. The weather did not cooperate (no snow) for the Launch at Islands Park, but the turnout was good and it wasn’t raining. We partnered again this year with Our House Youth Wellness Centre, the King St. Centre and the Municipal Recreation Department. We were able to pool our resources, develop a good program for the month, and encourage some people to get or stay active during the winter months. Next year’s program will be coordinated provincially by Recreation Nova Scotia. The province-wide advertising helps promote the local initiatives.



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The Loyalist Landing 2008 Committee was formed in April. It has worked continually since then, setting the wheels in motion for the 225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Loyalist Landing in Shelburne. An impressive year-long series of events is in the planning stages. The Committee is exploring a number of avenues for funding. The Department is offering assistance to the group in a number of ways.



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This year there was a significant increase in demand for many pieces of Department-owned equipment. The canoes were used by a number of groups. The chairs were loaned for special events and weddings. Tables, the portable sound system, the laptop, and the portable radios were used by a number of groups. Wear and tear and damage has been minimal. Some work was done on the canoes last winter, but the cost was not great. Some additional PFD's have been ordered to increase the variety and range of sizes available.

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The Community Use pilot project at SRHS ended on March 31, 2006. After an extensive evaluation process and a two-month extension, it was agreed by the Town and the Municipality that the jointly-sponsored project would continue for another 12 months, beginning June 1.

The "new" project was bolstered by funding from the Department of Health Promotion and Protection. The addition of developing a physical activity strategy for the area to community use of the school, and the Youth Leadership Development Program moved the project to full-time status for the Coordinator's position

Community use of the facility has been very good to date. A wide variety of programs for people of all ages have been developed, in addition to use of the facility by various existing groups in the community.

The Physical Activity and Community School Coordinator submits monthly reports to the Community Use Policy Committee and to both Councils.

The Physical Activity Strategy has begun the process towards implementation. Public meetings were held and information and input was gathered from those who attended. A "Working Group" has been established to use the information to develop the Strategy with the Coordinator.

The provincial Physical Activity Strategy funding will continue to be available for the program, with additional incentives for cooperation between the municipal units.

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The Department partnered with other Departments in the County, the Women's Fishnet and Volunteer Services to sponsor "Shelburne County - Our Community, Something for Everyone" on April 29. The event was a combination of exhibits, activities, information and entertainment for people of all ages and interests throughout the County. It was held at SRHS, with over 45 exhibitors in attendance. Public turnout was good. The revised format for the event, the expanded contacts available through the partnership developed and a decent budget for publicity and promotion all helped. Next year's event will be held at Barrington Municipal High School, and the rotation around other sites in the County will continue from there.



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Volunteer Week was April 23 -29. Barb Falk was chosen from among the many nominees submitted to represent the hundred of volunteers who serve in the Town at the provincial reception in Halifax on April 18. Our local reception was held on April 25 in Lockeport.



Budget approvals this year were mixed. The operating budget was reduced slightly. Funding for one summer staff person was shifted to help cover the Town's share of the wages for the Physical Activity and Community Use Coordinator, and there were some other adjustments. The capital budget was reduced quite drastically. A number of items that had been proposed were not approved. The proposal to replace both service trucks was reduced to the purchase of one used truck.

Many of the capital items that were not approved will be resubmitted next year, along with items that were already scheduled for inclusion in the 2007/2008 capital budget.

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The Shelburne County Lobster Festival was June 4-10. It was the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Festival. This year's program was very good, attendance at events was good and the Festival Committee is in good shape to start for next year. Membership on the Committee from the community needs to be developed to broaden its base of support and keep the Festival Committee in touch with the County.

The Department is actively involved in Committee work, keeping the Committee's books, assembling the program information for the printer, and sponsoring an event.



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The Shelburne County Arena received funding to undertake an Aging Building Audit. It was funded by the Town and Municipality of Shelburne and the Department of Health Promotion and Protection. The Audit was completed in September and the Final Report is the basis for planning that is underway for a multi-year capital upgrade for the facility. Plans are being made for the first phase - a 4 year work plan with a number of Structural, Electrical and Mechanical issues to be addressed.

The Department was, and still is heavily involved in assisting the Arena Association through these processes. It takes a considerable amount of background work and preparation to see all of these various parts of the project through to completion.

There was considerable discussion this year concerning a number of operational and management issues related to the Shelburne County Arena. The role that the Town and Municipality play in regards to the Arena has increased dramatically, in terms of both financial costs and Council and staff involvement. The Parks and Recreation Director now sits as an ex-officio member of the Arena Association.

There have been (and continue to be) a number of options under discussion concerning operation, management, ownership and responsibility for the facility.

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A proposal was submitted for this region to host a Katimavik project in 2006/2007. The proposal involved a number of community groups and organizations. Two other sites in the area were included in the overall project. Unfortunately, the program was unable to gather enough interest in one of the other areas to support a project for Western Nova Scotia.

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Summer programs were very successful this year. The format was changed quite a bit, with the reduction in staff. Funding for the normal “second” position was re-directed to the Physical Activity/Community Use Coordinator position. The Special Events Coordinator is now the sole person responsible for programs and events.

Last summer’s program was a mix of new programs and old. All programs with direct involvement by staff are short-term and we try and plan a variety of experiences through the summer.

We were fortunate to have volunteers who came forward this year to propose and assist with a number of programs. They offered to provide leadership to the programs and kept in regular contact with the Special Events Coordinator through the duration of each program. Programs like the Tennis League, the Tots Soccer program, the Cheerleading program and the Jam nights were all very successful and added to our overall program. The “ownership” of these programs by volunteers contributed to their success. We plan to continue this program format next summer.



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Founders' Days was July 20 -23. This year the weather was the biggest news with the event. Wind and rain hampered most of the activities. Some brave souls "hung in there" and when the weather did break, the numbers were quite good. The fireworks were postponed twice, then canceled altogether - till next year.

The Committee continues to be lead by staff from the Municipality of Shelburne with volunteers from the community offering various levels of support. They have gathered increased support in the community, although there is still the potential for more support from local businesses. The popularity and success of Founders' Days continues to grow and is only held back by the limitations of its budget.



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The "Town's" website had some format changes made in the past year. The site is maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department. The Department now has its own separate series of pages off the "front page" of the site. This has allowed the site to be more streamlined and gives the public better access to information specific to the Department.

"Hits" were down 8.6% this year over last.

The following tables illustrates the number of visits to the site over the last few years

Year	site visits
2001	6537
2002	7072
2003	6870
2004	6988
2005	8463
2006	7732

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The Dock Street swim area was used quite a lot this year. Local children, the Daycare and the occasional tourist all used the small beach area for swimming.

There were some problems with the raft this year. Changes will be made to its anchor system before it goes back in the water next year.

Most of the rocks placed on top of the cribwork at the Bill Norman Park are now in the water at the beach area. They need to be removed and some more sand added.

The water at the site was tested every two weeks, and water quality remained good. The area is checked daily for safety.

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The Shelburne County Senior Games were held Sept 10-18. The numbers of participants has declined. The older seniors are not participating for health reasons and many “younger seniors” don’t consider themselves old enough yet to need the Games!

The Department is involved on the Senior Games planning committee and we also supervise a number of events during the week.

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This year the Town’s annual Christmas tree came from the Sandy Point Road, near the home of Mr. Delbert Surette. It has become increasingly difficult to find good trees to send each year. The tree was cut and shipped on November 14. The Public Works Department assisted with the preparation, cutting and loading of the tree. We are preparing a scrapbook of the event for Mr. Surette.



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## *Parks Notes from 2006*

Construction and enhancement-related matters concerning the “new “ High School continue to take some time for the Department. The soccer field appears to be ready for use, but the track and its corresponding fixtures for “field” events is yet to be finished. The enhanced sound system for the school and some other minor items that were the responsibility of the School Steering Team (SST) have yet to be addressed.

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This year the single biggest factor in Parks work was the weather. Periods of wet weather hampered work, stimulated grass growth above normal levels and caused delays in work planned for the season. An early spring and a warmer fall combined with the wet weather meant we were cutting grass from mid-April through to the end of November with no normal slow down for hot dry weather.

The concerns over the standard of care for parks and facilities expressed last year did not improve this year, and in fact probably worsened.

Poor weather, insufficient staff, increased workloads, aging and inadequate equipment, and lack of time and resources to properly supervise all contributed to a continued general decline in the quality of care that is provided.

Worklists for sites under our responsibility were barely touched in some cases.

The Department is now responsible for 23 different park areas, facilities or green spaces of various sizes.

Unless some changes are made in preparation for next season, the standard of care will continue to decline.

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The Department is now responsible for maintenance at the site of the former African Methodist Episcopal Church on King St. This land was acquired by the Town when the former provincially-owned NSLC building was sold.



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The Waterfront Development Committee established a new grass area in front of the Fisherman's Memorial on Dock Street and the Department assumed responsibility for its maintenance. The Department extended an offer to the Fisherman's Memorial Committee to cut the grass at that site, since it would already be cutting the front and site of the same location. The offer was accepted by the Committee.



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Repairs to the Dock Street wharf were coordinated by the Department. Funds were allocated in the Town's 2006/2007 budget. The job involved a replacement of all deck planking, repairs to the side whalers, ladders and spiles. Repairs were not begun until the funds were approved in August and they were completed in September.

Since the wharf was not safe for use until the repairs were done, the floating Dock was not put in this year. It will need some minor repairs before it goes in the water next spring.



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Parks staff numbers were less than anticipated this summer. The Department hired its usual number of staff, but additional staff that were anticipated from other sources did not materialize.

A grant position that had been approved through Community Services was not filled because of the lack of suitable candidates. A “Work Wonders” job placement that was supposed to last all summer did not materialize when all the workers found placements in other jobs.

We did have a Work Wonders placement in the very early spring - for 11 weeks. This allowed us to get some work done on the old section of the trail, and more progress than normal on spring cleanup.

A second placement with this program in the fall was not as productive or successful.

With less staff than anticipated and not enough equipment to perform the work expected in an efficient manner, the Parks operation was not up to par.

This matter has been discussed briefly at Parks and Recreation Commission meetings. Some options to correct this will be presented as part of the 2007/2008 budget process.

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The Skateboard Park on King Street had some new ramps added by Our House Youth Wellness Centre in continuation of the partnership agreement for this site. Use of the skateboard park is sporadic and the helmet requirement is rarely met. Both the Department and Our House are in favour of the requirement, enforcement is the issue.

There has been some minor damage to the skateboard equipment on the site. Damage is noted by Department staff as part of their inspection requirement and that information has been passed on to Our House for repair. In the past, the Department was conducting most of the repairs, but this is supposed to be the responsibility of Our House, so the information is now given to them for action.



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Some changes were made to the shrub beds at the Tourist Bureau. A number of old overgrown shrubs were removed and replaced with different varieties, which will allow for better and easier cleanup and maintenance at the site.

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This year there has been a significant increase in the amount of vandalism at most park areas and facilities. Each time damage is noticed a Damage Report is prepared. The report includes pictures and a written description of information related to the damage, A copy of the report is sent to the RCMP, and recently we have begun sending copies of trail or ATV-related damage at other sites to the ATV regulation officers with the Department of Natural Resources. Copies are also kept in our files.

In the calendar year 2005 we completed 33 Damage Reports.

In the calendar year 2006, 49 Reports were completed.

This represents a **48%** increase!

The reports are a necessary part of due diligence and oversight, but the amount of time spent in preparing this number of reports - and the amount of time and money spent on the repairs is discouraging.



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For the second year in a row, the picnic tables and benches had to be removed from the park area on Parr Street, near the Community Centre. Problems with noise, language, unacceptable behaviour, littering, damage, etc. by people using the park have forced the removal. It is uncertain whether we will attempt to put the fixtures back next year or not.

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This year we were finally able to get started on the trail extension from King Street to Charlotte Street. The South West Shore Development Authority's Skills Acquisition Program crew was able to help with the work necessary to clear the abandoned railway line from Anne Street to Charlotte Street. Trail signage was also installed. The Public Works Department helped by grading the trail bed, adding some gravel, helping to install bollards and working on drainage. That section was open for use in September.

Plans are underway for the completion of the section of trail between John and Anne Streets. This will involve relocating a short section of the Exhibition Grounds fence, installing bollards and signage. Public Works will be helping with that.

The section of the trail between John and King Streets - to hook up with the "old" section will actually follow the outside edge of the Community Centre parking lot. Concrete parking lot blocks and "crosswalk paint" will be used to delineate the trail on that section, in accordance with plans suggested by the Department of Natural Resources.

Planning and preparation for this expansion of the trail has been underway since 2003. Difficulties in coordinating work schedules, weather and other factors have forced many delays in the project. We hope to have the last sections completed before the summer of 2007.



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The SWSDA work crew was also able to provide resources to enable clearing and cutting on the old section of the trail. They were able to do from King Street to Wright's Road. Department staff did the section from Wright's Road to the Roseway River later in the fall.

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Parks staff were responsible for watering the hanging baskets placed by the Waterfront Development Committee on King, Dock and George Streets. They had to be watered most days, including weekends through the summer. Staff also planted, watered and maintained flower beds on the corner of King and Water Streets and that the Cenotaph. Many compliments were received on the attractiveness of the flowers at all locations.

We need to change our equipment so we can carry more water, to reduce "deadhead" time in refilling barrels. A design is in the works for development over the winter.



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The Roger Grovestine Recreation Complex had another busy year. Ballfield use increased considerably over last year (+27%), although there are still no "senior level" teams in the area. The local minor baseball program is now making maximum use of the field.

The pitcher's mound on the field was removed at their request, since there is no level of play that requires it.

The table below provides information on ballfield booking, in comparison with previous years

Bookings - baseball field

Year	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept	Total
1997	25	35	39	32	17	148
1998	43	49	55	25	3	175
1999	36	50	58	54	32	230
2000	34	44	46	40	9	173
2001	30	34	40	24	3	131
2002	48	29	42	23	2	144
2003	28	25	42	19	2	116
2004	37	30	35	35	2	139
2005	18	29	31	27	13	118
2006	37	31	32	37	13	150

While the number of bookings increased, the use of the ballfield lights dropped significantly - down 50%!

The younger players are having few games "under the lights" and regular evening games are relatively short, finishing well before the nights might be needed

No bulbs were actually replaced this year. Those that are out do not significantly affect the level of play currently on the field. There are no significant “dark spots”.

There were some problems with the lights this year. Water is getting into some of the wiring casings through leaks in some light fixtures and making its way all the way back to the panel. As lights are repaired, drain holes are drilled in the back of the fixtures to prevent any escalation of the problem.

The following tables show light use, based on electricity used

Year	Kwh used
2001	1534
2002	1839
2003	1923
2004	2073
2005	3240
2006	1620



Work began in the fall on replacing the walls of the third base dugout and the roofs of both. The work should be completed in the spring.

The old toolshed on site was demolished. A new pre-fab building has been ordered.

The tennis courts were busier than usual this year. A tennis league initiated by a volunteer was very successful this year. The tournaments that the Department sponsored were quite well attended.

A fairly major repair was done to # 3 court in the late summer. A small area that had been settling for a number of years dropped significantly over the winter. The area was dug out, re-filled, compacted and patched.

We are still plagued by ATV's around the property. Some major damage was done on the ballfield late when a gate was smashed to gain access. ATV's are frequently seen running up and down Carleton Street and around the property during ball games. The property is being continually tracked and rutted by tires on the soft ground and in the swampy area on the Eastern side of the property.



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## *Looking Ahead to 2007*

2007 will be a year full of challenges for the Department in a number of areas:

The Physical Activity Strategy and Community Use at SRHS will be going through another evaluation process as its second year of operation draws to a close.

The work that has been done at the school through community use is a valuable part of the overall community recreation program that is funded by the Town and Municipality. The Community Use Coordinator is our Programmer!

It is time that the program moved from the tentative, conditional, year to year state that it is in to become established as an integral component of the recreation services that both Municipal units provide. The ongoing Physical Activity Strategy funding provided by the Department of Health Promotion and Protection should help to ensure that this happens.

It is vital that decision makers take the time to visit the school, talk to community use staff, participants and users to get the feedback necessary to make informed decisions.

The Physical Activity Strategy provides an opportunity to have a significant impact on our communities. The potential for programs, leadership development, education and motivation is staggering. The result would be communities that are active, healthy, engaged and attractive to newcomers.

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With the completion of the soccer field at the high school, the Albert Acker Field will no doubt be turned back to its owners by the School Board. That would be the Town of Shelburne and Municipality of Shelburne. If this does happen, then the responsibility for maintenance of the property may well be assigned to the Parks and Recreation Department.

This will mean a sizable increase in the workload of the Department. The grass area is almost the same square footage as the ballfield at the Recreation Complex. The turf is in very poor condition and an improvement program will have costs. The possibility of further development of the site could be quite exciting. There is a fair-sized part of the property on the North end that could be developed for recreation purposes. There will be the need for discussion, planning, funding, etc. for anything on even the most bare minimum scale to happen concerning basic maintenance or future development. The shared ownership should provide for some interesting discussions too.



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The Shelburne County Arena Association will be trying to secure funding to start the first phase of a multi-year plan to upgrade their facility. The information contained in the Aging Building Audit will provide the basis for most of the planing for the next number of years. It was money well spent.

Discussion on options regarding ownership, responsibility, etc. will also be underway. Each scenario has its advantages and drawbacks. No clearcut “best practice” is evident.

As the upgrade project develops, the Department will no doubt be involved in assisting the Association through the process. Timing and approvals for funding, project priorities, unforeseen costs, changes in plans will all not doubt be factors to encounter.

The arena is an important part of the overall recreation infrastructure in the region. Its place needs to be secured.

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2007 will be the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the incorporation of the Town. The 2007 Anniversary Committee have a number of events planned through the year. They will provide opportunities for citizens to show community pride, celebrate where we’ve been and possibly look forward to the future.

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As 2008 draws closer, the pace of the Loyalist Landing 2008 Committee will quicken. Plans will be firmed up, budgets developed, funding secured and lengthy “to do” lists made. If things come together as hoped, the entire year of 2008 will be filled with events and activities celebrating the 225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Loyalist Landing in Shelburne. The Department will continue to be involved with the Committee as these plans unfold. We have already committed to sponsoring some events in 2008.

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Most of the issues we will be dealing with in 2007 will have implications for our operating or capital budgets.

The operating budget will be considering changes to staff and equipment allocations throughout the department.

Proposals to increase staff time, shift hiring patterns, and change work procedures will be included in the operating budget.

The capital budget will continue with the three year plan submitted last year, but next year’s budget will include many of the items from this year that were not approved, in addition to those already scheduled to be included. Some shifting and “bumping” may take place, but the list then gets shifted to the year after that.

Some proposed items can’t wait that long. As our equipment ages (and demand on it increases) repairs costs go up and down time has a serious affect on an already swamped schedule, especially if the weather doesn’t cooperate with outdoor work.

Many of the items that will be included in both budgets will have to be considered, and decisions made well in advance of “normal” budget approval timelines. Budget items linked to action and expenses in the spring and summer can’t wait for August approvals.

The difficulty in all of this is matching the budget capacity of the Parks and Recreation Department (and the Town) with the workloads, expectations and standards of care that are set for the Department.

“The only alternative to adequate resources is reduced expectations”

If we don’t have the resources to do the job, then the job needs to be changed, and matched to the resources available. This will mean a change in the way we do business, tough decisions on standards of care, workloads, allocation of resources and a lowering of the expectations on the Department.

We may have to change from “can do” to “we’ll see”.

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