

# Annual Report

*2007*



## *Shelburne Parks and Recreation Commission*

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# *Introduction*

The 2007 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 2007 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

2007

Councilor Elizabeth Acker, Chair  
Councilor Bernard Nickerson, Vice Chair  
Deputy Mayor Tony Mahaney  
Councilor Alan Reid  
Marina MacLellan  
Doug Langley  
Kara Nash (Cole Abbot) 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

## 2007 Highlights

The biggest Highlight of the year was implementation of the Physical Activity Strategy. The Strategy was developed as a result of a partnership among the Town, The Municipality of the District of Shelburne and the Department of Health Promotion and Protection. Each is committed financially to the implementation and sustainability of the Strategy. Since the Strategy is being implemented cooperatively with the Town and the Municipality, the Province is contributing additional funding to the project. The Strategy's "Working Group" released its Preliminary Report in April 2007. The final report was completed in November 2007. The report development process was very detailed and intense. This Strategy format is being used as a model for other municipal units that are developing proposals to receive funding for similar programs in the province.



The Community Use Program at Shelburne Regional High School is combined with the Physical Activity Strategy. The Coordinator is responsible for both programs. Use of various rooms and areas at the school for programs sponsored through Community Use, or by volunteers and groups in the community is very popular.

A regular series of programs is advertised through brochures, posters, press releases and use of the Town website. The Coordinator prepares monthly reports for distribution to both Council and the Community Use Program Committee. Statistical information on use is recorded. In the last 12 months 6092 participants took part in programs and activities at the school.



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The Department continues to develop and use its Community Groups email contacts. The Parks and Recreation Office regularly receives information on programs and opportunities that could be of interest to local volunteers. It is a very simple operation to forward that information to the various groups that have indicated they are interested in receiving it. The volunteers can then choose whether or not the information may be useful to them.

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Volunteer Week was April 15- 21 in 2007. Janice Tudball was selected to represent the many volunteers nominated for recognition in the Town of Shelburne. She attended the Provincial Recognition Reception in Halifax. Our local reception was held on April 17, hosted this year by the Town of Shelburne.



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This year “Our Community, Something for Everyone” was held in Barrington on April 21. The BMHS gym and cafeteria were filled with many exhibits from community groups and organizations in the County. Attendance by the public was one of the best ever.



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The Department’s “10,000 Step” step counter program was given a big boost this year with funding from the Dept. Of Health Promotion and Protection. All of the step counters in the Department’s inventory were out on loan. The additional funding received allowed for more counters to be bought and it provided funds for the development of a high-quality display for promoting the program. The program is very popular, and there are quite a number of people in the community who take part in the program either on a short or long-term basis.



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This year’s budget approvals was the usual good news/bad news. Proposals to increase the Secretary’s hours to 20 per week from 16 and create a “new” seasonal position in Parks and reduce the number of students hired were not approved. A proposal to replace the 1995 service truck was approved, with enough funds to purchase a good used truck. The proposal to keep the old truck for the summer to assist with transportation of staff and equipment was rejected.

Most of the other major expenses proposed in the Department's capital budget were not approved. Some have been on the list for a number of years now. They will continue to be placed there and costed, along with other items scheduled for future years as their time rolls up.

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Reductions in the Department's operating budget costs were softened this year by an unexpected increase in funding from the Federal government's student job creation program. The "new" program was preceded by a number of concerns about eligibility, funding levels, selection criteria for staff, etc.

Publicity generated by early approvals was not favourable for the Federal Government. The result was a lot of back-pedaling and funding of almost all the applications at levels beyond what was expected. This is not likely to happen again.

The Yarmouth/Shelburne Municipal Recreation Association expressed its concerns about the program to the appropriate levels of government, on behalf of the Departments in the region. The 2008 program will probably be announced early in the year.

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2007 was the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town. Council struck a Special Committee to organize a number of events to mark this occasion. The Department provided additional promotion of the Anniversary in 3 ways:

- all Department Stationary had a special "Header".
- a special signature line was added to our email format.
- a "banner" was added to the two Events signs



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July 18 and 19 marked the visit of the Tall Ships to Shelburne. A small but dedicated core group, spearheaded by the Shelburne and Area Chamber of Commerce coordinated the event, just prior to Founders' Days. It was a tremendous success. Careful planning, good promotion, the assistance of lots of volunteers and excellent weather combined to draw thousands to Town. The Tall Ships are an excellent draw for a community, and those that came to Shelburne were not disappointed. The lessons learned this year will be discussed, noted and used in planning for the 2009 visit.



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Founders' Days was very successful this year, despite another bout of temperamental weather. All of the Saturday events were canceled and most were compressed into a jam-packed Sunday.

The Department was actively involved with the Committee that was lead by the Municipality of the District of Shelburne staff. We were involved through the planning stages and our staff provided most of the logistical support for the event. We also sponsored a number of events during the weekend



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The Department continues to be involved in the operation of the Shelburne County Arena, through Parks and Recreation Director's ex-officio membership on the Arena Association.

The Arena has improved its operating position significantly in the past two years, and continues to strengthen it with each season.

The Department spent a considerable amount of time and effort in the preparation of a Recreation Facility Development application for the Arena. The application for funding was submitted to the Province in January 2007. Information gathered by the Aging Building Audit conducted in 2006 formed the basis of the 4-year plan for the first round of funding.

On May 1, the Province announced funding in the amount of \$117,000.00 over four years for the project valued at \$351,000.00. Another one-third of the project will come from the Town, the Municipality and the Arena Association. The stumbling block has been the remaining 1/3. Various sources of funding have been pursued, but the results have generally not been favourable. The local RDA has been asked to help locate sources.

The roof was identified as the first work to be done in the project and it requires the most significant amount of cash. A number of options are being considered by the Association.

Other discussions are underway concerning the future of the Arena. A number of agreements are in the works.... The Town has agreed to assume ownership of the building, the Exhibition Association have agreed to leasing the land to the Town instead of the Association, the Town and Municipality have agreed to continue supporting the operation of the facility through a management agreement with the Arena Association. Most of these agreements are still in the planning and discussion stages, but there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel.....

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The Department launched a “Bike Routes” brochure in May. The brochure outlines 4 different bike routes in the area ranging from 18 to 35 kilometers in length. The brochure includes a map and text description of each route. The brochure is available at the local Visitor Information Centre, the Parks and Recreation Office and other locations. It is also available online through the Town’s website.



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The Shelburne Harbour Whirligig Festival was held this year on September 22 and 23. This year the Festival Committee decided to “fly solo” and the result was the most successful Festival ever.

The Department has been actively involved with the Festival since its inception and the process toward planning this year’s Festival was truly enjoyable. The Committee has a number of enthusiastic, dedicated volunteers who are committed to the Festival.

This year also featured the arrival of “Bruce”, the Festival’s oversized whirligig mascot. Assistance was given to Bruce’s designer and builder. A number of other activities associated with whirligigs have developed. This includes sessions in the elementary and high school on gig design and construction.

The possibilities for this Festival to grow even further are many. The Committee has a tremendous amount of imagination and talent. The Whirligig Festival received the Nova Scotia Festivals and Events Council’s the **2007 Community Experience Event of the Year** award. Support for the 2008 Festival is already starting.



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The Department continues to maintain the Town’s website. The Department uses the site to provide information on program and services, links to other useful sites for the community. A site counter tracks the number of visits. This year site visits were up 26% over last year. An increasing number of people are using the site to get information whether it is tourists making travel plans or local people getting information on programs and events. The site is of value to both.

The following table 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
2007	9738

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Shelburne County Senior Games were held September 9 to 15. The number of participants continues to drop. The Committee needs to make some serious changes to Games to boost attendance. Many seniors do not consider themselves “seniors” and do not take part. A number of options are being discussed informally, decision will need to be made early in the new year. The Department is involved on the planning committee and coordinates several activities during the Games themselves.

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Equipment loans from the Department continue to be very popular. Items like chairs, band risers, tables, sound system, projector screen, bleachers, canoes, and other items are being used by a number of groups and volunteers in the community.

This indicates that there is lot going on, and that we can often support their activities by simply providing some of this equipment.

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The Department’s summer program was planned and organized by the Special Events Coordinator. The program was the usual mixed bag of results. Some programs are very successful, others were washouts. Each year we assess past programs and make changes based on recommendations from staff and participants. Some programs are dropped and some new ones are added. The individual skills, talents and interests of the Special Events Coordinator and current trends also factor into the composition of the summer program. The Coordinator prepares an extensive report that forms the basis for planning for the next summer.



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This year's Christmas tree for Gloucester was donated by Celeste Jackson. The tree was cut and shipped on November 6.



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The Department's Secretary has taken the position of Deputy Clerk with the Town. Rhonda Henneberry's last day was November 13. She will be missed. Advertising and interviews for her replacement were held in December, with an early January start in mind.

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## *Parks Notes from 2007*

The Roger Grovestine Recreation Complex had its busiest season ever in 2007. Bookings for the ballfield were frantic.



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
2007	58	35	50	45	17	203

The number of total booking is up 35% over last year. Every month had an increase.

The increased use is also reflected in the use of the ballfield lights

The following table shows light use, based on electricity used:

Year	kWh used
2001	1534
2002	1839
2003	1923
2004	2073
2005	3240
2006	1620
2007	4860

This is a 200% increase over 2006 and 50% over 2005. There are some lights not working, but the level on play on the field doesn't justify the cost of repair. We will continue to monitor the lights and repairs will be done when the need arises.

The increase in use comes from a number of factors. There are more Minor Baseball players, and more High School ball teams (May & June), more tournaments being held here, and there is some demand for use of the field for adult softball tournaments.

The field condition is very good despite all the use it gets. This is due in part to the level of play on the field not causing much damage. The daily maintenance work that the Department does to the field also helps to keep it in good shape. Some additional material will need to be added to the infield next spring.

The dugout roofs were replaced this year, a new scoreboard was installed and the Prince St sign was repainted. A new tool shed arrived. It was placed closer to the field than the old one.



We experienced some problems with water quality this year at the field. The well was given an aggressive cleaning and the problem appears to have been solved. Water quality is checked regularly.

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Damage at the Town's parks, facilities and green spaces continues to escalate. Each incident is recorded and reported as part of the Department's risk management plan. The report provides details, including pictures of the damage and information related to the repair. Copies of reports are usually sent to the RCMP. Damage on the trail is copied to DNR.

The table below charts the number of Damage Reports filed.

Year	Reports filed
2005	33
2006	49
2007	57

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The Department watered the hanging baskets on Dock Street again this summer. The new trailer used to haul water increased capacity enough to allow for all the flowers to be watered with one trip. This provided more efficient operation.

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This year the Tri-County Regional School Board formally turned responsibility for the Albert Acker Memorial Field back to its owners.

Discussions are underway with the Municipality of the District of Shelburne concerning the field. There are a number of issues that need to be resolved. These include ownership, responsibility, maintenance, scheduling and possible future development. In the interim, the Department has assumed responsibility for maintenance at the field.

The field is still a busy spot. It was used last fall 4 afternoons a week by school soccer teams. The Minor Soccer program uses it and there are a number of casual users as well. It has tremendous value to the community as an open space



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The Department refurbished the three interpretive signs on Dock Street. New frames were constructed and the signs were cleaned.



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Transportation issues continued to plague the Department this summer. With 8 staff on payroll and only two vehicles to use, the transportation needs of two parks crews, program staff and administrative staff were often in conflict. This resulted in reduced supervision of work sites, unproductive time spent waiting for rides and time wasted in simply getting access to a vehicle. A proposal for a third seasonal use vehicle was not approved. It will be submitted again in next year's budget in an attempt to maximize our workforce.

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The Department was fortunate to obtain funding from the Department of Community Services for a worker through their Wage Subsidy Program. The program provided an additional Parks Worker for 22 weeks at 100% funding. This additional staff person was a tremendous bonus for the Department. We were able to get most of the work identified for the season done, even some jobs that had been “on the books” for years. This position was for longer than normal and allowed for more help for the Parks Supervisor at a time when he is normally working alone. In the past few years grass cutting has continued right into November and has been occupying an increasing amount of staff time in the fall. This means less time for other work.

A proposal had been made to hire a staff person on a longer seasonal basis than normal for students. It had not been approved in the budget. This employment project showed that a position such as this can add positively to the capacity of the Department and allow for additional work to be done.

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The Dock Street swim area had a number of problems this year. The raft was very late getting in this year. When the raft was installed we discovered that one of the anchor chains was broken. The one chain only held for a short time and then it broke. By the time this happened the summer was nearly over and we could not justify the services of a diver to replace the chains. This will be done next spring. The swim area saw good use through the season. Some material needs to be added to the beach. Water quality was monitored regularly.

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Shifts in weather patterns have had implications for parks work. Warmer weather in the fall means that we were cutting grass up to November 29 this year. While the grass grows at a slower rate than in the summer months, our parks staff is reduced from 4 or 5 to one. This means that the grass cutting work often overshadows the other work that needs to be done. As a result normal fall work is now being pushed ahead in hopes of an “open” winter to allow that work to get done.

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## *Looking Ahead to 2008*

In 2008 the Loyalist Landing Commemoration events will take place all year long. The Department has been providing assistance to the LL08 Society since its formation. The level of support provided during the next year will no doubt increase significantly as the actual events of the year unfold.



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The Roger Grovestine Recreation Complex will probably be as busy as this year, if not busier. The re-opening of the ballfield at Bowood (the former Youth Centre) should help to ease the demand on the field.

There is an increasing demand for use of the field for softball tournaments. This new use may cause us some problems. Some of the behaviour associated with these tournaments is not acceptable, particularly drinking and illegal drugs. It is our policy to notify the RCMP when these games are booked and to issue a zero tolerance warnings to the users. The site is checked after each use. We do not want our facility to get a bad reputation in the community.



Additional work needs to be done at the Complex prior to next season. The infield needs material added and the bleacher planks need to be replaced. The tennis nets will need replacing prior to next spring and the ballfield lights may need some work, depending on how they do over the winter. A plan for some improvements to the dugouts is under consideration.

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Work will be done toward establishing a reliable source of electrical power on Dock Street for special events. Funding in the 2007/2008 budget will be used to get the project underway. Preliminary indications are that the funds allocated may not be enough. If that is the case, a plan will have to be developed and approved to continue the work in the next fiscal year. We are waiting for a report for the Town's electrician.

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Discussions around the Albert Acker Memorial Field will continue. The issues under discussion need to be addressed so that both the Town and the Municipality know what is expected of them and who will have that responsibility. The facility has tremendous potential, but it also needs a significant amount of work done on it to begin to restore it. The level of care it received as a school field was never very good. It deserves better - it needs better - in order for the site to be safe for users.



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The Shelburne County Arena process will continue. Additional funding is needed to complete all the work identified in the 4-year project. The work proposed, and partially funded, will have to be rescheduled or a revised work plan will have to be developed. Additional delays may even jeopardize some of the funding in place. The 4-year plan may take more than 5 years to complete.

The other issues under discussion such as building ownership, land lease changes, operational support, management agreements, etc. will also continue as well.

The facility has turned a corner operationally and is slowing making its way back to solvency. The arena must continue to have support from the community if it is to be successful.

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The Shelburne County Senior Games Committee has its work cut out. The Games need to be re-thought, re-tooled and re-vitalized. The added incentive of the Provincial 55+ Games in this region for 2009 may provide some spark. The Games Committee will be considering all of this in the new year.

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A proposal is underway for a major cleaning of the monuments at the Cenotaph on King Street. The last time this was done was in 1989. The trust fund for the site does not have the capacity to fund the work. The Royal Canadian Legion have been asked to help the Town fund the project. Negotiations between the two will begin in the new year.



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The Department will be converting all 48 Christmas wreaths to LED lights over the spring and summer. Funding was received from Conserve Nova Scotia to pay for 1/2 the cost. We will save almost the entire other half through reduced power costs for the lights in their first year of operation.

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A number of changes will be made to the Department's summer programs. Some will return and other will be gone. A number of suggestions for new programs and creative changes to program timing will be considered.

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The Physical Activity Strategy will be up to full steam this year. With funding commitments from its partners, and the work from the Report as its map, a number of programs and initiative should be well underway. The Strategy will be focusing on partnerships and branding in the initial stages, to establish its identity and gain recognition and support as it moves forward.

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The Community Use Program at SRHS will continue to develop. Its relationship with the Physical Activity Strategy and its connection to the school facility creates an ideal partnership. The combination of program generated by the Coordinator, and program and activities from the larger community, held in the school is a good example of cooperation and coordination.

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Through the year there is also the "routine stuff" --- Volunteer Week, Take The Roof Off Winter, June is Recreation Month, Our Community - Something for Everyone, Lobster Festival, Founders' Days, Senior Games, the Whirligig Festival, the Gloucester tree, Christmas lighting, the Town's tree, the Christmas Parade. These things all come and go with a regularity that seems to speed up every year. Each item is routine, but there is always opportunity to examine what you've done and make changes necessary to do better.

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Almost everything the Department does relates back to it budget. Whether it is specific costs associated with doing certain work that needs to be done, or making time to assist a volunteer or group with a project, there is a financial implication.

Over the past few years the expectations placed on the Department have not been completely matched by budgetary resources. The quality of care we give our facilities and our citizens is slipping. We have been making decisions to "not do" things as often as decision to "do".

**"The only alternative to adequate resources is reduced expectations"**. The Department needs the equipment and staff necessary to do what is expected from it. As additional expectations are placed, something has to go if the resources don't change.

The budget implications of all this must be placed in context too. The Town is faced with a declining population and a static tax base. Other departments in the Town are in the same situation. There is no easy answer, no golden pot.

## ***NOTES***

A number of proposals that had been in previous budgets will be re-submitted for consideration. The budget approval process sometimes does not lend itself to matching funding approval with the timelines of the request. In those cases Council is often asked for early decisions in order allow plans to be implemented.

Though the entire process the Department attempts to maximize the resources it is given, to create the most benefit to our citizens.

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