

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Parks and Recreation Department has faced a very challenging year. The Board actively meets two times per month with minutes posted electronically. It is a priority with the Board to keep the community well informed of all activities and events. This is done by utilizing the Tuesday and Wednesday envelopes sent home through the schools, postings on the community bulletin board and local newspapers.

The Parks and Recreation Department offers soccer, basketball, baseball and softball programs. Each program covers a wide array of age and skill appropriate programs. All sporting experiences are aimed at developing sportsmanship and skills in a positive, nurturing atmosphere. The assistance of a very strong and capable volunteer base has been a great help. The various sports coordinators, coaches and the Recreation Association of Hampden (RAH) have made it possible for the continuation of these youth programs. In addition the Board offered a trip to Fenway Park to see a Red Sox game. This was the only recreational trip that was offered.

The Summer Activities Program experienced another great season with many theme weeks that provided campers with many fun filled and exciting experiences. The enrollment was down from prior years but the camp provided the children who attended with a memorable summer filled with great activities and interesting guests. The Commissioners would, as always, like to thank the wonderful staff from last year's summer camp program, particularly Kara Vicalvi. Kara served as Camp Director for the last two summers. Her motivation and organizational skills were instrumental in the success of the program. The dedication, enthusiasm and hard work shown by our town's young people, who worked as counselors and CIT's ensured that the summer program was a continued success. We are looking forward to working with many of them again.

A spray park is under construction at Memorial Park and completion is scheduled for early spring 2007. The Memorial Park Project members, headed by Sue Rauscher, Beth DeSousa, Carolyn Brennan and Mark Feeney, are responsible for this remarkable accomplishment. Their determination and dedication enabled the construction of this park to move very quickly. They raised the necessary funds, got the proper clearances and arranged for a contractor to work on the project. It is an awesome addition to Memorial Park and to the Town of Hampden. It has replaced an unused swimming area with water spray features that the entire town can enjoy. The Board extends our thanks to the project members.

The Board, in conjunction with the Police Department and the Recreation Association of Hampden has continued to hold movie nights. These events are held periodically and are well attended and enjoyed by many families.

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In May, Bob White and Mark Goossens were elected to the Board replacing Tina Albano and Mike D'Agostino. Tina and Mike's dedicated service to our community will be missed. Deb House has continued as our clerk and has been a wonderful addition to our team. Without her hard work and dedication we would not be able to accomplish our mission. Dana Pixley and his Highway Department staff have always been a great help to our department and this year was no exception. The wonderful staff at Town Hall also deserves our thanks and appreciation.

All of our town sports programs are run in conjunction with the Recreation Association of Hampden. RAH's committed volunteers help to organize and monitor all of our sports programs. Their contributions are integral to the growth of youth sports in Hampden. We are grateful for their involvement.

Respectfully submitted:

Chris McDonald, Chairman
Larry Forrest
Mark Goossens
Huck House
Bob White