

PLAYGROUND OR RECREATION COMMISSION

The Belmont Recreation Department provides an opportunity for each of the Town's residents to participate in an enjoyable activity during their leisure while also promoting fitness and a healthy lifestyle. The Department sponsored programs are selected, organized and staffed with the objective of providing appealing programs to satisfy the diverse interest of local citizens. The Department provides a comprehensive and balanced recreation program by:

1. Offering public recreation programs for all ages.
2. Sponsoring special event and special interest programs.
3. Assisting community groups in recreation oriented activities.
4. Assisting in the maintenance of public playground and recreation areas and facilities.

In presenting our accomplishments of 2006 and our thoughts for the future, our areas of interest will be:

- A. Areas, Facilities and Maintenance
- B. Recreation Programs
- C. Long Range Planning

A. AREAS, FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

The Recreation Department continued to work closely with the Department of Public Works to implement needed improvements at the Town's playgrounds, athletic fields and recreation facilities. One of the significant new improvements was the construction of a new bocce court in the back corner of the Payson Park playground.

B. RECREATION PROGRAMS

SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAMS

Recreation programs sponsored by the Playground or Recreation Commission, during the School Year are divided into the following categories:

- Children's Programs
- Teen Programs
- Adult Programs
- James "Skip" Viglirolo Ice Skating Facility
- Field House and Indoor Pool Complex
- Special Needs Programs

Children's Programs

Youth Basketball

The Department once again co-sponsored this popular program with the Belmont Youth Basketball Association (BYBA), for children in grades 3-8. Volunteer coaches and coordinators help to make this long-running program a success year after year, over 160 high school students or parents have offered their time this season. Registration for this program continued at a high level with close to 600 participating again this year. This is a comprehensive program of instruction and competition, featuring many different levels for boys and girls, including traveling teams for grades 5-8. "Open Gym" at the BHS Field House on Friday's during the season continues to be well attended by BYBA players which offers a safe and enjoyable activity for children on a weekend evening.

Children's Soccer

The Department continued to assist the Belmont Youth Soccer Association, the 2nd Soccer Association and Belmont Community Soccer. This sport continued to be very popular with boys and girls. The soccer fields at Grove Street, Pequossette, Town Field, Winn Brook and at the High School Athletic Complex were used for games and practices.

Belmont Youth Baseball

The Department continued to be a sponsor of this program which includes Instructional League, Little League and the Babe Ruth League baseball program in Belmont. This popular program is held in the spring and summer at the Concord Avenue and Conley fields for boys ages 8-15.

Conley League Baseball

The Conley League Baseball program again provided an opportunity for all Belmont youngsters ages 8 - 12 to participate in organized baseball this spring. No players sit on the bench in this program, offering players of all skill levels the opportunity to participate. Volunteer assistance is a key factor in the program's success as many adults donate their time to coach and umpire. The Department provides baseball caps and T-shirts for all of the players in the League. The program is open to all Belmont children not in the Little League Baseball Program. Games are played at the Belmont Hill School fields.

Conley League Softball

This weeknight program is held at the Washington Street and Winn Brook playgrounds. Girls ages 8 - 12 enjoy this program, which includes instruction on the fundamentals of the sport and a full schedule of games. The Department provided softball caps and T-shirts for all of the players in the league.

Conley League Middle School Softball

This weeknight program was held at Washington Street and Concord Avenue fields and included girls in grades 5 through 8. A full schedule of games was completed during May and June. The Department provided tee shirts for all of the players in the program.

Youth T-Ball

The Department continued to sponsor this popular program for young boys and girls. This year the weeknight instructional program was held at the Wellington School Playground and the Payson Park Playground. The basic fundamentals of batting and base running are provided with the use of special batting tees for the boys and girls in this program ages 4-5. Caps and T-shirts were provided to all of the children who participated.

Vacation Week Specials

During the major school vacations, the Department sponsors a full schedule of varied activity. Offered are additional afternoon hours at the Skating Rink, Wenner Field House and the Higginbottom Pool. Full or half day sports programs are offered through New England Sports, Inc.

Musical Theatre

The Department continued a partnership with Musical Theater Experiences, a musical theatre company open for children in grades 1-7. This program provides the opportunity to sing, dance and act in musical performances. Rehearsals are held once a week and each session concludes with a performance for family and friends. This year's performances of Lion King and Oliver were a huge success.

Youth Sports Nights

In conjunction with the Belmont High School Athletic Department, we continued to sponsor Youth Sports Nights. In 2006 we held events for hockey, football and soccer. These events include free admission for youth players in their respective sports and souvenir prizes donated by local merchants, the Boston Bruins, the New England Revolution and the New England Patriots.

Teenage Programs

Saturday Night Ski Program

The Nashoba Valley Ski Program offered by the Department continues to be one of the most popular teenage activities in Belmont. Six buses of Belmont teenagers traveled to Nashoba Valley each Saturday evening for the first six weeks of the year. Over three hundred boys and girls were registered for the program of skiing, snowboarding and instruction. The Department thanks all of the parents who volunteer to chaperone these trips each season.

Adult Programs

Volleyball

This popular recreation sport continued to be held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings as part of the Field House program. The Field House Supervisor organizes informal games among those in attendance.

Sculpting, Strengthening and Aerobics

Classes are designed to meet the needs of all levels! Using weights, bands, balls and your own body, participants develop aerobic endurance, muscular strength and endurance, a strong/supple core, as well as flexibility and body awareness. Each class includes an aerobic warm up, cardio section (dance and athletic movement), weight work, balance training, and abdominals. Class concludes with a final stretch and relaxation. Through practice with proper form and breathing techniques you learn to deepen the mind body connection and improve all aspects of your health!

Classes meet Monday and Wednesday evenings in the Belmont High School Upper Gym and are led by Certified Instructors and Personal Trainers Donna Ognibene and Louise Cocuzzo

Women's Bowling League

The Department continued to co-sponsor a morning candlepin-bowling league for Belmont women, now in its 41st consecutive year. This weekly program held at the Lanes and Games Bowling Center on Concord Turnpike.

Benefits for Belmont Seniors

The Recreation Department offers Belmont Seniors, aged 65+ memberships at no charge to enjoy all the Dept.'s facilities throughout the year. The Department assisted the Council on Aging in its Senior Swim program and in their 2nd year of planning day and overnight outings.

James "Skip" Viglirolo Skating Rink

Child Beginner Skating Instruction

Two seven week sessions of beginner and advanced lessons for children grades K through 4 are held on Saturday mornings. Children are taught the fundamentals of skating in this class and earn badges as part of the U.S.F.S.A. program.

Pre-School Instruction

These classes were held on Saturday mornings at the rink. Basic instruction for boys and girls ages 3-4 is provided. Beginner lessons were also held on Tuesday afternoon for preschool and Kindergarten children.

Teen and Adult Lessons

These classes, held on Sunday evenings offer an opportunity for young and older adults to learn the basics or improve their skills in a relaxed, informal atmosphere.

Figure Skate Lessons

This class allows advanced skaters the opportunity to improve their ice skating skills and figure skating techniques.

Recreation Hockey

This popular weekend program was held on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings once again this year, providing instruction in the fundamentals of the game to boys and girls ages 4 and over. This is one of the programs that benefits from valuable volunteer assistance throughout the season. Teams were formed and each team received N.H.L. style jerseys with team logos that are always very popular.

The Department once again co-sponsored an Annual Invitational Tournament, the Belmont Mite Holiday Classic, during the Christmas vacation week. The tournament was held in two divisions with teams from Belmont, Lexington, Winchester, and Arlington participating. Large crowds were in attendance at the skating Facility to enjoy the action.

Special Memorial Awards were presented at the annual ceremonies to officially conclude the season. These include the Duncan Lyons Memorial, the Frank D. Napoli Memorial, the Richard Leonard Memorial Trophy, the Richard Pomer Memorial Trophy, and the Richard Fitzgerald Memorial. Youngsters are chosen for these awards by the supervisors based on their improvement, team play and good sportsmanship. All youngsters in the program received a souvenir hockey medal.

Women's Hockey League

This program continued on Sunday evenings at the rink and is proving to be very popular with registration increasing each year.

Adult Hockey

The Recreation No-Check Hockey Program continued to be a big draw this season. Adult men meet Monday evenings throughout the season.

Vacation Ice Skating

During the major school vacations the Department schedules public sessions of ice skating, mostly during the weekday afternoons. These sessions offer the opportunity for a safe activity for children or families and continue to be well attended.

Field House and Indoor Pool Complex

The Department sponsors a wide variety of recreational programming at the Wenner Field House and Higginbottom Swimming Pool at Belmont High School. The Field House and fitness room are open on week nights during the school year and the Higginbottom Pool is utilized 37 hours per week for lessons, practices or public swimming. The facilities at the High School have fulfilled the "Community School" concept through this programming. Thursday's Family Night/Open Gym continues to be extremely well attended at the Field House. The following programs are offered at the pool.

Family Swim

Three sessions per week are set aside for children with their parents. This time period is always very popular and offers an opportunity for families to enjoy an early evening or weekend afternoon activity together.

Adult Swim

This public swimming session is set aside for use by adults and is generally less crowded than other time periods. Lap swimming for conditioning and therapeutic recreational swimming is common during these time periods, which are held on weeknights as well as afternoons on the weekends.

Public Swim

Public Swimming sessions are held on Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday afternoons, offering an enjoyable and healthy activity for Belmont residents.

Children's Instruction

Swimming instruction for children in American Red Cross Levels 2 through 7 is offered throughout the school year. Experienced instructors work with children in small class groups to ensure maximum benefit and growth.

Competitive Swimming (Belmont Dolphins Swim Team)

The Recreation Department sponsors the Belmont Dolphins Swim Team, a competitive swim team that is part of the Middlesex League. Instruction in all of the basic competitive swim strokes is practiced and a series of swim meets are held throughout the fall and winter. Approximately one hundred twenty boys and girls participate on this team each year. Emphasis is on working as part of a team as well as personal achievement. Once again, parents are a great part of the success of this program, volunteering their time and effort at swim meets and hosting an annual banquet for swimmers.

Wenner Field House

Adults utilize the facilities for a variety of activities including jogging, walking, weight lifting, basketball, volleyball, handball, paddleball and exercising. It can also be used for participation in the Basketball League and the Fitness and Aerobics classes. The Field House and Fitness Room continued to be a popular center for recreational activity for adults throughout the season.

Special Needs Programs

The Belmont S.P.O.R.T. (Special Programs Organized for Recreation Times) had a very successful year. Activities that included competitive and non-competitive sports training with the option of Special Olympics competition, as well as art and social programs, drew participants of all ages. Growth continued in all of our programs, especially in social programs.

Overall, Special Olympics training and competition continued to involve the largest percent of S.P.O.R.T. participants. Individual and team sports welcomed athletes of all ability levels in our year round program. Two of our swimmers, along with one of our aquatics coaches successfully participated in Special Olympics first National Games, which was held in Ames, Iowa. The Belmont S.P.O.R.T. Program proudly continues to send the largest delegation of athletes, coaches and volunteers to all state events.

Social events and other non-competitive activities offered participants further opportunities for recreation and personal growth. With more young children enrolling in our swimming lessons, we were able to accommodate their needs by offering an additional class. Our popular Family BINGO night welcomed More than 100 people for an evening of entertainment. Belmont Shaw's sponsored another basketball scrimmage and pizza party, where Shaw's employees played against S.P.O.R.T. athletes. S.P.O.R.T. participants and their parents enjoyed a family trip to the Cooperstown area, as well as the Erie Canal and Howe Caverns.

The S.P.O.R.T. Program is very proud of the new bocce court that was built this year. In a joint effort with the Recreation Department and the Department of Public Works, the S.P.O.R.T. Program was able to raise the fund needed to purchase the material, while the Department of Public Works provided all of the labor. It is our hope that many people in town will enjoy the new bocce court.

The success of the S.P.O.R.T. Program continues to be a tribute to a caring and supportive community. Timeless and tireless commitments from dedicated volunteers remain our greatest asset. Resources from local civic organizations and merchants further enhance our program. The S.P.O.R.T. program is truly grateful to everyone in the community for supporting special needs recreation.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

“Kids” And Pre-School Summer Day Programs

These two programs were held at the Winn Brook School. Seven one-week sessions were offered with the option of full or half day attendance. The Pre School Program is for children ages 4 through entering kindergarten and “KIDS” is for children entering 1st grade through age 8. A variety of activities, planned by director David Blake and Assistant Directors Katie Mahoney, Debbie DiScipio, Lora Smid and Brian Binkowski, included arts and crafts, fitness, sports and special events. A weekly trip to the Underwood Pool for a morning of swimming was enjoyed by all of the children who attended. These long-running, popular children’s programs continue to be a positive summer experience for Belmont children.

Summer Sports Programs/Clinics

A full schedule of instructional sport programs was once again held during the summer. These programs are held for boys and girls ages 8-14 at Belmont High School. Local college age and high school athletes serve as instructors at these programs and many of the high school coaches directed their respective sports. This year’s expanded schedule featured four weeks of tennis, three weeks of basketball, two weeks each of soccer and an All Sport Clinic and one week of field hockey, Jr. soccer, Go-Girl’s Basketball, lacrosse and volleyball. Participants enjoy a full day of sports from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with a lunch break that includes swimming at the B.H.S. indoor pool.

Pre-Teen Program

This popular program, now in its sixth year, held at Belmont High School for boys and girls ages 8-12, was very successful and was held for seven weeks this summer. The program was led by Staci Marino and Joe Quinn and offered a wide variety of daily activities. “Field Trip Thursdays” included visits to Crane’s Beach, Lake Cochituate, Fenway Park, the Omni Theatre at Boston’s Museum of Science, Boston’s Franklin Park Zoo and the Crystal Caves Family Center.

Underwood Swimming Pool

Director Lorraine Benoit and her staff of lifeguards and instructors supervised a full schedule, featuring day, evening and week-end hours from mid-June through Labor Day weekend. Caring and experienced instructors offer swimming lessons to children ages 3 and over. These lessons continue to be well-attended and offer children a positive learning experience. The management team at the Underwood Pool conducts training sessions and emergency drills throughout the season to ensure the quality of staff and safety of residents and guests.

Adult Tennis Instruction

Two sessions of tennis instruction for beginners and intermediates were held in July and August at the High School Courts and were very well attended. These classes are a fun and informal way to be introduced to the game or to improve your skills.

Indoor Swimming

The Higginbottom Pool at Belmont High School was utilized for indoor swimming on evenings during the summer months. Special hours were allocated for family and adult swimming sessions on Monday through Thursday evenings.

Adult Softball League

The Department continued to sponsor two Slow-Pitch Softball Leagues in 2005.

The “AA” League Championship was won by DV Realty. The “A” League Championship was won by Mahoney Oil. A total of 12 teams competed this season.

C. LONG RANGE PLANNING

The Department continued to co-sponsor Recreation programs, work with independent organizations and add new programs in order to add variety to the schedule.

We will continue to work in cooperation with the Department of Public Works on improving recreation facilities in the Town.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel MacAuley, Chairman