

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
FISCAL YEAR 2016/2017

Members of the Chester Park and Recreation Commission seek to promote healthy lifestyles through recreation, by providing parks and programs that meet the needs of all town residents, while maintaining a fiscally responsible operation. Most of the budget, net expenditures, is for park maintenance, while programs are self-funded. In addition, contributions from groups and individuals in the community have helped finance various activities.

The Commission is responsible for the maintenance and renovation of 7 facilities in Chester. They are North Quarter Park, the Chester Creek Overlook at the Town Dock, Pelletier Park on Cedar Lake, Lake View Park on Cedar Lake Road, Parkers Point Boat Launch on the Connecticut River, L'hommideau Park on the Pattaconk Brook, and the baseball fields at Chester Elementary School. The Chester Public Works Department is instrumental in maintaining our parks. In addition, volunteers helped prepare Pelletier Park for the summer season, including Staff members Meghan Saunders and Justin Robida, Commission members Ivey Gianetti, Deron Grabel, Aaron Page, Dawn Saunders, John Saunders, and John Williams, Counselors-in-training Jackson Bisson, Arianna Gallo, Jack Guthrie, Sam Iselin, Olivia Noll, and Reece Whitney, Residents Charlie Iselin, Sadie Iselin, Randy Netsch, and Samantha VanJeune, as well as Divers' Cove.

The department sold a record 162 non-resident park passes during the summer of 2016, with income to the Town's General Fund for fiscal year 2016/2017 of \$13,038. Fees collected for the Children's Summer Program contributed \$27,985 to the General Fund. The balance of Camp fees collected was used to operate the Summer Camp Program. Scholarship funds, determined by the Human Services Director and the Chester Elementary School Counselor, helped fund expenses for those who would not otherwise be able to participate in the Camp. There was an increase need for Summer Camp financial assistance in the spring of 2017. This program operates without money from the taxpayer funded budget, but supplies and \$2,231 in scholarship contributions were received from the Chester Rotary Club, Mike Abramson, Trisha Brookhart, Gail and Edward Castelli, Jessica Dobratz and Nicholas Gorra, Pamela Graham, Paul Just, Candace and Justin Kronholm, Catherine O'Boyle, DeeDee Prisloe, John Rannestad, Ursala Roscoe, Victoria Smolkin-Rothrock, Kimberly Stack, Kristie Valentino, Claudia VanNes, and David Wasik. First Student provided school bus service from Chester Elementary School and John Winthrop Middle School to the Town Hall helping us offer programs to the youth in our community during the academic year.

Self-funded programs included 95 participants in the 2016 Children's Summer Camp Program, filling 396 spaces. Academic year self-funded program registrations were 47 youth basketball players coached by volunteers, 21 adult basketball members, and over 200 family members who attended Chester Youth Basketball "March Madness" where children challenge their parents to a game of basketball. 66 students registered for American Red Cross courses including two classes each of Community CPR/AED, First Aid, and Babysitter's Training. The department ran sports clinics and camp programs at Chester Elementary School and the Town Hall for 148 children on days without school or early dismissals. The Commission also sponsored Yoga throughout the year with 39 participants. The Valley Regional High School Field Hockey players and their Coaches Beth Powers and Randy Netsch, volunteered their time to run 4 clinics for 15 elementary and middle school players. A new Counselor-in-Training program prepared 16 7th and 8th grade students to assist the Camp Counselors and Lifeguards for the 2017 season.

Chester Parks and Recreation ended the fiscal year in 2017 by enrolling 142 different children, 317 camp spaces. Summer Camp 2017 began on June 26th and all 7 weeks of camp were full. Camp and Lifeguarding positions provided summer employment to 20 local residents. We are fortunate to have the resources of several beautiful park facilities and over 50 exceptional employees and volunteers. They help fulfill the purpose of the Chester Park and Recreation Commission by improving the quality of life for all citizens by “*Celebrating Community through People, Parks, and Programs*”.