

COLCHESTER PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

*“Creating community through
People, Parks and Programs.”*

VISION

Well maintained parks, public spaces, and abundant nature areas provide opportunities for citizens to maintain active, healthy lifestyles; while appreciating our community's natural resources and preserving them for future generations. Community spirit is fostered by the town's diverse cultural fabric; facilitated and coordinated in superior, award winning recreational programs.

MISSION

“To provide high quality parks, facilities and recreation services in a way that meets Colchester's diverse interests so that people may find identity and make meaningful connections, and enhance their quality of life.”

GUIDING PRINCIPLES/ VALUES

We will act with integrity by being:

- **RESPONSIVE** to the needs of the public
- **DEDICATED** towards service
- **FAIR** through objective listening & thinking
- **ETHICAL** in decision making
- **PRO-ACTIVE**
- **RESPECTFUL**
- **PROFESSIONAL**

General Statement of Functions and Responsibilities

The Parks and Recreation Department fosters active lifestyles, social well-being, and environmental stewardship. This department is responsible for the organization, administration, and coordination of all town-sponsored recreation activities and facilities, including the care and maintenance of all town parks, open space, municipal & school grounds and athletic fields.

GOALS & STRATEGIES FY 2008-2009

GOAL # 1 Enhance Customer Service

STRATEGIES:

Effective and efficient use of technology

- Promote online registration availability
Jay – adjust online intro text, promotion prior to each brochure
COMPLETE
- Continue transition to ActiveNet software
Jay – **waiting on requested changes in software**
- Facilitate software trainings of facility coordinators 2x/year
Chris
- Increase use of emailing receipts
All – measured by decrease in postage and # of emailed receipts each month
COMPLETE
- Include mass email information in Town welcome packet
Intern – redevelop dept info pamphlet – **ON HOLD**
- Place a counter in the office for customer interaction
Parks Crew – **by Feb '08**
COMPLETE – **Feb '08**
- Procure a fax line and fax machine dedicated to P&R
COMPLETE – **June '08 (efaxes)**
- Network parks garage with town hall
Jay – **by Feb '08**
COMPLETE - **WiFi antenna installed Jan 08 – Computer installed 5/08**

Superior customer/staff interaction

- Revise refund policy
P&R Commission – **COMPLETE 4/08**
- Reconfigure office to install customer counter
Parks Crew – **by Feb '08**
COMPLETE
- Nametags and/or nameplates in the office
Liz – **end of Jan '08**
COMPLETE
- Expand Recreation Specialist position to fulltime
Jay – **July '08 – progressing**

Effective and creative promotions and marketing

- Attend at least 4 community outreach/open houses per year
Anita – **Lunch with Linda 5/08 & CBA 5/08**
- Seek opportunities for expanding customer base through new offerings
Anita – 4 new programs/year **USTA Coaches Workshop, Drama Kids, Tennis Camps, Pilates, Tennis, Million \$ Babies, Drama Kids, Mad Science, Strength & Fitness, Training, Funtastic Fitness**
Chris – Fall Brochure 2008 - Adult Flag Football, Adult Ropes, Family Bocci
- Increase the addition of other departments' activities in our brochure
Jay – solicit at dept head meetings and through town hall emails - **Continuing**

Strategic data gathering, with effective interpretation, application and distribution

- Evaluate programs through customized surveys, onsite evaluations with participants/parents and tracking response rates
Anita-ongoing-year round
- Place customer comment book in a more visible location (new counter)
Liz
COMPLETE

- Review existing programs for viability
Anita – at conclusion of each program; written eval for each-**COMPLETED QUARTERLY**
- Review customer comment book at staff meetings
Liz - Ongoing

Communicate with residents

- Place program evaluation forms on the P&R's website
Anita – develop form – Jan 08
Jay – put on web site – Jan 08
- Seek input from public as to requested programs via website
Jay – online form – Jan 08
- Develop FAQ page and blog on web site
Jay – Feb 08 - **COMPLETE**

GOAL # 2 Provide Strong & Decisive Leadership

STRATEGIES:

Increase number and use of volunteers for programs and events

- Promote opportunities for volunteers to meet their organizational goals of community involvement
Anita/Chris – Three (3) per season/brochure.
Fall Brochure, 57 Fest, Halloween
- Recognize volunteers participation through the media
Anita – volunteer section in brochure & 2 press releases per year
Spring Clean-Up, Boy Scouts on Green 4/08

Use Parks & Recreation Commission effectively

- Provide information on any incidents/serious concerns at events or during programs when appropriate
Jay – by email - ONGOING
- Increase commissioners attendance at programs/events
P&R Commission
- Develop commission's role regarding legislative advocacy
Jay - ONGOING

Serve as central clearinghouse of information for community events

- Develop system to gather information on community events
Jay to create form – Chris to maintain – Chris – article in brochure & press release (TRANSITION TO FIRST SELECTMAN'S OFFICE)
- Disseminate accumulated information
Chris – Online Calendar – Ongoing (TRANSITION TO FIRST SELECTMAN'S OFFICE)

Increase participation with non-Parks & Recreation entities

- Represent department in programs and events of other groups/organizations
Jay – at least 4 – Stop & Shop Easter Egg Hunt 3/08
- Share department expertise where appropriate
Jay – Town Hall Expo

GOAL # 3 Fiscal Responsibility

STRATEGIES:

Submit Capital Improvement Program and Technology updates that are multi-year plans that can be realistically implemented and funded annually.

Jay

Educate and inform taxpayers on the benefits of the park system

- Update "P&R Fast Facts"
Jay/Intern – by August '08
- Update website to include FAQ and blog
Jay – Mar/April '08 - COMPLETE
- Produce periodic emails regarding the benefits and management of parks and grounds
Jay – every other month
Making use in weekly columns in Colchester Bulletin 4/08

Create new revenue streams

- Pursue new grants & sponsorships
100%
Greenways Small Grant, Sponsorships \$30,000+ 8/08
- Increase new partnerships with other towns
Anita – 1+ per year (Complete – staff training with Coventry, Camp Days w/Marlborough & East Hampton

Manage budgets effectively and efficiently

- Include P&R Finance Subcommittee in budget development
JAY – COMPLETE 1/08
- Keep budgeting software/programs current
JAY - COMPLETE
- Develop balanced annual program fund budget
JAY - COMPLETE
- Maintain open communication with First Selectman's Office
JAY - ONGOING
- Review non-resident fees for facility usage
P&R Commission - COMPLETE

Conservation of materials

- Make use of natural compost
Tim – in progress – using compost from Transfer Station 7/08
Recv'd training 12/08 & tested compost
- Re-use of in house materials for park improvement
TIM - ONGOING
- Efficient scheduling & grouping of activities/maintenance
TIM - ONGOING

GOAL # 4 Pursue Unique Contributions - Recreation

STRATEGIES:

Focus on introducing community to healthy activities

- Include health benefits in program descriptions
Anita – COMPLETE 8/08 Fall Brochure
- Create regular before & after school opportunities for physical activity
Chris – IN PROGRESS
- Facilitate “healthy partners” clubs
Jay
- Run successful introductory fitness classes at BA fitness center
Chris – OFFERED; 2ND TRY IN 2009

Partner with other departments and non-town agencies

- Facilitate software trainings of facility coordinators 2x/year
Chris
- Expand community section of brochure
Anita-Ongoing
- Identify liaison for each town group to provide information
Chris
- Make activity kits available for check out through library
Anita
- Develop P&R resource library in partnership with Cragin Library
Chris

Improve quality and increase number of recreational opportunities that encourage lifelong learning and enrichment

- Develop 2 new activities at Cohen Woodlands to address “nature deficit disorder”
Chris
- Develop “High School for a Day” program
Chris ‘09
- Create intergenerational program
Chris ‘09

Create unique opportunities for underserved populations

- Create local version of “senior games”
- Expand Rec’ing Crew program
Anita – COMPLETE 6/08 Program doubled with adding 4 extra weeks
- Develop focused teen climbing program
Chris – Summer ‘08

Enhance community spirit through special events

- Expand food court at 57 fest
Jay – COMPLETE 9/08
- Pursue a 57 Fest parade – **COMPLETE 6/08**
- Reach out to more organizations to participate in Spring Clean-Up
P&R Commission - ONGOING
- Develop pre-concert activities for summer series
Jesse – COMPLETE 7/08

Make use of non-traditional facilities

- Plan at least one program/event at each of:
 - Youth center
 - Senior center**Anita**
- Hold P&R commission meetings at various facilities
P&R Commission - ONGOING

GOAL # 4 Pursue Unique Contributions - Parks

STRATEGIES:

Provide safe and inviting parks and facilities

- Increase lighting at facilities (parking lots, stairs)
P&R Commission
- Secure funding for new park signage
Jay – in progress – not funded
- Replace/increase markings along Air Line Trail
Jay
- Implement wifi on Town Green
Jay
- Reinstate Park Ranger program
P&R Commission
- Examine/evaluate stonewall at Recplex
Tim
- Develop walkway along side of commuter lot
Jay - CLEARED

Develop additional new facilities to meet community recreational needs

- Encourage town leadership to implement Athletic Facilities Task Force recommendations
P&R Commission
- Form Dog Park committee
Jay – site approved 11/08, able to fundraise
- Build new parks garage and relocate concession stand
P&R Commission

Improve upon existing facilities, both indoor and outdoor.

- Implement CIP as funded
Jay – NOT FUNDED
- Complete bocce rest area (bench, covered area, portable restroom)
Jay/P&R Commission
- Develop field irrigation plan
Jay – Plan Developed 5/08 No \$\$
- Replace tennis courts at Recplex
Jay – QUOTE OBTAINED
- Replace fencing at Recplex Annex, and fields where appropriate
Jay
- Continue field closure/renovation rotation
P&R Commission – FINISHED R6 Renovation – Closing all of R4 – Working on Inner R6 7/08
- Redevelop holiday decorations on TG
P&R Commission – IN PROGRESS

Maximize existing resources to manage expanded grounds maintenance responsibilities.

- Replace trucks #28 & #22
P&R Commission
- Continue to cooperate with volunteer groups to beautify & decorate public grounds seasonally
Jay – IN PROGRESS
- Implement procedures for school grounds maintenance by development of a work plan and calendar, and methods of documentation to analyze the current system to make recommendations for improvements
Tim
- Develop “adopt a park” plan
Jay – Research Underway 9/08

Assure maximum, functional use of each recreation area or facility.

- Complete transition to Activenet
Jay – WAITING ON SOFTWARE ENHANCEMENTS
- Continue to facilitate 3 sport league scheduling meetings per year

Chris

- Coordinate with Planning & Zoning and land use boards with regards to land acquisition
- Proactively research possible land acquisitions through donation and/or bequest.
- P&R Commission**

GOAL # 5 Professional Development

STRATEGIES:

Conduct annual evaluation and feedback process

- Establish annual goals with individual & group staff
Jay/Strategic Plan - COMPLETE
- Minimum of a 6 month update
Jay - COMPLETE
- Mandatory annual performance evaluation
Jay - COMPLETE
- Examine possibility of custom evaluation forms
Jay – IN PROGRESS

Maintain qualified and competent staff and commissioners

- Maintain appropriate certifications
Jay - COMPLETE
- Attend professional conferences
Jay - COMPLETE
- Commissioners maintain activity in relevant sub-committees
P&R Commission
- Cross-train staff on office duties
Jay – Ongoing 7/08
- Develop frequent internal staff training
Jay – Ongoing Weekly Staff Meetings

Recognize the work and contributions of staff and commissioners

- Continue with non-monetary system & include commissioners
Jay
- Develop a “meet the staff” section on the website
Jesse – in progress 7/08
- Examine staff compensation for appropriateness, consistency and benchmarking
Jay - ONGOING

Attract and develop new staff and commissioners, as openings permit

- Expand department accomplishments and awareness
Jay – IN PROGRESS
- Review tuition policies for staff
Anita/P&R Commission
- Develop orientation program for new commissioners
Jay/Sean O’Leary - ONGOING

Promote staff well being

- Ensure a work environment that is conducive to staff well being
Jay - ONGOING
- Partner with health department (ie. Vaccinations, blood pressure, health email list)
Jay – IN PROGRESS
- Pursue friendly sports competitions with neighboring P&R depts.
Chris