

REPORT OF THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

To the Honorable Board of Selectmen and the Inhabitants of the Town of Abington:

The Park and Recreation Commission submit its 125th Annual Report on the operations of the Park and Recreation Department to the Townspeople of Abington.

On March 6, 1882, the voters of Abington accepted a special law passed by the General Court, formally known as Chapter 10 of the Acts of 1882, AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR LAYING OUT A PUBLIC PARK IN THE TOWN OF ABINGTON. At the same meeting the voters of Abington, in accordance with the newly accepted law, elected three Park Commissioners to provide for the selection and administration of a public park. Moses N. Arnold, Henry B. Pierce and Thomas F. Giles were chosen as the first Park Commissioners for the town. The first official act of the new Park Commissioners was to purchase the land known as Island Grove and designates it as the Town's first public park. In 1970, the Park Department and the Recreation Committee were combined to form what you all know today as the Park and Recreation Department.

On a historical note, Moses N. Arnold served as a Park Commissioner for 37 years from 1882 to 1918. To this day, Moses N. Arnold, years of public service to the Town of Abington as a Park Commissioner are unmatched.

At the annual town elections, Robert Walsh chose not to seek reelection and Russell Esau was elected to fill the vacant position.

Organizing for the year, Steven J. Wakelin was elected Chair, Paul F. Mollica was elected vice-chair, and Scott L. Tomlin was elected as Secretary.

The Park and Recreation Commissioners would like to thank Robert Walsh for his dedicated years of service on the Park and Recreation Commission.

In November 2006, the voters approved \$145,000.00 of infrastructure improvements for Island Grove. These improvements include renovations made to the bathhouse and a new dock system. These are the first major improvements made over at Island Grove since the opening of the pool area in 1969. Both projects were completed for the opening day and once again the Island Grove swimming area is something the townspeople can very proud of.

The Park and Recreation Commission would like to thank Mr. Phillip L. Warren, Jr., Town Manager, and the residents of Abington for supporting the infrastructure improvements thru the town's capital plan.

The Park and Recreation Commission along with Mr. James Wells, South Shore Tobacco Control, met with Abington Board of Health to discuss adding a section to the current no smoking policy to include no smoking on all Parks and Playgrounds in the town of Abington. The policy was approved unanimously by the Board of Health and unanimously by the Park and Recreation Commission. The new policy went into effect on June 1, 2007. Abington became only the second community on the South Shore to institute this policy.

This past fall, there were two major renovation projects at Memorial field. The bleachers at Memorial field were completely renovated through a \$65,000.00 grant from the

Department of Housing and Community Development. The concrete was repaired and sealed. New aluminum bleachers were installed. A new center stairs handrail was installed and the press box and surrounding area received a fresh coat of paint.

The second major project was the complete reconstruction of the football practice/right field of the varsity baseball field. A portion of the old cinder/stone dust track was removed. The field was rot tilled. Approximately 1,200 yards of new loam was added to grade and level the field. Then the field was hydro seeded and fertilized. This project was completed at no cost to the Town.

The Park and Recreation Commission would like to give special thanks to Mr. Shawn Reilly, who took complete charge of the fundraising efforts of the project and also helped in the coordination of the project, Mr. Glenn R. LaPointe and staff, Glenn R. LaPointe Construction Inc, Mr. Chris Kane and staff, Barcellos & Kane Landscaping, Mr. Lee Mann and staff, W Lee Mann & Son Landscaping, Mr. Scott Leines, Turf Irrigation Solutions, Highway Superintendent, Mr. Kenan Connell and staff, Abington Highway Department and The Park and Recreation maintenance staff.

All fields remain extremely busy from late March until late November. We are seeing more players, more teams, and more leagues on our fields now than we have ever seen before. As these youth programs continue to grow, our fields are receiving less and less time to recover from the use. The Commission and the youth organizations have worked very closely trying to plan schedules so fields have a chance to rest and recover.

During the winter months, equipment and manpower were made available to the Highway Department for snow and ice removal.

Other unseasonable chores include bench and bleacher repair, maintaining all small engine power equipment, maintenance of all larger landscape equipment such as riding mowers, walk behind mowers and mowing decks, and tree removal and brush cutting.

General maintenance and upkeep of the 70+ acres of Town property, parks and fields was done on a daily basis.

The Commission and the Park and Recreation Department assisted with the Cancer Relay for Life and the Night Before the Fourth Committee. Both annual events were a great success.

The 28th Annual Charles F. Whitman Senior Citizen's Cookout was held in August. There were over 200 Senior Citizens in attendance that enjoyed the festivities of the day. The Commission would like to extend Thank yous to all cooks and servers and especially to our sponsor, the North Abington Cooperative Bank. Also thank you to the Businesses in Town that donated prizes for the raffle. Once again the John Shea Orchestra supplied music. The John Shea Orchestra has been performing for the Senior Citizens since the beginning of this event. Thank you to the John Shea Orchestra.

All of the programs, except for a small portion of the staffing at Island Grove, offered by the Park and Recreation Department is self funded.

The Island Grove and the Eager Beaver Programs are under the supervision of Mr. Clifford Murray, Recreation Director/Aquatics Director and Sherri Ryan, Eager Beaver Pro-

gram Coordinator. The weather this summer could not been any better. We only had two days of rain that forced the Eager Beaver program indoors. Memberships and Swimming lessons were up over last season due to the great weather and the capital improvements that were made at Island grove. Both our programs were largely successful due to the commitment and caring of the Eager Beaver Staff and the Island Grove Staff. The Park and Recreation Commission would to thank all summer staff members for going to extra mile to make these two programs so successful this past summer.

Other Recreational Programs included Men's/Women's' over 30 Basketball, Co-Ed Adult Volleyball, Adult Tennis Lessons, Youth Tennis Clinic, Girls Basketball Camps, Baseball Camp, Drama Workshops, and the Fastbreak Basketball Camp

In all Recreational Activities the Commission tries to hire Abington Residents or Students as the Counselors or Instructors for all of its programs.

In closing, the Commission believes that the department is able to offer the taxpayers of Abington a good service thanks to the efforts of many organizations. The Commission would like to express its gratitude to all the Organizations, Clubs, other Town Departments and Citizens of Abington who have helped over the years.

Respectfully Submitted,
Abington Park and Recreation Commission

Steven J. Wakelin, *Chair*
Paul F. Mollica, *Vice-Chair*
Scott L. Tomlin, *Secretary*
Christopher Trucchi, *Commissioner*
Russell Esau, *Commissioner*
Mark S. Chirokas, *Superintendent*