

Peterborough Recreation Committee Annual Report 2021

I would like to start by thanking the other members of the Peterborough Recreation Committee (PRC): Vice Chair Roxanne Loudin; Andrew Brescia; Michelle Rourke; Zoe Wroten-Heinzmann; Alternate Bob Beck and past member Rob Fox, who resigned in October before he and Paula moved back to Ohio to be closer to family. Thanks also to Bill Taylor, Select Board liaison to the PRC. It is a dedicated, creative and engaged group working together to support the work of the Peterborough Recreation Department and serve the Town of Peterborough.

In other comings and goings, we said good-bye to Program Coordinator John Kohlmorgen in May. John is just down the road in Jaffrey as their Recreation Director, a job he is perfectly suited for, and while this was a big loss for us, it's a wonderful opportunity for him. In June we were thrilled to welcome Julia Chidester as our new Program Director. Julia is no stranger to Peterborough, having most recently been teaching at South Meadow School (SMS) for a few years, and serving as the PRD Playground Program Head Counselor in 2018. She has worked many summers in recreation and brings knowledge and passion to the job. It has been exciting to see Julia in action as she creates new partnerships and programming for recreation in Peterborough.

We began 2021 still deep in the COVID-9 pandemic. We held all our meetings on Zoom from January through May. In June, with restrictions on public gathering easing but by no means lifted, we moved our PRC meetings outside, to the Adams Park Pavilion, where we held our meetings into September, before we were driven back inside by the weather. For the final three months of the year we were back meeting in person in the Roland "Beaver" Jutras Recreation Building on Union Street.

Just as the PRC moved and adjusted our meeting protocols around the pandemic, so, too, did the PRD as it showed incredible flexibility, creativity, problem-solving and teamwork to keep fulfilling the mission of "providing the best possible recreation experience for all children, teens, adults, and senior citizens in the Town of Peterborough." There were many challenges but also many successes.

The town pulled together and was able to offer swimming, ice-skating, sports programs and family events. We inaugurated the first ever Howl-a-Ween dog parade along with a soaking wet but COVID safe Trunk-or-Treat at ConVal. Easter Egg festivities delighted children, families and volunteers up at PES (Peterborough Elementary School) with help from the Peterborough Woman's Club, the Lions Club, the PTO and many other members of the community. Holiday Trees at the PCC (Peterborough Community Center) was a rousing success, complete with campfires, Santa, hot chocolate and sing-alongs.

In another generous outpouring of community support, The Kiwanis Club gave us a wonderful gift of flowering shrubs, oaks and sugar maples to enhance the beauty and ecology of Adams Park.

Speaking of trees, in developing new programming with the UNH Cooperative Extension, the forester meeting with Julia Chidester noticed the red pines planted in a grid behind the bathhouse. They are healthy for now, but all the red pines in NH are facing a deadly scale disease and we have about 3 acres of red pine within the 36 wooded acres up behind Adams. With Seccombe Trail, the pump track and other existing and potential recreational uses (disc golf, maybe), taking care of the red pines in a timely and responsible manner is very much on the radar of the PRD and PRC.

Stewardship is a word that comes to mind, as we manage our incredible natural resources, including Cunningham Pond, and also our built environment.

The 2021 year begins and ends, as does every year, with the CIP (Capital Improvement Program) and budget process. The CIP process has for several years included discussion of the aging Peterborough Community Center, the former Armory building which houses so many programs important to the PRD and the town. This year we were able to budget and put out to bid a comprehensive building envelope assessment to inform and guide any future repairs to the building.

Finally, this year saw the formation of the Municipal Campus Task Force to discuss plans for a new fire station. After Rob Fox left Peterborough, I represented the PCC on the task force. As we all know, this is an ambitious project that will carry well into 2022 and beyond.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and Our Town.

Respectfully, submitted,
Kate Coon, Peterborough Recreation Committee Chair