

## FY 2016 Town Report

(July 2015 – June 2016)

### Clinton Parks & Recreation Department

[www.clintonrec.com](http://www.clintonrec.com)



### Mission

*"The primary mission of the Clinton Parks and Recreation Commission is to oversee, develop, and provide programs and special events that offer participants a fun, educational, healthy, and memorable experience. Furthermore, we strive to improve the quality of life of town residents by managing and preserving the Town's resources, parks and facilities to provide open space recreation options."*

### Parks & Recreation Staff

Emily Easterling, CPRP  
Director

Kaylee Grosso  
Recreation Manager

Michael Gamache  
Park Manager

*(Report prepared by Director, Emily Easterling)*

### Commission

Chairman – Edward Verrier  
Secretary – Yoanna Osborne  
Members - Jamie Johnston  
Carly Ciarletta  
Joe Repole

### Executive Summary

FY16 was another positive year for the Clinton Parks and Recreation Department as the department further worked to integrate itself into the community, improve the park properties and expand upon its recreational offerings. The staffing dynamic of Emily Easterling (Director), Kaylee Grosso (Recreation Manager) and Michael Gamache (Park Manager) brought all sorts of success over the last year and together the staff has worked to make some tangible changes the town can be proud of.

The department saw major improvements to many of its park properties and tackled some much needed projects around town. During the summer of 2015 all of the railings were replaced in Central Park. The department changed the railing color from green to black and initiated a fence railing donation program giving families and supporters of the park the opportunity to have their name displayed on a silver plaque attached to the railings. Another notable accomplishment concerns the Savage Field Project. The commissioners came together to establish a volunteer group in support of the project, this group diligently marketed and promoted the renovation and the project was approved at the FY17 Town Meeting!

The year also proved successful for the department's many recreation programs. The department expanded upon its current offerings while introducing some new events to the community. This year the department celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Holiday Pops Concert and the show was one of the best yet with the introduction of the New Hampshire Philharmonic and the Pinkerton Academy Choir. Furthermore the department introduced some new events like a scarecrow decorating competition, holiday lighting competition and an outdoor movie in Central Park.



Overall, FY16 was a positive year for the Parks and Recreation Department. The goals set for the department for the year were met

and new goals have been set for FY17 that will continue to showcase the impact this department has on the community and the town residents.

## **Recreation Programs & Events Overview**

Mirroring the diligent effort of the Clinton Parks and Recreation Department the town has seen a positive increase in recreational programming. Many local organizations have seen the value of quality recreational programming and have begun to offer more programming beyond what is offered by the Clinton Parks and Recreation Department. Recreational programming is now being offered through the school system, through Saint John's Gym, the Library and Senior Center for example.

During FY16 CPR offered a variety of programs designed to meet the needs of varying age groups and interest levels. Some programs over the last year were highly successful and others unfortunately were not able to run, but overall the department has seen a steady increase in participation levels. As a department recreation is still a top priority and staff members will continue to come up with creative events and programs to meet the ever changing needs of the community. One area of growth for the department has been in the form of building rentals. The Parks and Recreation Department building located on 560 High Street in Clinton has a multi-function meeting room that the can be rented for small events like birthday parties, bridal showers, baby showers etc., almost every weekend this past year hosted a rental. It is an accomplishment for the department to use it's available space in this manner.

Below is a comprehensive list of the recreational programs and events offered from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015-June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

### **Sponsored by the Clinton Parks and Recreation Commission FY16**

#### • **Fall Programs:**

- Toddler Gymnastics and Tumbling
- The Gift of Art
- Intro to Skateboarding
- Babysitting Training
- Youth Tennis
- Adult Fitness Classes
- Yoga
- Bus Trips
- Scarecrow Building Contest
- Pumpkin Carving Workshop
- Middle School Dodgeball and Sports Program

#### • **Winter Programs:**

- Toddler Creative Movement and Reading
- Toddler Gymnastics
- LEGO Programs
- Knitting Program
- Adult Fitness Programs
- Bus Trips
- February Vacation Programs
- Student Ski and Snowboard Program
- Daddy Daughter Dance
- Mother Son Movie
- Block Party on Ice
- Light Up Clinton Event
- Tree Lighting Ceremony
- Holiday Pops Concert
- Boston Celtics Game
- Ice Rink at Savage Field

- **Spring Programs:**

- Toddler Gymnastics and Tumbling
- Explorations with Knucklebones
- Let's Get Cooking
- STEM Beginnings
- Wicked Cool for Kids Discovery Lab
- Youth Tennis
- Adult Fitness Programs
- CPR and First Aid Certification
- Spring Bus Trips
- Clinton Youth Softball League
- Red Sox Game
- Glowing Eggstravanga (Egg Hunt)
- Mother's Day Craft
- Family Movie Night
- Family Canvas Art
- April Vacation Programs
- Bark: Get to Know Your Trees

- **Summer Programs:**

- Father's Day Craft
- Yoga Programs
- Town Wide Yard Sale
- Summer LEGO Program
- Summer Bus Trip
- Summer Playground Program
- Teen Adventure Program
- Counselor in Training Program
- Summer Concert Series
- Adult Fitness Programs
- Adult Sport and Social Club
- Thundercat Sports Summer Sports Jam and Basketball Clinic
- Clinton's Gael Hunt (Scavenger Hunt)

### **Most Successful Recreational and Events Programming:**

In FY16 the department continued to expand its recreational and event program and saw some positive growth in this area. The most successful programs of FY16 include the following:

1. Scarecrow Building Competition (Fall of 2015): The Clinton Parks and Recreation Department embraced the fall season with a good old fashioned scarecrow building competition. This event was held in conjunction with the PTO Ghost N' Goblin Roadrace and participants paid a small registration fee and the department provided the clothes, leaves and stakes needed to build a unique scarecrow. All scarecrows were displayed in Central Park until Halloween. This was a brand new event and saw 25 scare crows built.
2. NYC Bus Trip (November 2015): Run through Fox Tours this trip featured a bus ride to NYC where participants could shop or take in the sites for the day. This trip sold out with 50 participants. The department plans to run this trip again.



3. Holiday Pops Concert (December 2015): Celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of this event the 2015 show saw exciting new changes. This year the show featured the New Hampshire Phil Harmonic Orchestra with the Pinkerton Academy Choir. Attendance was in the 400s and the department received excellent reviews for this production.
4. Boston Celtic Game (January 2016): This was the first time we ran a Boston Celtic's Game bus trip. The trip saw 30 participants and the Department received a special on court experience for the kids in the group (they got to be on court for the National Anthem!). The department is looking forward to running this trip again.



5. Daddy Daughter Dance/Mother Son Movie Night: These two events are favorites amongst the staff in the department and always feature high attendance. This year the Daddy Daughter Dance saw 456 people and the Mother Son Movie saw 176 people. The color scheme for the Daddy Daughter Dance was Pink, Black and Zebra Print and we gave out light-up princess wands. The movie shown for Mother Son Movie Night was Mighty Ducks and the department gave out light-up bouncing balls. This year is our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the events and the department is very excited about this milestone.

6. Glowing Eggstravaqnza (April 2016): This is an egg hunt unlike any other, participants hunt for eggs in the dark! This event saw record numbers and

unfortunately participants had to be turned away from the event. The Department budgeted for 300 participants and there were easily 600 people in attendance. The event got so big through social media and other online marketing tools. The number of participants proved how successful this event is and the department has already taken steps to modify this event to accommodate for the increased participation level.

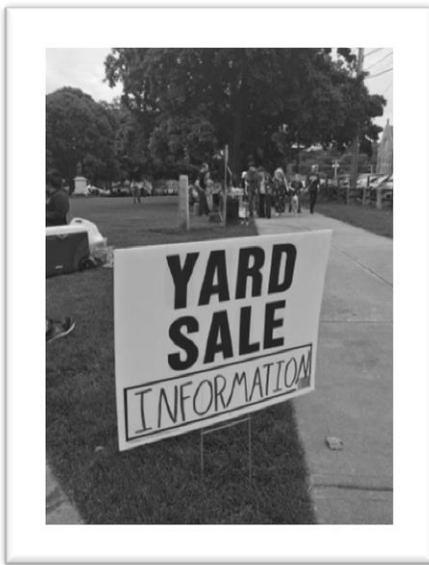
7. Outdoor Movie in the Park (April 2016): After receiving a grant from the Clinton Cultural Council the Department excitedly introduced an outdoor movie. The 2016 movie was The Minion Movie. The movie was shown in Central Park and was free to attend. To offset the cost of this venture the department operated a concession stand. The Clinton Parks and Recreation Department is excited to run this event again and are looking to run this outdoor movie event in both the spring and fall.
8. Clinton Youth Softball League: The Clinton Youth Softball League had a very successful 2016 season. Thanks to the dedication of the coaches and volunteers that are part of this program softball in Clinton has been gaining



momentum and over the next couple years the department hopes to increase registration for this activity. This year the league joined the Wachusett Softball Association, a local softball league that features teams from Sterling, West Boylston, Boylston, Rutland, Holden and Princeton. Over the next year the league is looking to expand the league even more and have more teams in each age division, along with putting together a summer softball season. The FY16 CYSL featured the following team breakdown:

- a. Instructional: 1 team
- b. Minor Division: 2 teams
- c. Junior Division: 2 teams- The Navy Ninjas won the division championship which is a big success for the Clinton Youth Softball Program

9. Town Wide Yard Sale (June 2016): After low participation numbers for the 2015 event the



department was hesitant to run this event again, however 2016 proved to be very successful. The 2016 event feature three events held on the same day: Discover Clinton Sidewalk Sales Days, Farmer's Market in the Park, and the Yard Sale. The increased traffic from these supplemental events directly benefited the Yard Sale attendance and participation. This year's event featured 31 house sales and 38 Central Park sales.

10. Toddler Programs (Fall, Winter, Spring):

During fiscal year 2016 our toddler offerings greatly expanded. Each season the department was able to offer various toddler programs such as intro to gymnastics, creative movements, and micro-sports. Each of these programs saw high participation numbers and most were offered on Saturday mornings. The Department is looking forward to

expanding these offerings in the year to come.

11. Adult Fitness Programs (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer): This year saw increased interest in adult fitness programs. Each season the department offered various programs designed to meet this niche. Some of these programs included total body workout, yoga, abs class and Intro to Barre.

12. Summer Playground Program/Teen Adventure Program (Summer 2015): The Clinton Parks and Recreation Department Summer Playground Program and Teen Adventure Program continue to be one of the most successful programs run by the department. Each week saw record attendance and participation levels. The department introduced some new field trips and activities for the summer of 2015. This summer also was the introduction of late care, which is an option that allows participants to stay at the program until 4pm. This option was very well received by parents.

13. Summer Concert Series: The Department once again hosted a seven week summer concert series. This series is sponsored by local businesses and is free to attend. The concerts are held in Central Park on Tuesday nights from 7:00-8:30pm. Each week the series features a different style of music to appease a wide crowd range. Some of the department favorite groups from the series included the Rampage Trio and Judy Pancoast. Both will be featured in the FY17 series.



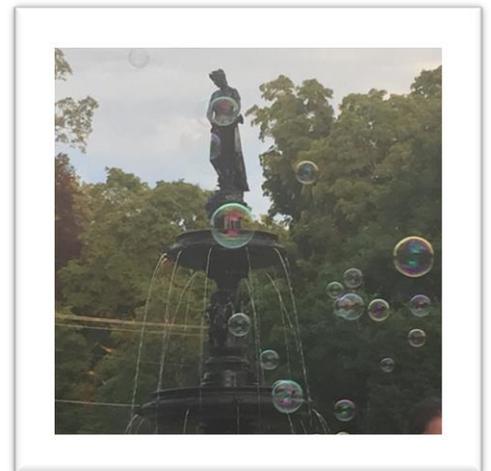
Unfortunately not all programs can be successful and there were many over the course of the year that did not receive the participation numbers needed to be executed properly and therefore needed to be cancelled. Canceling a program is always discouraging to the department, but interest levels in town will ebb and flow and the department will continue to adjust offerings accordingly. It is the goals of the department to increase marketing efforts in order to help avoid programming and event cancellations. Some programs that had lower numbers and will need to be monitored in the years to come include the ski and snowboard program, the seasonal bus trips and elementary/middle school after school programs.

Overall, the town and Parks and Recreation Commission is very proud of the direction the department is taking recreational and event program. This positive change in the department is thanks to the hard work of Recreation Manager Kaylee Grosso and Director Emily Easterling.

## Parks Overview

The Clinton Parks & Recreation Department oversees and manages multiple parks/properties around town. Our priority is always to maintain these properties so they are safe and enjoyable for all residents to enjoy. Over the past year the department has put a strong focus on the management of the park properties and improving various elements within the parks. Some big projects from FY16 include:

- Replacement of the fencing at Central Park- all railings (over 400) on the fencing surrounding Central Park were replaced. The work was done by Kevin Allen Construction. The new railings feature a black stain as opposed to the green paint that was originally on them. Part of this project was funded by donations. Donors received a plaque on the railings featuring their family name.
- Repainting of the basketball court at Philbin Memorial Park- The court at Philbin Memorial Park was painted blue and



grey to match the other elements at the park. The work was completed by Vermont Recreational.

- Tree work in Central Park- Two trees were removed in Central Park due to their age and disease progression. One of the trees was located in front of Town Hall; the other tree was located in front of the Russian Museum. There are plans to replace these trees in the coming year.
- Finalization and approval of Savage Field Renovation Project-Over FY16 the department worked hard to finalize the Savage Field Project plans, gain momentum and support from the town and present the project the FY17 town meeting. The Parks and Recreation Commission worked hard to establish a volunteer group and to spread the message about the project. All their hard work paid off and the first phase of this multi-faceted project was approved and construction will start in FY17. The first phase of this project will focus on a new playground, formalized parking area (100 spaces), walking trail, and picnic pavilion. Future phases will repair the ball fields, add athletic lighting and redo the skate park.

In addition to these major projects the department improved other aspects of the parks such as irrigation systems, fertilization programs, and the overall appearance of these locations. The Ice Rink was once again located at Savage Field, however, this winter was uncharacteristically warm with very little snow and the department was not able to open the rink this season. Both of the Block Parties on Ice had to be cancelled this season. Under the direction of park manager, Mike Gamache the parks have been very well received by the town and are a source of pride for all residents.

## Budget Overview

### Operating Budget

**FY 2012** – \$176,316.00

**FY 2013** – \$166,039.00

**FY 2014** -- \$179,435.00

**FY 2015** -- \$212,435.00

**FY 2016** -- \$238,198.00

**Comments:** Over the last couple years the department has worked to update the yearly budget in an effort to reflect the true costs of running the department. The department has been thankful for the support of the Finance Committee and Selectman in regards to the steady increase of the operating budget. With the increase to the operating budget the department is better able to meet the growing needs of the community, the park and the office/administrative responsibilities of the department. This past year with the addition of the Override the department saw increases to the Park Wages and Recreation Wages funds. These increases allowed the department to staff the park workers later in the year and to hire more recreational workers (summer counselors). An increased number of summer counselors meant that more participants could be accepted into the summer playground/teen adventure programs. FY16 also saw Kaylee Grosso go out on maternity leave so some of this funding was used to staff an interim recreation manager.

Each year there will be different needs that will need to be met which will cause the operating budget to fluctuate and the department hopes to continue to receive the support of the town as these needs are addressed. An ongoing concern for the department is the full time employee salaries. The low pay in part contributes to the high turnover of the department during the last two years. It is the hope of the Parks and Recreation Commission that the town recognizes the employees as a valuable asset and will increase pay to be competitive with surrounding towns and positions.

## Revolving Account

**FY 2013 beginning balance** (July 2012) – \$61,441.92

**FY 2014 beginning balance** (July 2013) -- \$81,128.09

**FY 2015 Beginning Balance** (July 2014) -- \$ 113,754.97

**FY2016 Beginning Balance** (July 2015)—\$133,543.07

**FY2017 Beginning Balance** (July 2016) --- \$204,371.26

**Comments:** Over the past couple years the department has worked hard to increase programming and events, the increase in offerings has yielding an increase in the revolving fund. The money collected from program fees are used to cover the costs of the programs to include equipment, instructions and marketing materials. The balance is “revolving” as some program fees are collected in one Fiscal Year and the expenses for that same program are not paid out until the next Fiscal Year. The Parks & Recreation Director meets with the Town Accountant & Commission yearly to approve the balance and spending of this account.

## Capital Budget Requests

**FY 2016-** Three total requests were submitted:

1. Savage Field Project - \$646,196.52,000
2. Ride on Mower - \$9,800
3. Tree Removal in Central Park - \$6,344

**Comments:** The following warrant articles were presented at the FY16 town meeting. Two out of the three requested items were approved and the department received the funding for a new ride on mower and the tree removal in Central Park. Unfortunately the department was denied funding for the Savage Field Project. Additional requests will be made in the years to come for other park improvement projects and capital improvement purchases.

## Department Goals for FY17

1. **Parks:**
  - a. To perform strategic and long range planning functions for recreation, park and open space facilities to include design and development.



- b. To apply safe design principles in order to make parks safer and more user friendly thus increasing resident usage
- c. To continue to apply for grants and alternative funding to help offset the cost of park management.

**2. Recreation:**

- a. To continually improve the availability and effectiveness of recreational, athletic, and educational programming so that it meets the needs of the entire community
- b. To provide multi-generational recreational opportunities within the community.
- c. To generate an atmosphere of openness to promote dialogue and communication between the department and the citizens we serve; to develop a quality strategic plan for the future growth in programs, services and facilities.
- d. Increase programming marketing to limit cancellations

**3. Service and Staff:**

- a. To seek cooperative efforts with adjoining governmental units in providing the public with parks, recreation facilities, and programming.
- b. To create a safe, productive and rewarding workplace which emphasizes teamwork, communication and recognizes innovation and achievement for all department employees and volunteers
- c. To provide opportunities for continuing education opportunities for employees.

## The Heart of the Community

The Clinton Parks and Recreation Department set a goal to be the heart of the community. It was the goal of the department that with the change in management it would produce a change in the perception of the department within the community. A Parks and Recreation Department should be a place where residents come to gather information on community organizations, events and happenings. This past year the department came closer to reaching its goal. The department starting pairing with different organizations in town, created a community event page on the website and openly advertised for community events alongside the departments own offerings. By doing this the department was able to offer diversified programming and avoid duplicating a programming already offered in town. Residents are starting to turn to the Clinton Parks and Recreation Department when they have questions, ideas, or concerns and the Department is very proud to be that line of communication.

