**RECREATION COMMITTEE TOWN REPORT 2017-2018**

The Recreation Committee has added a new member: Brad Walker, who was voted in at last year’s town election. Unfortunately, both Julie Dubreuil and Emily Schoelzel have resigned from the committee, which means we now have two vacancies ☹. We miss both Emily and Julie a great deal, and want to thank them for their five years of service. In addition to Brad, the other two members of the committee are Diana Hardina and Norman Beebe. Emily Crehan completed her fifth year as Director of the Cowell Gym. Emily’s contributions to the town’s recreational needs continue to extend well beyond the Cowell Gym.

The primary responsibility of the Recreation Committee is to provide and facilitate opportunities for recreation within our community.  Last spring, Shelburne Falls Girls Softball had two teams, one for grades 2-3, and one for grades 4-6. West County Soccer for grades K-6 held another successful season in the fall, and hosted a *Challenger Sports™* Soccer Camp in the summer. This past fall and winter, the Cowell Youth Basketball Program for grades K-6 ran on four nights, with coed groups for grades K-1 and 2-3, and separate evenings for boys and girls grades 4-6.

During the course of the year, we offer the following ongoing activities at the Cowell Gym: a senior walk three mornings a week, adult basketball three nights a week (both competitive and relaxed), and volleyball two nights a week. All of these activities are open to the public. The senior walk is free, and the other activities have a $3 per child or $5 per adult session fee. We also continue to sponsor open gym for the community on weekends, during school vacation weeks, and on school snow days.

In August, the basketball courts at the Cowell were repaved thanks to a generous grant from Massachusetts Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (the grant was written by our own Emily Crehan) and matching funds from the town (supported by voters at annual town meeting). With the renovation, Shelburne’s courts are now ADA compliant, have a new-and-improved regulation-size tennis court, a high-school regulation-size basketball court, two additional hoops lowered for younger children, and painted areas for hopscotch and four-square. If you haven’t seen them already, come check them out!

Currently, the Recreation Committee, along with the Open Space Committee, is looking into the feasibility of a hiking trail along the Deerfield River in the village that could potentially connect Deerfield Avenue to the Mahican Mohawk Trail. If all goes well, we will be looking to build such a trail in 2019-20. Future projects/hopes include a new boiler for the Cowell, in-town ice skating rink, swimming access (perhaps by supporting Buckland’s rebuilding of its pool), and having a defibrillator located at the Cowell.

The Cowell has been rented by outside groups for many uses, including indoor soccer, birthday parties, school team practices, flying model airplanes, and tai chi. Additionally, a stop-the-pipeline group held a 200-person rally/concert in March, and the Art Garden plans to sponsor the fourth annual 12-hour Draw-around this April. Last year’s Draw-around drew ☺ hundreds of people to the Cowell.

The West County Emergency Food Pantry completed its third full year of operation in the basement of the Cowell Gym. This permanent presence allows the Food Pantry to be open three Wednesdays a month from 11 am to 5 pm and to serve over two hundred individuals a month in the Shelburne area. In October, the Clothes Closet, run by Trinity Church and located in the Cowell Gym basement adjacent to the Food Pantry, completed its second full year of operation. It is open the same hours as the Food Pantry and generally sees 30 to 40 people each day it is open. Residents can contribute clothing in good condition by putting the clothing in bags, and dropping the bags off at the clothing shed by the Cowell Gym entrance.

As part of our ongoing communications strategy, we maintain a Facebook page, and the Cowell Director sends out regular email updates to folks who have asked to receive them. If you'd like to receive these emails, please email [cowellgymnasium@gmail.com](mailto:cowellgymnasium@gmail.com) . You can also like us on our Facebook page by going to [https://www.facebook.com/ShelburneRecreation](https://www.facebook.com/ShelburneRecreation/) .

The Recreation Committee would like to thank the people of Shelburne, in particular the Selectboard and Shelburne Highway Superintendent Mark Shippee, for their ongoing support.