

# **Town of Shelburne Recreation Committee**

## **Town Report 2018-2019**

The Recreation Committee has added a new member: Stefan Topolski, who was voted in at last year's town election. Stefan joins Brad Walker, Diana Hardina and Norman Beebe. We currently have one vacancy on the committee. If you are interested in joining, please contact one of us. Our contact information is available on the town website. Unfortunately (for the Rec Committee ☹), Emily Crehan, the Cowell Gym Director for five and a half years resigned in June. We miss Emily a great deal, and want to thank her for her years of service. Fortunately (for the Rec Committee ☺), we were able to hire Bill Buck to replace her. Bill has an extensive background in both coaching and facility management. We look forward to working with Bill in the years ahead.

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 (the latter were combined into one coed group in January).

Throughout 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 encourage community members to host activities open to the public on weekends, during school vacation weeks, and on school snow days. Please contact us if you would like to host such an activity. The Recreation Committee recently received a donation for the purchase of a ping pong table, and will soon be offering ping pong at the Cowell. Information will be forthcoming on the town website and on our Facebook page.

The Cowell Gym now has a defibrillator thanks to a grant submitted by outgoing Cowell Gym Director Emily Crehan. The basketball/tennis courts at the Cowell, which were repaved in August of 2017 (thanks to a generous grant from Massachusetts Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities and matching funds from the town), continue to see a resurgence of activity. One unfortunate casualty of this improvement was that ice skating, which had been held at this location for a number of years, was no longer possible ☹. This year, thanks to Shelburne Recreation Committee member

Stefan Topolski, ice skating has made a comeback! Stefan graciously flooded his side yard and opened it up to the public for skating. Next winter, be sure to check out the town website or our Facebook page for information on ice skating.

The Cowell has been rented by outside groups for many uses, including indoor soccer, birthday parties, school team practices, fly fishing casting, baseball practice, and tai chi. Additionally, the Cowell hosted its fourth Halloween Dance, and the Art Garden plans to sponsor the fifth annual twelve-hour Draw-around this April. Last year's Draw-around drew 😊 hundreds of people to the Cowell.

The Recreation Committee continues to collaborate with other committees and organizations. In collaboration with the Open Space Committee and the Franklin Land Trust, we continue to make progress on the possibility of a hiking trail along the Deerfield River in the village that could potentially connect Deerfield Avenue to the Mahican Mohawk Trail. The town, as part of a successful FRCOG (Franklin Regional Council of Governments) grant, has received money to determine the feasibility and cost for building such a trail. Josh Ryan of Timber and Stone LLC, has been hired to do this work. If all goes well, we will be looking to build it in 2020-1. Also, we helped to plan and participated in the town's successful 250<sup>th</sup> celebration.

The West County Emergency Food Pantry completed its fourth full year of operation in the basement of the Cowell Gym. This permanent presence allows the Food Pantry to be open the second, third and fourth Wednesday of each month from 11 am to 5 pm and to serve over two hundred individuals a month in the Shelburne area. The Clothes Closet, run by Trinity Church and located in the Cowell Gym basement adjacent to the Food Pantry, completed its third year of operation. It follows the same hours as the Food Pantry and generally sees over 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 Facebook at <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.