

# **Town of Shelburne Recreation Committee**

## **Town Report 2019-2020**

The Recreation Committee has added a new member: Jackie Walsh, who was appointed last year. Jackie joins Diana Hardina, Norman Beebe, and Stefan Topolski. 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. Bill Buck enters his second year as the Cowell Gym Director. Bill's background in both coaching and facility management has been an asset to the committee, and we look forward to continuing to work with Bill.

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. This past fall and winter, the Cowell Youth Basketball Program for grades K-6 ran on three nights, with coed groups for grades K-1 and 2-3, and girls grades 4-6. Boys 4-6 was offered on a fourth night but was canceled after two weeks due to lack of interest.

Throughout the year, we offer the following ongoing activities at the Cowell Gym: a senior walk three mornings a week, adult basketball two nights a week (both competitive and relaxed), and volleyball two nights a week. We also resurrected pickleball which started up two mornings a week in late February. 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. The town purchased a ping pong table last fall (thanks to a donation) and is hoping to secure a second table so we can begin ping pong one or two days a week (probably on the weekends). If you would like to help out with ping pong, please contact us. 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. Let us know if you would like to host such an activity.

Once again this year, Shelburne Recreation Committee member Stefan Topolski provided public ice skating in his side yard. The weather was not ideal for skating this past winter, but when available was greatly appreciated by those who skated. Check out our Facebook page for information on ice skating next winter.

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 Art Garden hosted its fourth annual twelve-hour Draw-around in April. The Draw-around drew 😊 hundreds of people to the Cowell. Unfortunately, this year's Draw-around was canceled due to the health crisis.

The Recreation Committee continued its collaboration with the Open Space Committee and the Franklin Land Trust, in pursuit 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, received money to determine the feasibility and cost for building such a trail. Josh Ryan of Timber and Stone LLC did the feasibility study and provided a detailed assessment. We are currently reaching out to land owners whose property the trail may cross and considering whether to proceed with a geotechnical study that would be required before building a portion of the trail.

The West County Emergency Food Pantry completed its fifth 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 fourth year of operation. It follows the same hours as the Food Pantry and generally sees over 40 people each day it is open. Please note, the Clothes Closet has been closed during the lockdown but the Food Pantry continues to operate.

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> . We will keep residents up to date on when and how we will reopen. We will be taking our guidance from the state and our local board of health.

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.