

## **RECREATION DIVISION**

In 2004, Arlington Recreation offered a multitude of safe, quality programs and facilities for all residents of the Town of Arlington. We welcomed three new staff members to Arlington Recreation.

Improvements to facilities continue to be a priority. Arlington Reservoir continued its effort to ward off Canadian geese with a temporary fence and Border Collie program. The Sports Center received several improvements to include the following; team logo's in the lobby, skate rental room moved closer to cashier booth, and skate sharpener tuned up and training held for five staff. We continued the marketing and advertisement plan.

As the popularity of our activities grow, so too the demand for facilities and additional staff. Participation in a variety of youth sport programs has increased resulting in more offerings throughout the year. Skating is still one of our most popular activities with ice time at a premium during peak season.

The Arlington Recreation staff work professionally with residents to meet their changing recreational needs. New programs in 2004 included: adult yoga, yoga for kids and their parents, girl's volleyball, floor hockey for teens, adult skating lessons, oil painting for adults and new martial arts program. Many traditional programs were also modified to meet the increasing demand and changing needs of program participants.

Arlington Recreation provides excellent customer service by offering several ways to register for programs. Walk-in, mail-in and on-line registrations allow residents and non-residents to sign up for all our programs. Our registration software has been well received and has increased our efficiency with customers. Arlington Recreation introduced its newest brochure format with much praise from our registrants.

Arlington Recreation collaborates with other town organizations and recreation centers in Arlington to offer town-wide special events. Such events include Town Day, Memorial Day Road Race, Arlington Celebrates and the Winter Carnival. This year we continued to offer the successful Special Needs skate program with the Arlington Catholic HS Boys' & Girls' Hockey teams and Minuteman Tech High School Hockey teams and their coaching staff.

Limited outdoor recreational facilities and playing fields continue to be an important issue facing Arlington Recreation. Arlington Recreation continues to work with both high schools and the many youth sport associations to adopt policy and procedures to assist in the scheduling and maintenance of our playing fields.

In the year 2005 the Arlington Recreation will continue to offer residents quality recreational programming. It is the goal of Arlington Recreation to increase program offerings every season. Arlington Recreation will also continue to work with users of the

Arlington Sports Center and town outdoor playing fields to address the increasing needs of the community.

## **PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

In 2004, the Park and Recreation Commission worked closely with the Superintendent of Recreation and various town organizations to improve recreation facilities and develop policies that address the increased demand for Arlington's field and open space use. The commission continued the task of improving the town's parks, playgrounds and open spaces as outlined in the 10 Year Capital Improvement Plan. The commission also developed new policies to address the increased demand and use of open space in the town.

In 2004 the commission and the recreation department welcomed Heather Hogle as Program Coordinator to the recreation office.

### **Field Permit Policy**

The Park and Recreation Commission continued to implement the Field Permit Policy to assist with the growing demands in scheduling and permitting of the town's fields and outdoor spaces. The policy was amended and approved by the Park and Recreation Commission and the Town Manager in November. The Park and Recreation Commission formed a sub committee called "Field Use Committee". This committee meets several times a year to work together with the Superintendent of Recreation and his staff to discuss usage, maintenance and permitting of playing fields.

### **Maintenance**

Maintaining the town's parks and playgrounds continues to be one of the major tasks facing the Park and Recreation Commission and the Department of Public Works. The number of organizations and teams that use the town open space facilities continues to grow and has resulted in the deterioration of fields. The Department of Public Works has contracted with an outside specialist in field maintenance to provide scheduled seeding, aeration, fertilizer and weed control. It is the hope of the Park and Recreation Commission that all combined efforts will improve maintenance and conditions for the future of playing fields.

### **Arlington Sports Center**

The Arlington Sports Center Improvement sub-committee was established and will meet several times a year to discuss improvements to the Sports Center.

### **Capital Improvements**

The process of identifying and implementing capital improvements to open space areas under the

jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Commission involves establishing a priority of need; application for approval of funding; coordination with open space advocates and user groups; development of plans and specifications by qualified consultants; selection of contractors through the public bid process and construction of the projects. The time of this process varies depending on the availability of funds and the complexity of the project.

The following is a summary of the sites that are currently in the process of planning, design and construction.

#### *Spy Pond Park*

In 2001, 2002 and 2003, Town Meeting allocated funds for the renovation of Spy Pond Park. In January 2002, Carol R. Johnson and Associates, landscape architects was selected to update the Master Plan and prepare preliminary and final design plans for the entire park. In 2002 and 2003, meetings were held with the Friends of Spy Pond Park, plans developed and cost estimates prepared to establish the scope and cost of the project. The improvements that are proposed include restoration of the shoreline, the installation of a drainage system to prevent erosion, new paths, selective pedestrian access to the water's edge, emergency boat access to the pond from Pond Lane, new benches, picnic tables and landscaping. The project was bid in the spring of 2004 and awarded to Heimlich Landscaping and Construction. It is anticipated that the project will be completed in the spring of 2005.

#### *Buzzell Field*

In 2003, the town allocated \$200,000 for the renovation of Buzzell Field including landscape design fees. Buzzell Field is approximately 3.6 acres and is located on Summer Street between Mill Street and Mystic Street. The area was once a landfill area. There is up to forty feet of unstable landfill resulting in settlement problems. The facilities include two softball/Little League fields, one basketball court and a playground. The site used by Youth Soccer and Pop Warner Football in the fall, Little League, Youth Soccer, Adult Softball and Women's Softball in the spring and Little League Baseball, Adult Softball and Women's Softball in the summer.

The field was renovated in 1979 when the two softball/Little League diamonds, lighting and landscaping were installed. In 1996, a new playground was constructed. The Arlington Playing Field Management Report prepared by Pine and Swallow in 1997 recommended replacement of the turf and modifications to the grading. The presence of an existing sewer line and the extent of compressible or organic fill materials may limit the scope of work the town can afford.

Potential improvements include modification or replacement of the subsoil, re-grading, new turf,

underground irrigation system and landscape additions. The design and reconstruction of Buzzell Field has been delayed to permit the use of the field by Arlington High School during the reconstruction period of Pierce Field. It is anticipated that the reconstruction of Buzzell Field will begin in the summer of 2006.

#### *Waldo Park and Playground*

Waldo Park and Playground is located in East Arlington between Waldo Road and Teel Street, adjacent to St. Paul's Cemetery. Waldo Park is approximately 1 acre and has a large open play area, a paved basketball court and street hockey area and several pieces of play equipment. The area is highly populated and is somewhat isolated resulting in vandalism and after hours use.

The park was extensively renovated in 1977. The play equipment was modified and replaced within the past ten years. The Selectmen in 2003 allocated \$90,000 of the requested \$150,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for upgrades and improvements to Waldo Park and Playground including landscape design fees. An additional \$50,000 in CDBG funds was approved in 2004. The design for Waldo Park was prepared by Larson Associates Inc., Arlington, MA in coordination with the Friends of Waldo Park and the Park and Recreation Commission. The plan includes new entrances from Teel Street and Waldo Road, new play equipment, refurbished basketball court, drainage improvements, paved walks, seating, picnic tables and landscaping. The project was bid in the spring of 2004. The bids that were received were over budget so the plans were modified and the project will be re-bid in February 2005. It is anticipated that construction will start in the spring of 2005.

#### *Locke Playground*

Locke Playground is located on Paul Revere Road in Arlington Heights adjacent to the Locke Condominiums and Massachusetts Avenue. The 10,473 square foot 0.2 acre playground was constructed as part of the Locke School renovation into condominiums in 1981. The playground equipment is in need of replacement and the playground needs to be reconstructed to meet current safety and handicap access standards.

Plans for Locke Playground were prepared by Larson Associates, Arlington, MA working with the users of the park and the Park and Recreation Commission. The scope of work at the Locke Playground includes replacing the existing play equipment, reconstruction of the entrance to the park to make it accessible to persons with disabilities, new benches, picnic tables and landscaping. The budget for the Locke Playground as approved by Town Meeting in 2003 was \$175,000 including landscape design fees and expenses. The project was bid in the

spring of 2004. The bids that were received exceeded the budget so the plans were modified and the project will be re-bid in February 2005. It is anticipated that construction of the project will start in the spring of 2005.

#### *Crosby Tennis Courts*

The Crosby Tennis Courts are located in East Arlington between Winter Street and Oxford Street. The Crosby playground, field and basketball courts were renovated in 2002. The Arlington Town Meeting approved \$90,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds in 2003 for the renovation of the tennis courts. This was less than the requested \$150,000 amount. An additional \$60,000 of CDBG funds was approved by the Selectmen and Town Meeting in 2004. The project will be bid in February 2005 and will include the replacement of the four existing courts including new structural fill and vinyl coated chain link fencing. It is anticipated that the project will be completed in the spring of 2005.

#### *Bishop Field*

The Bishop Field and Playground were renovated in 1976 and a new play structure installed in the 1990's. A new addition was added to the school in 1998; however no additional improvements have been made to the field. The condition of the 2.6 acre field was assessed by Pine & Swallow in 1997. The report noted that Bishop has very silty topsoil and drainage problems. The report recommended modifications to the loam, replanting, irrigation and reconstruction of the diamond and improvements to the backstop and benches.

#### *Menotomy Rocks Park*

Menotomy Rocks Park is located off Jason Street near Arlington Center. The park was renovated in 1977 when a small play structure, picnic table, benches and an exercise course were installed. In 1990's, the pond was dredged, restored and the stone wall repaired with the assistance and support of the Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park. The Friends and the Park and Recreation Commission have identified the reconstruction of the entry path as a priority to provide improved access to the park and pond. Other improvements include tree work and restoration of the open field areas. It is anticipated that construction will start in the summer of 2006.

### **10-Year Capital Plan**

The Park and Recreation Commission have developed a 10-Year Capital Plan for upgrades and improvements to the recreation and open space areas that are under the jurisdiction of the Commission. The program is more than fifty percent complete; however a number of the remaining projects are expensive and complicated. Robbins Farm, Spy Pond, Menotomy Rocks Park, Buzzell Field and others will require significant funds to address the problems and potential of these sites. To avoid phasing of the work over many years, the commission will be seeking an increased level of funding that is greater than the amounts that have been traditionally approved by Town Meeting. Alternative sources of funding will be also be explored.