



Sandown Recreation Commission & Parks and Recreation Department
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Recreation Commission Members:

George Blaisdell, Chairman 2022

Darren Hudgins, ex officio 2021

John Donahue 2021

Heidi Dyer 2021

Jennifer Dangas 2023

The Recreation Commission, in accordance with 'RSA Chapter 35-B: Public Recreation and Parks', oversees the Parks and Recreation Department which maintains town owned recreational facilities and offers recreational activities for all ages. Maintained facilities encompass approximately 20 acres including baseball and softball fields; a public beach; outdoor basketball court; 2 playgrounds and a year-round recreation building that is located on approximately 8 acres and includes a 3-acre multi-purpose playing field and playground.

The year 2020 was certainly unique in many ways. The uncertainties and challenges of the Covid-19 Pandemic made for some interesting situations. Not knowing is always harder than knowing when planning events and activities. Although many programs and activities needed to be placed on pause, there were bright spots throughout the year.

Some of those bright spots included the ability to run the much-needed summer program for kids taking place over the course of June, July, and part of August. On a personal note I would like to extend much thanks and appreciation, not only to parents who worked diligently to help keep their children safe but also to my program staff. Staff rose to the occasion, were nervous at times, but were willingly to navigate a program that basically had to be re-invented, sometimes on the fly. Without their years of experience the department would not have been able to pull it off. While most surrounding towns had to cancel their summer programs, we were able to offer our full summer program minus things such as field trips. The children in the program were not heard to complain about the changes even though for many it was indeed a shift in what they had become accustomed too. We were incredibly grateful to not have one case of Covid either for kids or staff. The department was also able to safely offer a fall after school program with the same safe results.

One major change this year was the institution of a resident beach pass system for Seeley Beach. This change was brought about for several reasons. Seeley Beach is a resident only beach deeded to the town by Beverly Seeley in 1946. Over the past few years it's been noted that often enough there were non-residents on the beach. Larger groups from out-of-town had begun appearing more frequently and behaving in a disruptive manner and ignoring warnings from lifeguards regarding safety and unruly behavior. Residents were unhappy about the change in atmosphere from a quiet family type beach to one where they did not want to go, particularly with their families. At the suggestion of the Chief of Police and support from the Recreation Commission, the Board of Selectmen enacted an ordinance that clearly states that Seeley Beach is a resident only beach with residents required to obtain and then display their beach pass to staff on duty. Beach passes are free and good for the season. They must be renewed each year. Please see the rules of the ordinance by visiting www.sandown.us and navigating to the Seeley Beach tab on the Recreation page. Most residents obtaining beach passes were in strong support of it.

Other bright spots included re-invented visits with the Easter Bunny; Santa and Mrs. Claus; Halloween fun; contests; parades and scavenger hunts. Some adult classes were able to resume in the fall and some were not.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra O'Neill Brown
Parks & Recreation Director