



Parks Meets Recreation

We are proud to announce a new re-structuring development to the general public. Effective July 1, 2010 the Parks and Grounds division of Public Works will now be merged with Recreation forming a new, more traditional Parks & Recreation Department. This re-organization will better connect the programming component and the care and control of the park maintenance operation and ultimately provide enhanced customer service.

The benefits of combining the Parks and Recreation departments are many.

- First, it bridges the disconnect between what the public end-user receives or wants and the ability to respond to that directly with dedicated park stewardship. Programming impacts maintenance, and maintenance affects programming, so the connection is a tremendous advantage.
- Second, it better clarifies public confusion on who is responsible for what and will eventually improve external customer service standards. For example, athletic field scheduling and maintenance; up-keep of park playgrounds; care for the grounds at all public property; the park trash program; trail grooming and custody of park trees are all managed together now.
- Third, it will improve accountability. With direct communication and coordination, we should be able to be proactive with facility over-sight and increase response time to demands, issues, questions and problems.
- Fourth, response to community recreation users' (i.e. sports organizations, as well as individual tennis players, or trail trekkers) needs will become priority.
- Fifth, we can maximize the talent and value of the parks staff by focusing attention on parks and recreation initiatives.
- Sixth, the Park & Recreation Commission truly becomes a Park & Recreation Commission.
- Seventh, combined pride in people, parks and programs!

So, in addition to the 280+ recreation programs delivered by the Recreation Division annually, we are now responsible for the care, maintenance and control of all public parks, athletic fields, school grounds, open spaces and public properties (like the grounds of Town Hall, Library, Police Department, etc) through the Parks Division.

We are fortunate to add such a talented, highly-skilled, and experienced parks crew who really care to the existing professional programming staff. Our new Parks Superintendent, John Caldwell, will manage the Parks Division with Ryan Kane, Recreation Superintendent leading the Recreation Division. Both gentlemen are passionate about parks and recreation and eager to take on this new challenge.

We have some re-grouping to do and have begun assessing parks programs, processes and procedures with a look at maintaining those that are successful and efficient, refreshing those in need, eliminating those that are inefficient, unsuccessful, or no longer cost effective, and adding new ways of doing business to the inventory. We plan to accomplish this by setting some short-term immediate goals for urgent matters that must be addressed, some mid-term goals to tackle items that have to get done, but not urgent, and some long-term goals/projects with an eye on enhancement.

A few highlights of some of the things you will begin to see: (a) keeping parks open and accessible in the winter, (b) development of an athletic field use policy, (c) design a long-term plan for athletic field maintenance, (d) create a formal facility inspection program, (e) make needed repairs to the tennis courts by Timothy Edwards, (f) assist with the Walk & Wheel Ways initiative to make South Windsor a bicycle/walking friendly community, (g) begin a progressive clearing of the Lawrence Road Park site as winter weather allows.

Our "to-do" list is rapidly growing and we will do our best to get to things as quickly as we can, but I do ask for your patience as we work through this transition period.

This is a major change... a major challenge... and an exciting opportunity for all of us. You can still reach us at 860-648-6355 for program, ... and now parks needs!