

Borough of Chatham

Annual Report

2007

Recreation



CHATHAM BOROUGH RECREATION

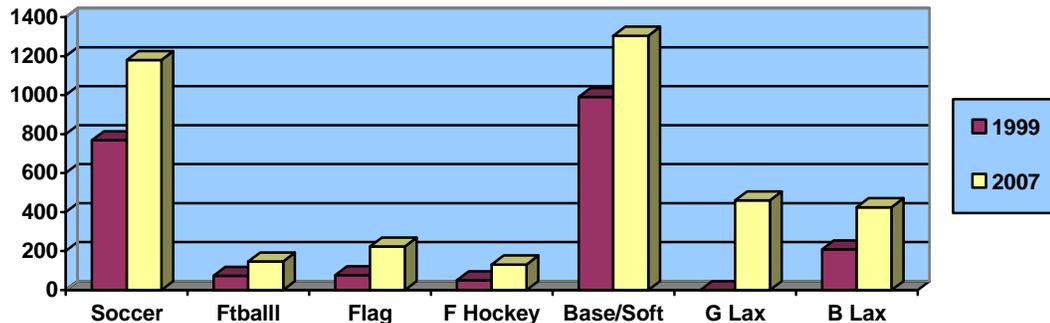
2007 ANNUAL REPORT

Chatham Borough Recreation experienced another very active year. We continued to meet with the Chatham Township Recreation Department to discuss and supervise joint programs. This joint venture with Chatham Township, referred to as the Chatham Joint Recreation Advisory Committee (CJRAC), formulated bylaws and is about to complete a Policy and Procedure Manual. Roles and Responsibilities and Standard Operating Procedures are being written.

As in previous years, most of our recreation efforts were directed towards youth activities. While adult activities were still an integral part of our overall program, space dictates what we are able to provide.

During 2007 our numbers continued to increase. With the ten basic youth activities offered (baseball/softball, basketball, cheerleading, field hockey, flag football, football, lacrosse, skiing, soccer and our summer camps), we continued to discourage playing multiple activities and wait lists were formed as some activities filled. In looking at the increase of participants between 1999 and 2007, Chatham Recreation had over 1700 additional participants during the fall and spring season. This number does not include the summer or winter seasons

Participant increase by activity spring and fall 1999 - 2007



Total increase in spring and fall participants 1999 - 2007



We began 2007 with our winter Ski Program, the lack of snow was an issue but the weather changed, snow fell and the six week program was a great success. For our basketball program, gym space was tight with the number of high school teams and our teams vying for court time. Those limitations made it impossible for teams to schedule additional clinics or team practices. In September 2007, when the new gyms opened at Washington Avenue School and the Middle School, that helped alleviate past limitations.

For the spring, our Girls and Boys Lacrosse Programs continued to expand. A new Kindergarten through Grade 2 Soft Toss Lacrosse Program was an enormous success. Several parent coaches joined the program, took clinics and became trained as coaches or assistants. This new group of trained coaches and assistants will move forward with the program as their children change grade level leagues.

The spring of 2007 also brought together our newly merged Recreation Baseball and Softball Program with those from the Chatham Little League Program. The combined activity merged coaches, players and ideas to further improve a very successful program for our youth.

The Tennis Courts opened for the spring with a series of Professional Tennis Lessons for our residents. Those lessons continued into the summer and fall. The gate locks continued to be a deterrent for non-tennis related activities. Funds from the tennis badge sales will be utilized for repairs needed at the courts.

The paved area at Garden Park, near the tennis courts, was resurfaced. Residents appreciated the repairs and drainage giving them a safe play area for both youth and adults. Several acts of vandalism were found at the Garden Park playground area. The police were notified and Public Works made the necessary repairs.

As the summer approached a grand opening was held for the new artificial turf field at Upper Lum. This joint venture between Chatham Borough, Chatham Township and the Chatham Athletic Foundation provided residents with a renovated Lum Field. During the summer months our Traveling Baseball and Softball Teams utilized the new turf. Many residents also enjoyed the opportunity to have a safe open space to play some unscheduled pickup games with their family and friends. Chatham Recreation would like to thank the Borough, the Township, the CAF and the many residents who funded this space for our residents.

In addition to the Summer Travel Baseball and Softball teams, over 20 Summer Sports Camps provided in-town opportunities for our children to explore new activities.

The Chatham Borough Municipal Pool provided relief to over 300 residents. Over 50 children participated in swimming lessons with the swimmers displaying their new skills at our annual Water Carnival. The Wading Pool had some needed repairs due to age and the weather cracking the pool surface. The pool areas replaced will be evaluated for 2008 to see how those repairs held. Outside the pool area, in Memorial Park, the playground is a very popular location for those visiting the park, library and pool.

As the summer ended our Youth Football Team began practice at Lum Field. Six temporary light units were rented early September for the teams two night a week practices from 6-8pm. The lights were used from mid-September through early November. They were not needed for the entire two hours each night. It was estimated that the lights were used for 28 hours for practice. The four youth football teams played all of their home games at Cougar Field. The Youth Football Cheerleading Squads held practices during the week to prepare for the Sunday Youth Football games.

Our fall Flag Football Teams enjoyed their Saturday morning sessions. Players were split into three different grade level leagues.

Soccer as always was a popular fall activity with numbers on the lower grades increasing. Clinics were held and trainers hired to assist the coaches and players as their season progressed. We have found as players moved up in their grade levels many chose to join travel programs, several moved to our Flag Football or Tackle Football program and several of the girls moved over to our Field Hockey Program. The Field Hockey Teams play in a New Jersey Travel league. One of Chatham's grade 7/8 teams garnered a playoff berth for the first time in this league. The teams enjoyed playing their home Sunday games on the turf at Haas Field. Weekday practices were held at Lum and on Saturdays they practiced at Shepard Kollock.

In addition to the above youth activities, adult activities offered through Chatham Recreation were a Men's Over 35 Basketball Program, a competitive Men's Basketball League, Men's Softball, Women's Volleyball and Women's Softball. We also sold golf permits, through Millburn Recreation, to the Millburn Par 3 Golf Course.

To help Senior Citizens in the community, a link will be added to our recreation website promoting the many activities and bus offerings by the Senior Center.

In the spirit of cooperation in working with other organizations, we offered youth weekday soccer skills clinics through United Soccer Academy, we participated in the Morris County Adaptive Recreation Program (McArp), we assisted the Chatham Community Band with their music supplies and we allotted gym space to the Chatham Wrestling Program. The Chatham Wrestling Program requested additional space for their program but with the numbers recreation had enrolled we could not accommodate their entire request.

We also assisted Chatham United Traveling Soccer with space after all of our recreation and school needs were met. Several jointly sponsored clinics were held during the summer months.

Chatham Recreation worked closely with the Chatham Athletic Foundation as they provided funds for an ImPact testing program as part of their mission. The program gave players aged 10 and over the opportunity to take a baseline test through Atlantic Health System on concussion awareness.

Chatham's fields, due to enrollment, again had significant wear and tear. Planning and rotation of activities was critical. Field coordinating and creative juggling continued to be an on-going challenge. Problems with cicada killers were found at two ball diamonds. Those fields needed to be treated to rid the area of the bugs for the safety of both the players using the fields and the children playing around them.

Due to school construction projects, fields at Lafayette and Washington Schools were closed for the spring and fall. Shepard Kollock is on the list for renovations during 2008 upgrading the footprint of the current complex. Fencing was installed around sections of that field to alleviate vehicles driving onto the field causing damage to that area. The Lum Front Field and Memorial Park are also on the list for renovations and upgrades.

In the spring when fields were still unplayable our baseball, softball and lacrosse teams secured indoor and outdoor turf facilities to begin their March practices. While this was a very expensive proposition, the players needed to be safely prepared for their season. The school turf fields were utilized as space allowed giving us the opportunity to rest some of our grassed fields. Scheduling space on the school turf was difficult due to the number of school teams practicing and using them for their games.

In evaluating our field supply and demand, the Chatham Athletic Foundations fundraising efforts continued. Those funds would assist with a second project in Chatham Township. That project is being evaluated by the state. When that review is complete plans will commence to produce another area that will help alleviate field concerns.

As a variety of field plans were discussed for our activities, we knew we needed to modify how we used particular fields. This was due either to the field's condition and the usage it could bear or the parking and traffic at or around that field's site. Esternay Fields, in Chatham Township, was one location that was noted as an area that activities needed to be spaced out between sessions due to insufficient parking. This is also the case at Memorial Park.

Training for our coaches continued with coaches taking the Rutgers Safety Training. CPR and Defibrillator courses were also held. Plans to initiate fingerprint background checks were formulated and agreed upon by both Chatham Borough and Chatham Township. All coaches, assistants and those working directly with the children will have a fingerprint background check beginning with the spring 2008 programs. Initial printing will be done using the ink print cards. In March 2008 all prints will be done with a digital scanner through a new state contract agency Sagen Morpho.

Our Chatham Recreation Web Site continued to be a tremendous success. The site answered questions, gave weather and activity updates and gave residents the ability to print forms. Several new activity pages were added as well as an email subscription service where residents register to receive news updates.

Community Pass, our new online registration system, was also a tremendous success. Residents completed their forms and paid online for activities, clinics, etc. We have utilized it for every program registration. Residents have noted how easy it is to use and convenient to do from home or work. The Community Pass Administrators at Capture Point have been wonderful to work with. They have also worked well with our Chatham Recreation webmaster to coordinate the two sites into one enhanced communication tool.

Numbers registered through Community Pass during 2007



As space opened in the Municipal Building, a Recreation Office was opened for its residents. The small space that had been utilized was insufficient for the day to day operations of this department. In addition to the Director's computer system, an additional computer was added for residents, who visit the building, to register for activities.

Cooperation with the School District of the Chatham's was critical to the success of all of our programs. Joint sharing was paramount in our planning as was constant communication. The first right of refusal, on our school fields and in our school gyms, enabled us to provide an active year-round program. We will continue to work closely as we share needed space for our activities.

An Interlocal Agreement was signed by Chatham Borough, Chatham Township and the School District to permit Borough and Township employees and/or volunteers to take care of minor repairs on school fields recreation utilizes. A request was made to the school district to request time on Cougar Field if a proposed field lighting plan was accepted.

As always, our success is due to the efforts of many volunteers. They spend countless hours coaching and working with our children and adults.

We want to acknowledge the assistance of the Department of Public Works in preparing our fields and maintaining our park facilities and playgrounds. They continue to perform miracles during poor weather and in keeping with increased usage demands. We would like to thank our volunteers, our Chatham Borough Administrator Mr. Falzarano, former Mayor Richard Plambeck, Council Liaison Jim Collander, the members of the Chatham Borough Council and Robert Venezia and his Department of Public Works employees for their continued advice and support.

In closing Chatham Recreation will strive to continue the mission of the committee which states "Our mission is to provide advice and recommendations for a comprehensive program of community based recreational activities in the most safe, efficient and effective manner, providing accessibility and affordability, which contribute to the quality of life for all Chatham residents."

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Nauta
Recreation Director

2007 RECREATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Goal: Complete Lum Avenue Field
Objective:
Provide a safe play area for our residents
Provide relief for existing fields.
Achievement:
Project completed - June 2007
2. Goal: Assist the Chatham Athletic Foundation with their second project selection
Objective:
Provide additional space for existing activities
Provide additional relief for existing fields
Achievement:
Fundraising complete - project to be assigned.
3. Goal: Enhance our adult and senior citizen program offerings
Objective:
Provide opportunities that are non-athletic in nature to our residents
Achievement:
Communication and advertising of Senior Center programs and activities through our Recreation website and Community Bulletin Board.
4. Goal: Continue planning Memorial Park improvements
Objective:
Provide safe field areas for our residents
Provide space for additional opportunities for field rotation
Provide an enhanced park location central to the downtown area for activities and events.
Provide safe parking facilities.
Achievement:
This committee will reconvene as other local parking areas are investigated.
5. Goal: Complete our Policy and Procedure Manual
Objective:
Provide a comprehensive guide to our residents
Achievement:
A final draft will be submitted to the Chatham Borough and Chatham Township governing bodies.

6. Goal: Complete our Roles and Responsibilities and Standard Operating Procedures.
Objective: Provide a comprehensive plan for our committee
Achievement In progress
7. Goal: Complete a Field Utilization Report
Objective: Provide information for field rotations, closings, repairs, enhancements, etc.
Achievement In progress

2008 RECREATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Goal: Finalize a plan for the second CAF project
Objective: Provide an added safe location for our residents
Provide relief to existing complexes
2. Goal: Complete a Policy and Procedure Manual
Objective: Provide policy and procedures to our residents
3. Goal: Explore grant opportunities
Objective: Assist with funding facility repairs/enhancements
4. Goal: Develop a Recreation Master Plan
Objective: Identify field needs
Evaluate existing fields
Prioritize needs and locations
5. Goal: Memorial Park
Objective: Continue to meet with committee to formulate plan
Provide a progress report for additional parking
Provide a progress report of park renovations
Provide a timeline to enhance safety measures
Provide a review of the current pools

6. Goal: Athletic enhancements
Objective:
Work alongside the Chatham Athletic Foundation
Recommend areas for improvement
Improve the Front Lum Field
Complete a walkway into the new Lum Turf Field
Complete batting areas at the new Lum Turf Field
Renovate Shepard Kollock
Continue to work with the school district regarding facility needs/repairs.
7. Goal: Background Checks
Objective:
Ensure safe staffing for our activities
Facilitate a simple procedure for volunteers to be checked
8. Goal: Evaluate new program/activity requests
Objective:
Insure space
Consider impact on existing activities/program
9. Goal: Tennis Court Repairs
Objective:
Provide safe play area for our residents
Replace old, rusted fencing securing the courts
10. Goal: Hire a part time assistant
Objective:
Assist with the growing needs of the recreation department