

SURVEY OF SKATEPARKS

With the popularity of skateboarding and the ever increasing amount of skateparks that were being built throughout the state the Town of Manchester decided to assess our skatepark membership policies that had been in place since 2001. Our focus was to determine if we should be consistent with our recreation centers and consolidate our membership passes or continue to sell separate "skatepark" passes. As we were studying the membership use of our skatepark facility we were also curious about fees that other municipalities were charging for a skatepark facility pass and if they were providing supervision at the parks. Twenty-two municipalities took part in the skatepark query submitted through the CRPA yahoo groups list serve. These results would help provide us with direction on skatepark fee charges and appropriate policies on skatepark supervision.

On Friday July 20th, 2001 opening ceremonies were held for the new Manchester Skate Park, located on North Main Street. From changes in liability statutes to funding and land acquisition, the proposal and development of this new skate park had to overcome many obstacles. However, after receiving numerous letters from town residents pleading the need for a new skate park, the Manchester Parks and Recreation Department lent its resources, support and addressed these concerns. A public hearing discussed the advantages and disadvantages of developing a park of this type. More than one hundred residents showed up for that hearing. Research had to be done regarding location, design, equipment, safety regulations, and liability. In September of 1999 the committee, along with the endorsement of the Parks and Recreation Commission, presented their plan to the Manchester Board of Directors. Subsequently, the Board of Directors put the proposal out to referendum and in November of 1999, Manchester residents voted overwhelmingly in favor of a new skate park.

When the Manchester skatepark originally opened in 2001 the Town charged a \$30 fee for an annual skatepark membership. Recently the Town decided to decrease that fee and include the use of the skatepark with our "facility use pass" which costs \$10 per year for anyone under the age of 18 (\$50 for 18 and older, \$100 per year for non-residents). We believe that the fee would continue to provide the members with a sense of ownership in the park and provide funding to help pay for staff and maintenance costs as well as eliminate the additional cost that skatepark users were having to pay for a special "skatepark pass".

In the early planning stages of the skatepark the volunteer committees biggest concerns were the safety, supervision and liability issues. In 1999 the committee recommended that the Manchester Skatepark be fenced and supervised by Recreation staff. Recent research and the results from the skatepark query submitted through CRPA in November 2004 have provided us with direction in our decision that we should continue our practice of offering a fenced in and supervised skatepark.

We believe that supervision offers benefits that outweigh the costs. The activities at your park can be observed, problems can be addressed as they happen, and members demonstrating irresponsible behavior can be removed immediately. Secondly, those using a park that is supervised are less likely to cause problems. Park supervisors should be diligent about requiring waivers and proper protective gear and then monitor that this gear is being worn by park users. Supervised parks can also receive more support from the community; often community members feel supervision will prevent an adverse effect on their neighborhood.

We also believe that by providing staff supervision we are able to build a rapport with the members and offer camps, lessons and special events that fit their needs. In the past 4 years we have hosted skate camps, skate lessons, skate parties and skate competitions in a safe environment for residents of all ages. A nominal admission fee can also help pay for these associated costs of supervision and maintenance.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY:

22 municipalities took part in the skatepark query submitted through the CRPA yahoo groups list serve.

14 municipalities charge a fee for the use of their skatepark, 8 do not charge for use.

20 municipalities fence in their skatepark, 1 has partial fencing and 1 does not have any fencing

14 municipalities supervise their skateparks (3 operated by YMCA staff), 8 do not supervise their skatepark, 1 has an additional 24 hour camera for monitoring and 1 is supervised by trained volunteers over the age of 18.

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SKATEPARK SURVEY (October 2004)

TOWN	PARK FENCED IN?	PARK SUPERVISED?	PARK FEE?
BRANFORD	Yes	Most of the time. 24 hour camera also.	Free: residents. \$5: non-residents.
BRIDGEPORT	Yes	Yes (operated by YMCA)	Yes (operated by YMCA)
BRIDGEWATER, MA	Yes	No	Free
CHESHIRE	Yes	Yes	\$75/year: residents. \$150: non-residents
EAST HADDAM	Yes	Yes	Will institute fee (New park).
EAST HARTFORD	Yes	No	Free
ENFIELD	Yes	No	Free
FARMINGTON	Yes	Yes	\$75: Individual; \$100: family \$100: non-res. Ind.; \$175: non-res. Fam \$2 day pass; \$3 weekend day pass \$3 day pass NR; \$5 weekend day pass NR
GLASTONBURY	Yes	Yes	Yes
GROTON	Yes	No	Free
GUILFORD	Yes	Yes	\$50/year: resident. \$75: non-resident Day pass: \$2: resident. \$4: non-resident.
HEBRON	Yes	Yes	Yes
MANCHESTER	Yes	Yes	\$10/year: resident. \$50: non-resident. Day pass: \$2: resident. \$2: non-resident.
MILFORD	Yes	Yes (operated by YMCA)	\$40/year (probable fee). (New Park 2005)
NEWINGTON	Yes – partially	No	No
NEW HAVEN	No	No	Free
ROCKY HILL	Yes	No	Yes – TBD (New park).
SIMSBURY	Yes	Yes	\$2 daily fee
SOMERS	Yes	Yes – volunteers over age 18 w/CPR, 1 st aid	\$25/year: resident. \$40: non-resident. Day pass: \$3: resident. \$5: non-resident.
STRATFORD	Yes – only 3 foot	Yes (operated by YMCA)	\$18 registration fee; \$5 per session
WESTPORT	Yes	Yes	\$175/year: resident. \$100/half season. Day pass: \$6 week, \$8 weekend (resident); \$8 weekday, \$10 weekend (non-resident).
WINDSOR	Yes	No	Free