

## 9. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENTS

#### **TOWN HALL**

##### ***Existing Conditions***

The original town Hall, located on town Hall Road, suffered a fire in 1888. The building was rebuilt shortly thereafter and continues to house the town administrative services. Recent improvements to the building include replacing the roof in 1979, installing vinyl siding and insulation in 1981, and repainting the interior and hall floor .

The selectmen 's office houses a part time selectmen's clerk, a full time administrative assistant, and the 3 selectmen when they are there.

The tax collector/town clerk's office houses the full time tax collect or/town clerk , part time deputy tax collector/town clerk, and part time office clerk.

In addition to these offices there are two small rooms: one is used for record storage and the other is used as an office to four functions . The treasurer occupies one desk, while the health officer, the building inspectors, and the welfare agent share the other. Adjacent to these rooms is a multipurpose open area of 12 ft. X 24 ft. and a limited kitchen facility with a closet that serves as the town pantry. On the second floor is an auditorium with a stage, a small room used for storage, and a small meeting room.

The town conducts most public meetings in town Hall. The notable exceptions are school board meetings, annual town meeting and elections . The auditorium is limited in capacity due to the lack of a sprinkler system. No final plans or figures for the sprinkler system are available at this time.

Although off-street parking has been increased and is sufficient for employees and general business, it is still inadequate for well-attended meetings. Land constrain s limit the opportunities for building and parking expansion

##### ***Recent Improvements***

- The copula was refurbished .
- The building has been brought up to A D.A standards, including the allowance for the use of the two upstairs back rooms for public meeting . Also an important addition was the upstairs unisex bathroom which allows the further use of upstairs . Fu rther, the anteroom off the upstairs bath has new electric power for the cable operators for their cameras etc. The two downstairs baths were completely re-plumbed during A D.A renovations.
- The parking lot was expanded.

## ***Recommendations***

Plans exist for the expansion of the town Hall building. The plans have not been implemented.

- The center hall is large enough to accommodate an elevator or chair lift
- The Main Hall upstairs could have had a partial work/study area creating another level (mezzanine) without disturbing the stage area and in keeping with the design.
- The back rooms could be redesigned to allow for planning board and town clerk's offices, allowing for more rooms downstairs. The selectmen could then move to the former clerk's office, expanding where the wall was torn down.
- The parking lot was not enlarged to the boundary of the property. This could be done and a driveway added around the building to provide more parking on the other side. The State has given the town driveway access **OK**, (one way in, one way out). The town could negotiate with the Wrobles to purchase their upper piece of land. They do not have the road frontage required to develop, but it is adjacent to Town Hall land.

## ***FIRE DEPARTMENT***

### ***Existing Conditions***

Newton is served by a fire department composed of approximately 40 on-call firefighters and EMTs. The fire chief, two deputies, and a civil defense coordinator direct the personnel. All equipment is housed at one of two locations: the Central Station on Route 108 or the sub-station on West Main Street, which is part of the Horace Williams Community Center.

The Central Station was built in the early 1950's with additions in late 1967 and in 1985. Meetings take place on the second floor of the Central Station, which also houses the communications center. The communications system at the Central Fire Station, most of which was provided to the town by Public Service Energy plant in Seabrook, is capable of servicing fire, police, and civil defense. The second floor is not handicapped-accessible and does not have an emergency exit. The doors on the station cannot handle a larger fire truck. The facilities are in good condition and the Central Station can be expanded on additional, adjacent land.

The Newton Junction sub-station is privately owned by the Newton Junction Baptist Church. It is connected to a small Community Hall. This facility is in good condition and, in conjunction with the central station, is an adequate supplement for the long-term protection of public safety.

### ***Equipment***

The following is a list of town-owned fire-fighting and Emergency Response equipment.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Condition</i>	<i>Replacement Year</i>
Engine 1	1975	Fair	2024
Engine 2	1991		2016
Forestry 3	1988		2013
Tanker 4	1985	Rehab in 1997	2010
Tanker 5	1994		2019
Rescue van	1990's		2022

It is anticipated that current fire department equipment and buildings are adequate to safely serve a population of approximately 7,000 residents.

### ***Recommendations***

- The town should set aside funds for a central safety complex to house all fire, rescue, and police departments.
- Due to the high cost of equipment, monies for future purchases should be set aside annually in a Capital Reserve Fund.
- Evaluate concerns with the Newton Junction fire station.

## ***POLICE DEPARTMENT***

### ***Existing Conditions***

Newton is served 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, by coverage comprised of a full-time Police Chief, 3 full-time officers, 10 part-time officers and a full-time secretary. The Department participates in a mutual aid agreement with the towns of Kingston, East Kingston, South Hampton and Plaistow.

The building that houses the police department is 1100 square feet and is over 20 years old. The police department has outgrown the existing structure and is in dire need of more space.

### ***Equipment***

- marked police cruiser in good condition
- marked police cruiser in good condition
- marked police cruiser in excellent condition

The radio communication system consists of a base station in need of replacement, and one mobile cruiser radio, in addition to new radios with a 10-year life expectancy in the two newest cruisers. The police department relies on the Rockingham County Centralized Dispatch service. Portable radios have been provided by Seabrook Station and are in excellent condition, although the time has come when Seabrook will no longer be providing communication equipment and the town will be required to replace these items as they wear out.

### ***Future Needs***

- The building will not pass standards required of OSHA or any police accrediting process. A public safety complex building where police, medical and fire can share facilities as much as possible is probably the most sensible approach for this size community.
- Computerization needs must be addressed soon. Our current system is no longer able to provide the data required by Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR). Therefore our statistics are not being provided to the State Police for inclusion in crime reports.

### ***Other Public Safety Concerns***

The town of Newton has recently experienced several widespread losses of power for extended periods of time. The town needs to have emergency generators, which would be utilized to provide electrical power for key buildings in town. The Fire Department, the Police Department and one of the schools should be equipped. The schools could provide emergency housing for our very young and very old, who always suffer the most during these emergencies. Military surplus may be able to provide these to the town at a very low cost.

### ***Recommendations***

- Efforts should continue to consider a public safety complex to house fire, medical, and police departments.
- Serious consideration should be given to providing the necessary support to allow the police department to become accredited. By achieving either state certification or national accreditation, the town's insurance rate will be reduced significantly. This will result in meaningful savings to the taxpayers of Newton.
- There is an urgent need for emergency power generation for the Police Department (to ensure proper operation of critical functions such as communications) and at least one of the schools (to provide emergency shelter for residents). This will require appraisal of the existing power systems in the selected buildings; possible changes and/or upgrades to those systems to make them compatible with an emergency generator; and research into low-cost sources of generators (possibly government surplus).
- Community policing has proven to be very successful throughout the country. Even small towns like Newton can benefit from that philosophy. The more the community and the police can do to develop a partnership, the better the law enforcement service will be. We need to train our officers in that state-of-the-art law enforcement principle. We also need to educate our citizens in the value of participating in a community policing philosophy.

### ***PUBLIC WORKS***

Newton does not have a Public Works Department. The town elects a Road Agent who is responsible for road maintenance on an on-call basis. The town contracts out for snow plowing, sanding, salting and other road maintenance activities of town owned roads. The

Roads and Transportation section of this plan details which roads are State owned and maintained .

### ***Recommendations***

- Public works should include radio communication so that police officers and fire fighters can direct sand trucks and plows where they are needed.
- The town's roadway system will require extensive work. With a rise in population comes increased traffic on our existing roads. We have numerous roads, both State and town, which are dangerous and confusing to motorists. There are two locations where it is impossible for a school bus to pass by safely or without violating state statutes (Whittier Street Extension and the intersection of Pond Street at Route 108).
- The costs of constructing and equipping a Department of Public Works town Garage should be evaluated against the policy of sub-contracting.

## **SCHOOL SYSTEM**

### **HISTORY AND OVERVIEW**

In the first two centuries following the incorporation of the town of Newton, the children of the town were educated, at various times, at the A Marion Hatch Building, the Farmer-in-the-De Il, the Village School (which later became the Gale Library), and the original structure of Memorial School. High school students attended Haverhill High School and other area schools on a tuition basis.

In 1965, Newton joined neighboring Kingston to form the Sanborn Regional School District. When the District was created, the buildings and grounds of Sanborn Seminary (a private secondary school founded in 1883) became the high school campus for the district. At that time, ownership of the schools in Newton and Kingston were transferred to the new cooperative school district.

The Sanborn Regional School District provides grades one through twelve, with no public kindergarten. Sanborn also maintains a special needs preschool and kindergarten, which includes , on a tuition basis, some students without special needs. The district's two towns in Kingston and a middle school in Newton . Each town has its own elementary school, under the direction and control of the school district. Memorial School is in Newton and Bakie School is in Kingston. Students from Fremont have attended the high school for many years, but in 1997 the School District voted to discontinue its contract with Fremont, and their participation will end with the graduating class of 2000.

The district is unusual in New Hampshire because it has its own School Administrative Unit (SAU # 17) and a single school board. Sanborn also has the distinction of being the first school district in New Hampshire to have all of its schools separately accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (as of 1989). In 1997, the principal of the high school, Vic Daly, was named Administrator of the Year by the New Hampshire State Student Council Association. Sanborn has also received three Edies (Excellence in Education awards).

Sanborn accommodates its student's diverse needs with services which include enrichment programs, guidance services, special education services, a remedial reading and mathematics programs, and services for limited or non-English speaking students . Many of the district's graduates go on to attend post-secondary institutions.

In the 1997-98 school year, there were 1863 students (including tuition students and the pre-school program). The district employed approximately 217 people: eleven administrators (including four assistant principals who work directly with students), 28 support staff (secretaries, payroll clerks, custodians, maintenance workers), and 178 staff members working directly with students (teachers, librarians, aides, nurses, guidance counselors, etc.).

### **GROWTH IN STUDENT POPULATION**

Table 24 shows data for the years since the last Master Plan update . While the total population of the school district has increased at a fairly steady rate of around 1% per year<sup>2</sup>, the increases in the student population vary more widely from year to year. This unpredictability in student population helps contributes to the school district's problems in creating budgets and planning student services. This is made more difficult by the need to develop plans nearly one full year in advance.

Our school population has been increasing at a much greater rate than our general population. Since New Hampshire currently<sup>3</sup> relies almost entirely on local property taxes for school funding, this demographic shift has serious implications for future planning.

The two towns of Newton and Kingston see very different financial effects from any particular vote on school funding issues . In 1994, a group of citizens formed the Feasibility Study Committee to explore the feasibility of Newton withdrawing from the Sanborn District. The resulting report recommended withdrawal and a warrant article to that effect was submitted for town vote at the 1995 Town Meeting. The article failed by ten votes out of 354. Because of this close vote, it is important for Newton to continue to assess the benefits and drawbacks of belonging to the Sanborn District.

At the time of this writing, the state legislature has not adopted a solution to the Claremont lawsuit requiring a different mechanism for school funding. Whether the state adopts changes in how education is funded or successfully asks voters to endorse the current system as constitutional, Newton should be prepared to reassess whether the current Sanborn cooperative best meets the needs of students, the community in general, and the taxpayers.

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<sup>2</sup> The large increase in 1990 is due to corrected figures based on the 1990 US Census, and does not necessarily reflect a one-year increase, but the use of estimated data for some or all of the preceding ten years.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Other concerns* section on page 9-9 for discussion of possible changes to this situation.

Table 24: School Population Growth

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population (Kingston and Newton)</i>	<i>Total/ Students (excluding tuition students)</i>	<i>%Average Daily Member- ship from Newton</i>	<i>% increase Students from previous year</i>	<i>% increase Students since 1988</i>	<i>% increase Population from previous year</i>	<i>% increase Population since 1988</i>
1987	9466	1430	41.9	1.4	--	1.1	
1988	9536	1484	40.5	3.8	--	0.7	
1989	9583	1500	39.7	1.1	1.1	0.5	0.5
1990	9784	1509	38.7	0.6	1.7	2.1	2.6
1991	9902	1557	39.6	3.2	4.9	1.2	3.8
1992	10002	1577	38	1.3	6.3	1.0	4.9
1993	10106	1624	38.9	3.0	9.4	1.0	6.0
1994	10212	1644	39.9	1.2	10.8	1.0	7.1
1995	10338	1680	40.8	2.2	13.2	1.2	8.4
1996	10505	1714	40.7	2.0	15.5	1.6	10.2
1997	10992	1765	41.4	3.0	18.9	4.6	14.7

## ***FACILITIES AND SPACE***

During the past twenty years, the voters of Newton and Kingston have made an increased effort to provide additional classroom space for the schools. But 1998 finds the school district still facing an urgent need for renovations and/or additional space at the Memorial, Middle, and High schools. Balcie School, which is currently adequate, is at roughly 90% of capacity; any sudden surge of development in Kingston could create a need for additional space there.



**Table 25: Classroom Additions**

<i><b>Year</b></i>	<i><b>Bakie</b></i>	<i><b>Memorial</b></i>	<i><b>Middle</b></i>	<i><b>High</b></i>
1974				Industrial arts Wing (built by students)
1978			New school built (100% federal funds)	
1982				New Wing
1982				renovated Main Building
1988	13 classrooms, cafeteria, kitchen	5 classrooms, gym, kitchen		
1995			8 classrooms, (loss of two offices and storage space) warming kitchen	

In addition to the need for regular classroom space in our schools, there is also a need for customized spaces. Especially at the middle and high school levels many subjects require classrooms with specialized wiring, ventilation, or storage areas to accommodate specific necessary equipment. Some subjects such as music or drama may need large or specially configured spaces. This is one area in which the district is lacking .

Another neglected area is administrative space. The voters have made space used by students a number one priority. Sometimes there can not be a clear differentiation between student space and administrative space. Classrooms are not the only student-use areas of a school; rooms used for testing, tutoring, or counseling are actually more for student than administrative use.

Library space should be classified separately. The libraries at Memorial and Middle Schools were designed around twenty years ago and have not been enlarged since, despite major increases in student populations.

As the school district ages the amount of files and records that must be maintained increases. This, in turn, increases the need for additional space for storage of the filing cabinets to hold all the documents .

Small towns such as Newton also need to look at the other community purposes which a school building can serve, and make plans to meet those needs. The specialized spaces discussed above can serve community needs if they are properly located in the school building. Currently, the Sanborn District has difficulty allowing easy public use of school facilities, because the existing buildings do not permit public access to be limited to particular area. With the whole building open, there is a security problem. Public use of school buildings, even in Newton, is beginning to be associated with vandalism, however minor .

Newton voters should assess future school buildings by two standards:

- how well it meets the educational needs of all students



- how well it benefits the general public.

### ***RECENT ACTIONS TAKEN:***

- 1998 - voters approved a \$275,000 warrant article to begin selected portions of the necessary ADA work on the high school campus.
- 1997 - School board Long Range Planning committee developed a plan for tracking data for systematic identification of space needs.
- 1998 - School Board LRP completed a Growth Enrollment Study which includes projections of future enrollment. Based on this report and the sudden growth in Newton, the board has formed two ad hoc committees to analyze the space needs at the elementary schools and the high school campus and to develop plans for meeting those needs.

### ***OTHER CONCERNS***

Because of the strong impact which school planning issues have on the taxpayers of the Newton, is extremely important that these issues are taken into consideration by the planning board.

In New Hampshire, the school district budget accounts for between 80% and 95% of any particular town's tax burden. For towns that are members of a cooperative school district, this means that planning decisions made in other district towns affect all towns in the district. A first step would be to provide official channels for sharing information and providing feedback among the various agencies of the towns in the district. Newton and Kingston, sharing a single district and SAU, are in a unique position to attempt working together in this way. Coordination of the parts of the town plans that impact the school district and the tax rate would allow the school district's long-range planning process to yield clearer and more accurate results.

It is imperative that the planning, selectmen, and school boards in both towns begin working together to coordinate their long-term planning. This will be especially important during the coming year (1999) the State of New Hampshire legislature changes school funding methods in response to the Claremont decision, and the more recent *Gordon Allen v. New Hampshire* (which deals with cooperative school-district apportionment of costs).

It is also imperative that the town of Newton, and its elected officials (independent of the school district), be observant and mindful of the impact of these changes in school funding, to be prepared to make wise decisions regarding Newton's future.

### ***Recommendations***

- Coordinate planning with the school board and the Kingston planning board.
- Identify parcels of land suitable for future school use.
- Periodically reassess Newton's participation in the Sanborn Regional School District, to ensure that it is still the best educational and financial option for the town and its children.

- Research legal means for controlling growth, such as impact fees. Since these are often challenged in court, this will require budgeted money for professional and legal assistance.
- Coordinate district and town purchasing for improved pricing.

## OTHER TOWN FUNCTIONS

### ***REFUSE DISPOSAL AND UTILITIES***

#### ***Existing Conditions***

The town of Newton has no municipal water supply or sewage treatment system. The town maintains the Newton Solid Waste Transfer Station/Brush disposal site (WMD Permit No. DES-SW-90 -012). The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) grants the town of Newton authorization to burn wood and yard wastes on PIP No.: 651. The permit is based on NHDES Air Resources Division and Waste Management Division administrative rules. The permit requires annual renewal.

The transfer site is located off Dugway Road at Tax Map location 016-01-002. The Selectmen of the town of Newton, or their designee, are the administrators of the Solid Waste Transfer Station. The Solid Waste Transfer Station is overseen by a town appointed employee. A town Ordinance with 18 regulations is used to govern the Solid Waste Transfer Station. It was last amended in March 1996 by the Board of Selectmen.

The Solid Waste Transfer Station is located on a former land fill. The town has contracted R.W Gillespie & Associates Inc. to test the site. Wells in the groundwater management zone are tested for 8 metals identified under the Safe Water Drinking Act. R.W Gillespie & Associates Inc. in their 4/16/98 report recommend semi-annual groundwater monitoring in the fall and spring.

The town contracts with private trash companies to haul the waste from the transfer station to the Haverhill or North Andover incinerators. Minimal recycling is performed at the transfer station. Newspapers and glass are recycled for weight reduction and cost savings.

Newton is one of the towns comprising the Southeastern Rockingham County Solid Waste Management District. In July 1985, these towns organized formally as a District under NH RSA 149-M. The District operates under a set of by-laws. The Newton Town Hall has served as meeting headquarters. The primary charge of the District is the completion of a planning document outlining long-range disposal plans for solid waste.

**Table 26: Waste Tonnage**

<b><i>1997 Waste Tonnage</i></b>	
Refuse	1581.35 tons
Newspaper	51.82 tons
Bulky Items	430.22 tons

### ***Future Needs***

Factors to be considered for future recommendations :

- The possible closure of local incinerators may have an impact on waste removal costs.
- The increase in population will also increase the waste removal costs .
- The potential for more stringent air quality regulations from DES may eliminate the burn permit.

### ***Recommendations***

- The town should work towards a regional solution to waste transfer costs.
- The town should enforce town transfer station regulations, in particular regulation numbers 2, 11, 12 and 16. See Town Ordinance for Newton Solid Waste Disposal facility. Adherence to the regulations will help control cost by eliminating non-compliant waste disposal.
- The town should adhere to State PIP 651.
- Review the hauling bid process to seek more cost-effective waste removal.
- Add to current recycling including scrap metals to reduce both short-term disposal cost and long term cost on the environment.
- The town should keep as an option other methods of refuse disposal, such as curbside pickup.
- The town should consider adding yard leaf waste composting to relieve stress on the wetlands .

## ***CEMETERIES***

### ***Existing Conditions***

The cemeteries of Newton are served by a board of three trustees who are elected to three-year terms. Newton is responsible for four cemeteries, Willow Grove, Highland Street, Currierville, and town Hall Cemetery.

- The Willow Grove Cemetery is located on Whittier St. It is an active cemetery with fewer than 20 lots available . Land is available for expansion provided the town will pay to have it surveyed . The Trustees added a new pump this year.
- The Highland Cemetery is located on Highland Ave. It is an active cemetery that has just been expanded with some lots available . The Trustees have planned to fence the new area .
- The town Hall Cemetery is located off Main St. behind town Hall. It is inactive. The Trustees plan to repair the stone wall this year.
- The Currierville Cemetery located on Dugway Rd. is inactive and shared with So. Hampton.

- The Union Cemetery is located on New Boston Rd. It is a privately owned cemetery. There are lots available.

The town is responsible for perpetual care at all town cemeteries whether active or inactive . Current plot fees are \$100.00 per plot, \$50.00 perpetual care.

### ***Recommendations***

- It would be in best interest of the town to expand the Willow Grove Cemetery.
- Research what costs the cemetery fees were originally intended to cover, determine if these are still appropriate, and develop a new fee schedule based on updated values.

### ***LIBRARY***

Before 1977, the library was located in what is now called the A Marion Hatch building, a former school building. At this time the library had a limited number of books, employed only one librarian, and was open less than 20 hours a week. The library has expanded greatly since that time.

The Gale Library moved in 1977 to the former Village School building, built in 1907. By 1986 it employed 2 librarians and was open 30 hours a week. At that time it housed 13,000 volumes and conducted a variety of educational programs. The budget grew from approximately \$9000 a year in 1977 to over \$30,000 in 1986.

Recent upgrades include:

- Installation of a handicapped restroom and an exterior ramp
- Repair and painting of the fire escape
- Paving the parking lot to house about 10 cars

### ***Existing Conditions***

Circulation has increased 63% in 7 years . (15,153 in 1990 to 24,000 in 1997).

The 1998 budget is \$73,292. The town has placed money in the capital reserve fund regularly, with a current total of close to \$70,000.

### ***Staff and Hours***

The Library has seven paid employees: Library Director, Children's Librarian, and 5 Library Assistants.

The Library has expanded open hours to 32 per week.

Mon. & Wed.	noon to 8 P.M.
Tues. & Sat.	10 A.M. to 2 P.M.
Fri.	10 A.M. to 6 P.M.

### ***Programs & Services***

Story Hour

Little Red Wagon

Summer Reading Programs

Angel Tree

Stories in the Park

Open House/Art Exhibit

Book Review Circle

First Grader's Day

*Library Collection*

**Print materials**

Books	22,273
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Periodicals subscriptions	46
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**Non-print materials**

Books on Tape	632
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Video Cassettes	334
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*Computer Integration*

Circulation Stations	2
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Online Catalogs	2
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Public Access to Internet	1
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Multimedia Workstation	1
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*Friends of the Gale Library*

The Friends have continually supported the library with fundraisers and community programs. Their efforts have produced extras for the library from vacuum cleaners to fax machines and printers. They are greatly appreciated.

***Space Needs Study***

In 1977, the library occupied only the first floor. In 1981, a Future Directions Committee was formed, resulting in expansion up to the second floor. It was known at that time that the floor was not strong enough to support a library's load and the suggestion was made to line the perimeter with the stacks, and install a single center steel post. Growth has continued and twelve years later the problem of space is unavoidable .

In 1996, a warrant article was passed (#7) in which \$5000.00 was appropriated to "report, study, and survey the Gale Library". The purpose was to form a committee to study the increasing problem of lack of space for new books, office work, meeting room, and general study area.

The committee began with a citizen survey. Following that, they looked at the possibility of adding on to the present building, starting with a structural analysis. \* A surveyor was hired to survey the plot of land the library sits on. The committee visited nearby libraries

that recently expanded. A library consultant was hired to help to inform and direct the committee in planning a larger, more efficient and modern library.

\*The structural analysis, although stating that the building was in good repair, revealed that a basic structural problem existed on all three levels. A library building code is rated 150 pounds per square foot. According to the report, the existing building structure, built as a school, falls significantly short of the code. It advises immediate repair.

### ***Future Needs***

The Space Needs committee has worked for two years now and has produced a needs-assessment report. The 50 page report, submitted by Patience Jackson, Library Consultant, (see Needs Assessment and Building Program for the Gale Library of Newton, NH, available at the library) deals extensively with this topic.

### ***Recommendation***

- The Building Program recommends a building of 9,865- 10,256 gross square feet, to house 38,932 volumes, 53 seats, space for up to 12 computers for both adults and children, and an adaptable large meeting room that can be divided for a multitude of purposes to meet both library and community needs.
- Continue the Library Space Needs work and develop a timeline and plan for acquiring a new site (if necessary), and a Capital Improvement Plan for raising the funds.

## ***RECREATION***

### ***Purpose***

As set forth in RSA 674:1, the Recreation section of the Master Plan is designed to guide development in a coordinated and harmonious manner so as to "promote health, safety, order, convenience, prosperity, for the general welfare". The recreation plan is one of eleven elements of the municipal master plan, as outlined in RSA 674.2. The statute requires that the recreation plan show "existing recreation facilities and address future recreation needs".

Newton maintains a recreation commission, which was established in 1974 by town meeting. Members of the recreation commission (6 regular, 1 selectman, and 2 alternates) are appointed by the selectmen and serve for a three-year term on an unpaid, volunteer basis.

The role and responsibilities of the recreation commission are defined in RSA 35-B:3 and RSA 35-B:5. Basically, the commission is granted the power to acquire and hold property, contract for services, charge fees for the use of its facilities and programs, make and enforce rules, contract for joint operation of the recreation program, and manage property under RSA 35-B:3.

Recreation and recreational areas provide many benefits to the community, as described below:

- **Aesthetic** - They maintain open space and greenery. They offer scenery, clean air, pleasant surroundings, and other aesthetic and environmental qualities that make communities desirable.
- **Economic** - They expand opportunity and create jobs. They can favorably affect property values bringing greater tax revenue to the community. They attract tourists and increase spending which stimulates the local economy.
- **Education** - They afford an opportunity for learning about nature, the environment, culture and history. The recreational activities that take place in parks help to develop interpersonal skills and encourage cooperation and teamwork.
- **Personal** - They offer the individual opportunities for physical fitness, happiness, satisfaction of accomplishment, creativity, competition, learning, social relationships, and character development. They provide a place to retreat for solitude or personal reflection.
- **Social** - They make a space for community gatherings, engaging in recreation, and socializing. They provide opportunities for families to be together in the outdoors and neighbors to get to know one another. They help to instill a sense of pride and order to a neighborhood or community.

### ***Town Recreation Areas***

#### ***Greenie Park***

Located on Heath Street, this park was deeded to the town in 1971. It covers an area of 30.6 acres of which approximately 5 acres are developed. In 1991 by warrant article (\$65,000) and donations, Heath Street Recreation Park was re-developed to its current state. At that time it was dedicated as "Greenie Park" in recognition of Herman "Greenie" Green. Greenie was a very well respected and admired individual who developed youth baseball in his own back yard before the town had its own ball field.

The park has an official size Little League field, one youth softball field, one basketball court, one tennis court, a paved area for rollerblading which is currently being used for skateboarding, a playground for tots, portable toilets (seasonal), a parking area and a concession/ storage building.

#### ***Town Beach***

The beach was deeded to the town in 1976 and is located on Wenmarks Grove Road. It covers an area of 9.94 acres of which approximately 1.5 acres are developed. This facility has a sandy beach area, swim area with raft, a partially wooded picnic area with picnic tables and outdoor grills, a small parking area and portable toilets. The Recreation Commission employs a swim instructor, swim aides and lifeguards during the summer season.

### ***Recreation Programs and Events***

Events Include:

- Memorial Day Parade,



- Summer Swim Program
- summer events and trips
- seniors' trips

Some events are sponsored in cooperation with other groups, such as Newton Day, Halloween Party and library events.

The Recreation Commission takes responsibility for some of the recreation available; however, there are many other entities that offer various forms of recreation. This is only a partial list.

### ***Other Public Facilities***

- Memorial School (1 gym, 1 open field, basketball, playground)
- Middle School (1 gym, 1 softball field, 1 soccer field, 1 field hockey field, cross country running path)
- Bakie School (mostly used by Kingston residents)
- Sanborn High (mostly used by Kingston residents)
- Boat ramp (Country Pond)
- Country Pond (water sports and boating.)
- Peanut Trail (Whittier St. to Merrimac, Mass.) riding trail and handicapped-accessible hiking trail)
- Richard Sargent Management (total of 355 ac. set aside for hunting, managed by the state of NH).

### ***Private Facilities and Activities***

- St. Jean Field (1 Little League field located in So. Kingston)
- Country Pond Fish and Game (indoor hall and shooting range)
- Horse riding stables
- Dance studios
- Martial arts studios
- Art studios

## **Map 11: Town of Newton Recreation**

### **Recreational/Social Clubs**

- Silvertops (55 years and over seniors)
- Country Pond Fish and Game
- Boys Scouts and Cub Scouts
- Girl Scouts and Brownies
- 4-H club
- Newton Baseball/Softball Association
- Newton Basketball Association
- Sanborn Youth Soccer
- Nor-Rock football
- Babe Ruth
- Sanborn School sports and activities
- Sanborn School adult enrichment programs

### ***Recommendations***

The town has experienced an increase in participation of its programs, partly due to an increase in school aged participants. Based on the number of available building lots and the projected growth in population, we can expect an even greater demand for programs and facilities.

- Presently the town is in great need of soccer/ field hockey fields, baseball/softball fields, basketball courts and a skateboarding facility. There may also be a need for a football field - youth football participants have to travel out of town, which is inconvenient.
- There is a need for an indoor facility that could be used year round simply to gather, such as an auditorium.
- The town needs areas set aside for walking, sitting, and talking with other community members, such as a town common.
- With increasingly busy lifestyles, it is becoming more difficult to recruit volunteers. The recreation commission is responsible for making program and facility decisions. They are not always able nor should they be expected to carry on as facilitators of recreation. One possible solution is to hire a part time director to work under the direction of the commission. Another suggestion to ease the problem of the dwindling volunteer pool is to allow the recreation commission to hire a handy person to perform simple tasks. Insurance requirements set by town policy no longer allows for this.
- The main stumbling block in meeting future needs will be acquiring a parcel of land large enough to allow facility growth as the town grows. Location, soil type, accessibility, layout and other factors make the acquisition even more difficult.

Presently we are experiencing an increase in housing development that is lessening the stock of potential parcels, further exacerbating the likelihood of accomplishing this goal.

It will take a tremendous effort on the part of a few individuals and/or a generous gift from a landowner to assure that future needs are met. This particular issue should not be put off; the town is already experiencing inadequate facilities and a much greater demand for their use.

- The town must carefully plan in order to address the needs of a wide segment of the population with respect to age, income, degrees of physical ability, and cultural background. It has the financial resources, capabilities, legal tools, and resources to acquire, develop, and maintain recreation programs and facilities. It must provide continuity of services and assure permanent accessibility to recreation. It has the ability to equitably distribute the cost of recreation through the property tax system. The citizens expect the town to provide recreation and are willing to pay for it through their taxes.