

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This report presents the results of the management assessment of the Jamestown Department of Parks and Recreation ("Department") conducted by the University of Massachusetts Boston's Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management ("Center"). This section introduces the analysis – outlining principal objectives and how the analysis was conducted – and presents an Executive Summary.

AUDIT SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The project team conducted a comprehensive organization and management analysis of the Department's existing operations, service levels, infrastructure management, organizational structures and staffing levels. Additionally, the Center conducted three public input sessions and administered a survey to obtain input on programmatic services. The goal of the analysis was to be fact-based and include all aspects of service provision by the Department. The analysis focused on:

- Organizational structure, including an analysis of the appropriate grouping of functions and activities related to parks maintenance and the provision of recreational services.
- Effectiveness of staffing levels including, but not be limited to, staff assignments, workload, and cost-effectiveness of service levels and service delivery; and,
- Benchmarks and other objective indicators of program effectiveness.

To fulfill this scope, the project team:

- Developed an understanding of the key issues impacting the Parks and Recreation Department. The project team conducted interviews with Department management and staff, as well as Town management, current and former Town employees, and residents. Interviews focused on goals and objectives, management systems, the use of technology, the levels of service provided by the Department, the resources available to provide those services, etc.
- Developed a descriptive profile of the Parks and Recreation Department. The project team interviewed department staff to document the current organization of services, the structure and functions of the Department, budgets, workload data, management systems, inventory of the infrastructure, etc.
- Compared Parks and Recreation Department programs and practices to 'best management practices.' The best management practices included comparisons to the American Public Works Association's, *Public Works Management Practices Manual*, American Parks and Recreation Association, and the experience of the project team.
- Evaluated the staffing, organization structure, and service levels in the Parks and Recreation

Department. This included interviews with key staff to develop an understanding of the current service delivery model, evaluation of the adequacy of current service levels, work practices, work planning and scheduling systems, productivity and staffing levels, the plan of organization, and asset management.

OVERVIEW

The objective of this assessment was to identify opportunities for improvement in the operational, organizational and economic efficiency of the Department and practicable opportunities for enhancing the quality of its product and services.

1. The Parks and Recreation Department displays a number of strengths.

An organizational and management analysis by its nature focuses on opportunities for improvement. However, there are a number of strengths in the Parks and Recreation Department, as well as in the Town that supports the Department. Examples of these strengths are portrayed below:

- Town residents display a strong sense of involvement and ownership in their parks and the recreational services provided by the Parks and Recreation Department;
- The Parks and Recreation Director, Program Supervisor and Teen Center Coordinator solicit input and feedback regarding participants' desires for new programs, and satisfaction with others;
- The Department attempts to work with multiple community groups to accommodate their recreational needs in an equitable fashion. The recent closure of the Country Club at the Golf Course has made this effort more challenging, however, there appears to be an honest attempt to work with groups such as Bridges, the Community Theater Group, Conanicut Island Art Association, the String Ensemble Group, and others, all while providing daily scheduled activities at the Recreation Center;
- The Department solicits sponsorships from local businesses to support many of its annual events; and,
- The Department provides many popular events, such as the Jack-O-Lantern Jog, Summer Concert Series, and others.

These strengths provide a sound basis for further enhancements.

2. There are significant improvement opportunities for the Department going forward.

The Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department is typical of many small parks and recreational service providers across the country, in that it has provided services in the same way, with similar numbers of staff, for many years. Parks, grounds and beaches are opened, cleaned and maintained in accordance with plans, procedures and schedules that are largely undocumented, but well known to the staff.

Similarly, recreational services are provided with relatively little variation, although they may be altered and enhanced based on informal comments received by participants. When faced with new challenges, these organizations tend to confront them within the context of historical operations.

The project team has recommended that the Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department incorporate new, and more formalized, management and planning techniques that will result in greater accountability for results. Further, the project team has recommended that the Town engage in a formal strategic planning process that incorporates input from a broad range of residents. This strategic plan will help guide the Department's future actions and responses to changing needs, and will ensure that programming is a reflection of community desires. In short, the Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department, like many others, can no longer plan its future service provision based on a linear projection of what has happened in the past, but must change and adapt to changes in residents' needs.

The project team received excellent input from many sources during the course of the project, and has related the results within the following pages. However, the provision of the optimum menu of recreational services cannot solely be a product of a consulting report. It must be a collaborative effort by the residents of the town, in concert with the staff who provide them. One of the singularly fortunate attributes for the Town of Jamestown is that there is a knowledgeable and engaged populace with no lack of excellent ideas to share, and a willingness to participate.

With these considerations in mind, the project team has, in the following pages, made recommendations to enhance the operations of the Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department. The over-arching themes for enhanced operations fall into the following categories:

- Use of information systems and technologies;
- Management and planning efforts;
- Programmatic services;
- Facilities; and,
- Staffing and organization.

USE OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY

The Parks and Recreation Department, like many small departments, tends to focus its efforts primarily on the direct provision of services to its participants. With limited staff and budgets, this is understandable to a certain degree. However, the incorporation of information systems and other technologies can, once implemented, act as workforce multipliers by minimizing efforts related to repetitive and duplicate data entry, and facilitating the analysis of metrics such as cost of programs and services, accounting for fees, trends in participation – both on a demographic and programmatic basis, trends participant interests, as well as many others.

Interviews and observations by the project team during on-site activities indicated that the Parks and Recreation Department utilizes technology on a very limited scale. The Teen Center utilizes "Youth Services.net" to track attendance, however, the extent of technology use in the Department is otherwise limited to the use of electronic spreadsheets and word processing software.

MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING EFFORTS

The Parks and Recreation Department currently has no guiding structure in place to enable it to analyze, anticipate, plan or manage its work. Further, the Department lacks any asset management plan that identifies its infrastructure, its worth, its maintenance requirements, and the service levels and staffing resources required to maintain it. This is, in some respects, due to the lack of funding for such efforts, but is also related to the lack of managerial focus on these efforts.

Another element of management and planning efforts that should be a part of a well-functioning department is the establishment of performance measures and a reporting structure to ensure the accountability for the attainment of agreed-upon levels of service. This is absent in the Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department. The Department does issue an annual report that reflects certain workload metrics such as the numbers of broad numbers of participants in programs and activities. However, these are simple reflections of outputs, and without proper context, have no meaning to the reader. The real objective of performance measurement should be to report on the efficient and effective use of the resources utilized in attaining service level goals over time, and this is a lacking element of management and planning in the Department of Parks and Recreation currently.

PROGRAMMATIC SERVICES

As noted above, the recreational programs offered by the Department tend to be those that have been offered in the past, with the exception that if an instructor has an idea for a new program, the Department will explore it and, if successful, will continue the program. This is no small task as each program needs to be scheduled, instructors identified, participants registered, and any challenges that arise during the program addressed. However, due to the current day-to-day approach, there is no articulated overarching vision or philosophy related to the provision of recreational services. From the community input it became clear that many potential customers, such as those who do not participate in organized athletic activities and seniors, felt left out of the existing programs. Research is needed to determine the potential customer base and what services they might desire. This can be accomplished by reviewing data sources, such as census and public health data, and by surveying Jamestown residents and program participants.

FACILITIES

Indoor space in Jamestown is not sufficient for the types of programs that are currently ongoing, in addition to those desired by the community in the future. As a result, tension exists between different organizations that believe their space needs are not being met in favor of other groups. This situation has only been exacerbated by the recent closure of the second floor of the Country Club. The Town needs to prepare a long term plan for facility development that is based on a vision of the types of services it wishes to offer presently and in the future. Using the concept of "form follows function" would mean that the recreational and cultural programs should be identified first (aka, "function") and then buildings and sites designed second (aka, "form"). The attributes of different sites should also be taken into account, considering that while the golf course has space for parking, it is remote from the core downtown area where businesses are located that could benefit from foot traffic to recreational or

cultural activities.

STAFFING AND ORGANIZATION

At present, the Department has two significant areas of responsibility that are inherently different. This is the provision of recreational services and special events and the maintenance of parks, beaches, and Department-operated facilities. In many communities as they seek to be cost effective with operations, they look for organizational alignment that can also improve the quality of services. In the case of Jamestown, the project team recommends that the maintenance functions of the Parks and Recreation Department be moved to the Public Works Department. This will increase the number of resources, including staff and equipment, able to maintain open space and buildings in town, while also freeing up Department staff to focus on programmatic activities. In addition, it is recommended that senior services be added and the Department be renamed the Community Services Department. This will increase the opportunity for high quality programming to be offered for different generations of Jamestown residents and intergenerational activities to be increased.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Center has prepared this summary of the recommendations and their fiscal impacts contained in the report.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS						
<i>Organizational Study of the Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department</i>						
Page	Recommendation	Time Frame	Revenue Increase	Cost Increase	Cost Reduction	Capital Outlay
Information Systems and Technology						
11	The Department should acquire, or develop, a new software package that allows for on-line registration and records critical information regarding its program participants.	FY2015	NA	NA	NA	\$10,000 to \$20,000
12	The Parks and Recreation Department should enhance its website to provide both more information and more interactivity for visitors.	Begin Winter 2014	NA	NA	NA	NA
Management and Planning						
15	The Department should develop a set of performance measures against which it reports progress to the Town Manager on a periodic basis.	FY2015	NA	NA	NA	NA
16	The Department should engage in a strategic planning process that involves a wide segment of the Town.	Winter 2014 – Summer 2015	NA	NA	NA	NA
17	The Town should develop new job descriptions for each of the positions in the Parks and Recreation Department.	Spring 2014	NA	NA	NA	NA
18	The Finance Department should conduct random field audits of cash handling and night deposit	Immediate and ongoing	NA	NA	NA	NA

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS						
<i>Organizational Study of the Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department</i>						
Page	Recommendation	Time Frame	Revenue Increase	Cost Increase	Cost Reduction	Capital Outlay
	collections performed by personnel in the Parks and Recreation Department.					
Programmatic Services						
21	The Department should be much more strategic and visionary when developing a package of recreational programs.	Immediate and ongoing	NA	NA	NA	NA
23	The Department should establish targets for attendance at the Teen Center, with actual attendance be regularly monitored.	Immediate and ongoing	NA	NA	NA	NA
24	The Department should enhance communication about program offerings so that potential customers learn of programmatic offerings.	Immediate and ongoing	NA	NA	NA	NA
25	The Town should go through a process to determine what constitutes a "Town program"	Immediate	NA	NA	NA	NA
26	The Town should develop a standardized manner of compensating instructors of programs.	Immediate, for implementation in FY2015	NA	NA	NA	NA
Facilities						
27	The Town should explore constructing a cultural arts facility.	Begin engaging community members in gathering input in Fall-Winter 2014	NA	NA	NA	
28	The Town should identify uses and a design for the second floor of the Country Club that alleviate some of the space challenges faced at the Recreation Center currently.	Fall 2014	NA	NA	NA	

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS						
<i>Organizational Study of the Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department</i>						
Page	Recommendation	Time Frame	Revenue Increase	Cost Increase	Cost Reduction	Capital Outlay
29	The Town should identify alternate locations to hold adult fitness activities that were displaced from the second floor of the Country Club.	Immediate	NA		NA	NA
30	The Town should improve its bicycle facilities and develop a bicycle master plan.	FY2015-16	NA	NA	NA	NA
31	The Town should consider building a year-round public swimming pool.	TBD	NA	NA	NA	
Staffing and Operations						
33	The Town should transfer the responsibility for parks and grounds maintenance from the Parks and Recreation Department to the Public Works Department.	FY2015	NA	NA	NA	NA
34	The Town should transfer the responsibility for the maintenance of Ft. Getty Park to the Public Works Department.	FY2015	NA	NA	NA	NA
34	The Town should transfer the responsibility for the enforcement of rules and regulations at Ft. Getty from the Parks and Recreation Department to another department in the Town organization.	FY2015	NA	NA	NA	NA
35	The Town should consolidate the current Senior Center and Parks and Recreation Department operations under a single organization.	FY2015	NA	NA	NA	NA
36	The Department Director should schedule leave time during lower-volume	Immediate and ongoing	NA	NA	NA	NA

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS						
<i>Organizational Study of the Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department</i>						
Page	Recommendation	Time Frame	Revenue Increase	Cost Increase	Cost Reduction	Capital Outlay
	activity periods to the extent possible.					
37	The Town should certify at least one Parks Maintenance employee as a Certified Playground Safety Inspector.	FY2015	NA	\$340 one-time cost	May reduce insurance costs	NA
38	The Town should create a "Fort Getty Improvement Fund" that funds capital improvements at that park, and supplements current capital expenditures on the Park.	FY2015	NA	NA	NA	NA

INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY

1. **THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT SHOULD ENHANCE ITS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS CAPABILITIES TO OBTAIN AND UTILIZE PARTICIPANT DATA FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES, WHILE ALSO IMPROVING EFFICIENCY.**

The Parks and Recreation Department has no automated records of participants in its programs. Therefore, each time someone enrolls in a programmatic offering, critical identifying information is re-entered for each event, thus creating a multitude of separate and unrelated databases of participant information. Not only does this consume staff time, it is ineffective in targeting potential participants based upon their participation in similar programs in the past.

The entry of participant information into a single database that is updated each time an individual participates in a program is vital in the targeting of potential participants who may have interests in programmatic offerings that are similar to those in which he or she has participated in the past. Further, the capture of personal information about the participant in a single database will eliminate the need for duplicative data entry in the future.

In addition, existing registration processes are not customer-friendly. Today, to sign up for a program, registrants must either print and mail a registration form to the Department along with a check for the associated fee, or they must come to the Recreation Building to fill out the paperwork and make payment. This process is time-consuming for staff who have to re-enter the data from the forms into a spreadsheet so that they know who has registered, is difficult for registrants, especially those who work full time during the week when the Department is open, and it generates significantly more foot traffic to the Recreation Center than is necessary given today's technology. In the absence of clerical support, the inability of the information system to accommodate on-line registration also causes regular and constant interruptions of staff as they attempt to perform their other duties. In addition, staff handle many more checks and cash payments than is necessary. On-line registration is what customers expect, it will allow staff more time to engage in the programmatic aspects of their work, and it will have an added benefit of providing data that can be used to see which programs are most popular and fill quickly versus those in which enrollment is slow. One added benefit of an online registration system would be to establish minimum participation rates, below which a program would not be offered. Early registrants would likely encourage friends and family members to sign up if they saw that registration figures were low.

Any selected IT system should also have the capability of entering revenues associated with each program as well. Currently, Department personnel enter these revenues into an electronic spreadsheet that does not facilitate break-even analysis, revenue trend analysis, and other useful information.

Recommendation: The project team recommends that the Parks and Recreation Department acquire, or develop, a new software package that allows for on-line registration and records critical information regarding its program participants. Any new package should include the following data elements:

- Participant name, age (to be updated automatically on birth date), gender, address, phone
- Parent(s) name (if under 18), and alternate contact
- Program(s) being registered for and preferred date/time (if multiple sessions are offered, registrants could indicate their first, second, and third choices)
- Program identification numbers in which the individual has participated
- Personal Identification Number (PIN)
- Allergies
- Medications needed
- Other medical conditions or assistance needed
- Resident/Non-Resident
- Permission (Y/N) to photograph/video participant

In addition, the Department should integrate the participant information with the Town's GIS.

2. THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD ENHANCE THE FUNCTIONALITY OF ITS WEBSITE TO CONFORM TO BEST PRACTICES IN THE INDUSTRY.

In the not-too-distant past, the simple provision of a web site of any description for a parks and recreation department was considered a progressive and customer-oriented feature of government. Today, however, residents expect that their governments' web sites will be informative, interactive, and easily navigated. In fact, "web surfers" throughout the country and the world scan websites for information, and a well-designed website says much about a municipality, just as does a poorly-designed one.

The project team has made numerous visits to the Parks and Recreation Department's website throughout the course of this project, and there are several facets of its content and design that could be refined and enhanced to provide a more informative and useful experience for visitors, whether they are residents, other governmental entities, or simply interested viewers.

Darrell West, of the Brookings Institute, in his book, *Digital Government: Technology and Public Sector Performance*, describes four stages of government websites that progress from the "billboard style," that simply houses information, up to the "interactive democracy style," that offers residents services and a variety of ways to get in touch with public officials and to accomplish tasks. It is this latter style that West says that governments should aspire to in order to develop a more knowledgeable and empowered citizenry.

Although the Parks and Recreation Department's website is more than a simple "billboard" of information, it falls short of being truly interactive. Further, it does not provide certain information that the project team believes should be shared with visitors to the site. The project team noted several areas in which the website should be enhanced and has listed these below.

- The website provides descriptions of the three primary parks and beaches in the Town, however there are many more that are not noted on the site. The site may potentially be enhanced to provide photographs and driving directions.
- The Department should provide rules and regulations on its website for all beaches and parks.

- There is no mention of the Recreation Center on the website other than the address. The Center is the primary location of indoor services and programs, and the amenities should be described. In interviews and conversations with residents, many people mentioned the Recreation Center as a place they fondly remember in years past. The history, of the Recreation Center should be included on the website, along with, perhaps, a pictorial history of the facility.
- There is no information on how residents can volunteer to assist the Department. Further, there is no mention of programs and services for which volunteers are needed.
- There is currently no method by which visitors may offer suggestions for improvement in programs or services.
- Not all programmatic offerings are listed on the website (i.e., only seasonal programs are shown, year-round offerings are not).
- The site does not allow for online registration and payment.

The current Department website does list upcoming events in a bullet-style fashion, although two of the events listed had already occurred as of the writing of this document. This bullet listing is not as helpful as a community calendar would be in helping visitors visualize the timing of scheduled events. In this regard, the Department may wish to post and update events in a calendar style format, with links provided to a description of the event, as well as any related fees.

Recommendation: The website of the Parks and Recreation Department should be enhanced to provide both more information and more interactivity for visitors. The project team has provided several suggested enhancements that reflect best practices in the parks and recreation industry, and these should be incorporated into the Jamestown Parks and Recreation website.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

1. THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT SHOULD DEVELOP PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND REPORT ON THE ATTAINMENT OF THESE MEASURES.

The Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department provides grounds maintenance and recreational services in the town on a daily basis in accordance with what are perceived to be the expectations of Town management and the residents it serves. However, as many municipalities have found, simply providing the service in the same manner as has been performed in years past ensures that little or no progress will be made. For this reason, as well as others, the project team recommends the development and institution of performance measures that apprise stakeholders of the Department's progress.

Performance management and performance measures can help the Department develop a continuous system of improvement. Consistent performance measures can help reveal when a program or service is not being delivered properly or effectively, which can result in insufficient services to the public. Conversely, performance measures can help in identifying those programs or services that the Department is delivering well. Other benefits of a performance management program include the following:

- It can stimulate productivity and creativity of staff;
- It improves accountability for performance of agreed-upon goals and objectives;
- It facilitates communication from the Department to its stakeholders;
- It assists in focusing the Department, as well as its stakeholders, on results rather than process; and,
- It can improve the delivery of the services themselves.

In designing the performance measures in the Parks and Recreation Department, the project team recommends that the Department focus on the efficient and effective use of resources, and not solely on volume of work. The project team conducted an assessment of the Department's performance against "best management practices" (provided in Appendix B of this report), and this may serve as a basis for the development of a comprehensive performance measures program, however, the table below also provides some sample measures.

Performance Measure	Comment
Parks acreage per thousand population	Should be in the range of 15 to 20 acres
Total earned program revenue per capita	Should be in the range of \$12 to \$17
Break even on 90% of program offerings	Ensure consistency of costs captured from year to year
Percent increase in program participation	Should be measured on an overall basis, as well as on individual programs
Percent increase in volunteer hours worked	This measures the outreach efforts of the Department, as well as the level of community

	support
Decrease in number of staff injuries/participant injuries	This measures the effectiveness of staff in adhering to safety principles

Once established, the Parks and Recreation Department should report on these measures at least quarterly to the Town Manager. Deficiencies in performance should be explained, as well as remedial actions.

The Department should also formally issue periodic surveys to determine the levels of satisfaction with current services and programs, as well as to identify any that are desired but not currently provided.

Recommendation: The Parks and Recreation Department should develop a set of performance measures against which it reports progress to the Town Manager on a periodic basis. Negative variances should be explained, as well as corrective actions. The Department should also periodically formally solicit input from the Town to assess the satisfaction levels with current programming, as well as to determine any desired services that are not being provided.

2. THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT SHOULD DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN.

Interviews with Parks and Recreation Department staff, Council members, and members of the general public indicate that, although many have their favorite programs and services, and many have ideas about the future direction of the Department, there is no clear consensus regarding what the Department is attempting to achieve through its provision of services. In many ways, this is typical of small municipal departments in general, as the daily required duties of management and staff take precedence over strategic thinking.

The failure to think strategically can, over time, ensure that programs and services stagnate and fail to reflect the needs of the public the Department is attempting to serve. The project team facilitated a series of three public input sessions related to recreational services, and it was clear that residents had many ideas regarding desired services that are not currently being offered. This may or may not be a symptom of a disconnect between the Department and the general public, but it was equally clear that there were many suggestions that indicated that the Department had not included at least some of the residents in attendance in the planning of the programs and services it offers.

Managers may think strategically with or without a strategic plan. However, without a “blueprint” to guide this thought process, strategic thinking reflects the thoughts and desires of a single individual or, at best, a small group of individuals. A formal strategic plan that engages a wide spectrum of ideas from the Jamestown community is necessary, particularly for a provider of services that affect so many in a personal way. This would allow the Department to respond to such factors as:

- Changing levels of available resources;
- New or changing public expectations;
- Demographic changes;
- Changes in the profiles and availability of private service providers; and,
- Changes in the national economy.

The Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department provides an array of services that satisfy the needs of many in the Town. (See the Descriptive Profile in Appendix A of this report for a listing of programs and services, as well as estimated attendance at each). However, the service offerings are not reflections of any strategic effort, but rather appear to be the offerings that are made in reaction to individual, sporadic requests for programming, as well as the suggestions of staff for new programs.

Perhaps emblematic of this observation is the operation of the Teen Center. Interviews and input gathered by the project team during the public input sessions indicates that this is a very popular program, and is by all accounts providing a valued service for the Town's teen population. However, when asked to articulate the mission of the Teen Center and enumerate measures of success, the staff were unable to clearly define these important facets of operation. This is not to disparage the efforts of staff, nor the value of the services provided, but rather is an illustration of how even very popular programs should be challenged to define their future directions and measures of success, and these may be defined through a formal strategic planning process.

The project team recommends that the Department undertake in a strategic planning process that engages stakeholders from the Town at large. Although the process may be amended as necessary, the basic elements of the process should include the following elements:

- Initiating and agreeing on a strategic planning process;
- Identifying any organizational mandates;
- Clarifying the Department's mission and values;
- Assessing the internal environment (i.e., strengths and weaknesses);
- Assessing the external environment (i.e., opportunities and threats);
- Analyzing the customer base and its wants/needs (e.g., demographics, areas of interest as gathered via survey or community meeting, geographic location, etc.);
- Identifying the strategic issues facing the Department;
- Formulating strategies to manage the issues; and,
- Establishing an effective vision for the future.

There may be many outcomes of the process, however, it should, at minimum, identify a vision (e.g., "Creating a community through parks and recreational services") and mission (e.g., "Parks and Recreation will work with residents and visitors to be stewards of the environment, and specifically the beaches and parks, to provide safe and welcoming opportunities to play, learn and build community"). It should also state the Department's service delivery goals related to:

- People – residents, staff, diversity, inclusion, etc.;
- Parks – preservation, environmental sustainability, etc. This should also address Ft. Getty as a unique Town asset;
- Programs – encourage health and fitness for individuals and families; provide opportunities for lifelong play, creativity and learning; strengthen accountability for the provision of programs and services; enhance inter-generational ties; as well as others;
- Effective Partnerships – with youth and adult groups, private and non-profit providers, senior center, etc.; and,
- Communications with the public – through the web site, through community groups, solicitation of input from the public, etc.

The outcome of this process should be a formal document that provides guidance in many areas of the operation of the Parks and Recreation Department. It should not be viewed as a roadmap to provide specific instructions in arriving at a specific end-point, but rather as a flexible document that provides guidance in response to events as they occur. These responses should be based on the core mission and values of the Department, as well as those of the Town, that have been defined through a consensus-gathering process.

Recommendation: The Department of Parks and Recreation should engage in a strategic planning process that involves a wide segment of the Town.

3. THE TOWN SHOULD UPDATE THE JOB DESCRIPTIONS OF STAFF IN THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT.

The project team requested job descriptions for each of the positions in the Parks and Recreation Department, and received descriptions for the Director, the Recreation Supervisor, and the Recreation Clerk. The project team reviewed these job descriptions and determined that there are several missing elements, including the following:

- The job description for the Director lacks any reference to duties related to financial controls. One of the duties refers to the preparation of the budget and to the preparation of vouchers, however, there is no mention of the responsibility for the receipt and accurate accounting for fees for service.
- The Director's job description perhaps unnecessarily attempts to provide a listing of all of the parks, grounds, and beaches for which the Director is ultimately responsible, however, the listing is incomplete.
- The Director's job description does not refer to the position's duties to report on programs and services as they relate to metrics such as attendance and participation, financial position, maintenance performed, capital needs, etc.
- The Program Supervisor's job description lists the title of the position as "Program Supervisor" on one page and "Assistant Recreation Director" on the next page.
- There are relatively few "Illustrative Examples of Work" provided in the Program Supervisor's job description and none of these addresses the position's financial responsibilities or the responsibilities related to public reception, greeting, and communication.
- Neither the Program Supervisor's nor the Director's job descriptions list any physical demands or any description of their work environments. These descriptions are necessary in order to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- The job descriptions provided to the project team were apparently developed at different times, as the formats are different. For example, the Director's job description lists job duties under the heading, "Essential Duties and Responsibilities", whereas the similar section of the Program Supervisor's job description is entitled, "Illustrative Examples of Work."

There are other inconsistencies and omissions, however it is not the intent of this study to note each of these, but rather to point out that these job descriptions should be reviewed to provide more consistency and to reflect accurate job duties. Further, these job descriptions should be written to conform to the requirements of ADA in terms of listing each job's essential mental and physical requirements.

Recommendation: Develop new job descriptions for each of the positions in the Parks and Recreation Department that are consistent in the levels of description of work duties, are in the same format, and are in compliance with the requirements of ADA.

4. THE TOWN'S FINANCE DEPARTMENT SHOULD CONTINUE TO CONDUCT PERIODIC RANDOM CHECKS OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT'S CONFORMANCE TO THE NEW CASH-HANDLING POLICY.

At least partially in response to an alleged misappropriation of funds at Fort Getty, the Town issued new policies related to cash handling and overnight deposit collection. These policies are provided in Appendix E.

There are several important elements to the new cash-handling policy that should, with strict adherence by Parks and Recreation personnel, minimize any future misappropriations. These include, for example:

- The requirement that two people reconcile all deposits, and that one of these is always "management";
- The two people who reconcile deposits should rotate;
- Gatehouse receipts are issued in triplicate, with copies given to the customer and to management, with one copy retained at the Gatehouse; and,
- The Finance Department conducts an itemized listing of activity of individual deposits, with any unusual activity flagged for investigation.

The issuance of policies is imperative in ensuring that rules and procedures related to cash-handling is both understood and performed in a standard and approved manner. However, the issuance of the policies alone cannot ensure that the defined procedures are consistently followed. Over time, employees in any organization tend to follow rote procedures and get careless in executing them if there have been no recent problems, or if it is believed that management no longer places the same emphasis on following precise procedures as was once the case.

The project team strongly recommends that the Finance Department randomly, yet frequently, send a qualified designee to perform a field audit of the cash handling and night deposit collection procedures to ensure that staff in the Parks and Recreation Department are adhering to defined policies and procedures, and to ensure that there are no future allegations of impropriety.

Recommendation: The Finance Department should conduct random field audits of cash handling and

night deposit collections performed by personnel in the Parks and Recreation Department.

PROGRAMMATIC SERVICES

1. THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE MORE STRATEGIC AND VISIONARY IN DETERMINING THE RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS IT OFFERS.

The Department's program offerings do not appear to have a strategic underpinning, rather they are largely a continuation of programs that have been offered in the past, with some exceptions when an instructor has come forward willing to offer a new class. While this does not mean that the existing programs are not successful, opportunity exists to make the overall recreation program more successful.

It is important to recognize that recreation is a customer service function and one that has a responsibility for generating revenue to cover at least a portion of its operating costs. However, to do so, program offerings must be attractive to Jamestown residents at a price that they are willing to pay. Therefore, identifying and anticipating customer needs and providing good quality programs is essential. Further, capturing a larger cross section of town residents will also be important for generating revenue. At present, since program offerings are exclusively athletic in nature some people who do not engage in athletic activities, or do so elsewhere, are being left out.¹

Information is available that can be used to strategically plan for recreational programs. Census data, public health data, and information from customers themselves can be used to create a comprehensive package of program offerings. Census data, for example, is very enlightening. It reveals that Jamestown has a lower proportion of children and youth below the age of 20 (21.1% or 1,141 total youth) than Rhode Island as a whole (24.9%) and its median age is significantly higher, 50.7 years of age for Jamestown residents as opposed to 39.4 years for the State. While this does not mean that programing for youth should be diminished, it does indicate that there may be a large market of adults and seniors that could participate in recreational programs, if they were available.

Data from the Rhode Island Department of Public Health reveals that childhood obesity in children aged 2 to 5 in the state exceeded the national average. In fact as of 2008, 34% of kindergarteners and 37% of 7th graders were overweight or obese, and that the rates vary by gender.² Even though baseball and basketball programs may address this issue for some children, at best, only a subset of children in town participate in these activities. A youth running club, dance classes, cooking classes, or a fitness program that introduces young people to multiple sports, including strength training, may capture even more. When asked what the Department is doing to address childhood obesity, one of the staff said they had not really thought about it. Another source of information about childhood fitness would be local school administrators. Department staff should meet at least once a year with the school superintendent to see how they can collaborate. For example, classroom curriculum in nutrition could be reemphasized in fitness classes at the Recreation Center.

¹ It should be noted that the Jamestown Library does offer some non-athletic programs such as films, crafts, etc..

² Rhode Island Department of Public Health, *Initiative for Healthy Weight Program (2010)*, retrieved at <http://www.health.ri.gov/publications/burdendocuments/2010OverweightAndObesity.pdf>, October 5, 2013, p. 8.

Even though census and public health data can be illustrative, local residents truly are the best source of information regarding what programs to offer. The recent survey generated a number of suggestions from Jamestown residents and a more focused survey could possibly generate more and, importantly, would make residents feel as if they were part of the planning process for the Department.

According to the survey, some residents felt that certain age groups were not represented in the existing recreation program. Multiple people commented on the need for additional activities for seniors and more than one wrote about the need for activities for very young children, other than taking them to the playground. On the issue of seniors, data shows that more seniors are increasingly able-bodied and interested in participating in activities and events in their communities, including volunteering. They can be both customers of and an asset to the Department. For very small children, some communities and organizations offer "mommy and me" classes for infants that promote early development in learning and motor skills, coordination, and balance. Early childhood educators could help the Town identify the needs of its youngest residents.

In terms of actual programmatic suggestions, survey respondents offered multiple suggestions which can be found in appendices C and D. (See Appendix C for an overview of findings from the survey and community meetings and Appendix D for survey data and meeting notes.) A few comments from the survey include:

- Reasonably priced classes (water color, knitting, sewing, yoga, etc.) at rec (sic) center;
- Open country club to cross-country skiing in winter;
- Try to find activities that different age groups could do together. Old learning from the young skills like twitter "the Twitter abbreviations", their dances, the young interacting with older people in something that promotes conversation;
- Painting classes;
- Dodge ball, tug o war (sic), fishing, hunting, beach volleyball, indoor volleyball, golf, homework club, computers, field trips, youth group, afterschool snacks, kite flying, skate club, farming, self-defense and karate, kickboxing, surf club, canoe, kayak, bowling, bike club, horseback riding, bird watching, cooking, arts and crafts, puppet show;
- More sailing and ocean awareness programs for children;
- Adult walking group;
- Cultural classes in farming, scuba, swimming, bird watching, fishing, gardening; and,
- Ballroom and tango dance lessons.

In addition to surveying all Town residents on what programs they thought should be offered, actual program participants are an even greater source of information. They should be regularly asked about their thoughts on the program(s) they just participated in, i.e., quality of the instruction, cost, hours/dates available, equipment, etc. With an electronic registration system that would collect contact information including email address, this type of survey would be relatively easy to administer.

In terms of revenue generation, the Town has been reinvesting any difference between revenue and expenditure on recreational programs back into the department for years. The result of this is a relatively modest fund balance³ that can be used by the Department to enhance its programs. These

³ According to the Finance Director, the balance as of June 30, 2013 was approximately \$56,500.

funds can be appropriated out of the fund balance by the Town Council for Department expenses. It is recommended that they be used for one-time expenses, such as new equipment, building or playing field improvements, etc. as opposed to ongoing operations. As part of the strategic planning effort, participants should consider how best to use this resource to make the programs even more successful.

Recommendation: The Department should be much more strategic and visionary when developing a package of recreational programs. Consideration should be taken into identifying the potential customer base for the Department and identifying their needs, via use of publicly available data and outreach directly to community residents and program participants.

2. WHILE THE TEEN CENTER IS WELL-LOVED AND OFFERS DIVERSE ACTIVITIES, ITS OPERATION SHOULD BE REGULARLY EVALUATED TO MAINTAIN, IF NOT GROW, THE LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION AND TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO PARTICIPATE.

Nearly all of the attendees at the community meeting on Recreational Activities for Youth and Teens were there to show their support of the Teen Center. They indicated it was a very welcoming environment where the teens actively participated in leadership roles, including identifying and planning for future activities and trips. Parents indicated that they felt safe knowing that their child(ren) was at the teen center and explained that in high school when teens go to school off-island it was important for them to have a local place to go to see their friends. Teen Center participants expressed how open everyone was to individual differences and indicated that the anti-bullying program supported this. Attendance figures provided by the Center Director show that an average of 20 to 30 youth participate in activities at the Center on a daily basis. It is apparent from this that the Teen Center is an important part of the Department's programming. However, for the Teen Center to be successful, it must always remain vibrant and relevant, as what draws teens to the Center may change over time. As such, targets for attendance should be established and attendance closely watched to ensure that it remains an active place for young people.

The project team would like to offer two concerns regarding the operation today. First, attendance at the Teen Center is taken on paper and appears to be done predominantly by the Center director. Since the facility has seven (7) doors, a fact of which the Center director was very aware, she cannot always see who is exiting and entering the facility, even though she is very diligent in monitoring the youth. As a result, the attendance records may not always be accurate. In event of an emergency, teens could be listed as being in the building when they are not, or may not be listed even though they are there. Research should be done regarding whether a "tap card" type of technology (similar to those used in transit systems) might be an option for the Town so that the teens tap their cards when entering and exiting the building. Perhaps such a system could allow parents to monitor attendance remotely. Of course, the youth would need to be rigorous about tapping the cards, which should be included in the Center rules and posted online.

A second concern is regarding the space for the Teen Center. It appears that at times the Teen Center is both the room in the back of the Recreation Center and, at other times, it is the entire Recreation Center. However, when the Teen Center takes up the entire building, this can make it unavailable for other groups who would also like to use the space. This is creating a level of tension among organizations that should be addressed. (See Facilities Section, Recommendation #1 for further discussion.)

Recommendation: Targets for attendance at the Teen Center should be established and actual attendance be regularly monitored to ensure that facility remains a vibrant center of activity. Steps should be taken make check in electronic to provide more, and more accurate, data about attendance.

3. COMMUNICATION REGARDING PROGRAM OFFERINGS SHOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCED.

With 350 out of 411 respondents indicating that they learned about recreational programs and special events from the Jamestown Press and 209 respondents indicating they learned by “word of mouth” (respondents were asked to list all ways they receive information, so the total of all information sources is greater than the number of respondents), it is clear that the Town’s direct communication mechanisms are far from the first place that residents look for information. In fact, the Town website and the Department’s Facebook Page only received 57 responses combined. In the comments, multiple people indicated that they did not know about all of the programs offered by the Department and were learning them from the survey itself.

In order to keep in touch with its customers and to bring in new customers, the Department needs to greatly enhance its outreach and information sharing. Fortunately, technology makes this much more manageable than in the past. A few steps the Department and Town should take include:

- The Department should create a customer database that identifies the type of information different customers are interested in. For example, youth athletics, youth crafts, senior trips, etc. Customers can be asked to self-identify what they are interested in;
- The Department should prepare a calendar of all activities in Department facilities or operated by the Department and post it on the website. A monthly pdf of a calendar with information about how to register on the back should be sufficient until something more sophisticated can be developed;
- The Department should print and distribute calendars at the library, senior center, and other locations where people gather;
- The Department should more regularly use its Facebook page. It is a credit to the Department that they took the initiative to set up the page, but weeks can pass without a posting;
- The Department should develop list serves on different topics or for different age groups;
- The Town should consider creating a master database of residents who voluntarily sign up to get notice of activities, events, or other offerings. In many communities, this starts as a means to get out public safety information to residents quickly, but can be used for other purposes so long as they can opt out of information for which they are not interested.

To the Department’s credit, it should be noted that they actively provide announcement to the Jamestown Press for inclusion in the paper and that is part of the reason that residents look to the paper for information.

Recommendation: Communication about program offerings needs to be significantly enhanced so that potential customers learn of Departmental offerings.

4. TOWN OFFICIALS SHOULD ESTABLISH A POLICY ABOUT WHAT CONSTITUTES A "TOWN PROGRAM" AND THEN IDENTIFY THOSE PROGRAMS THAT TAKE PLACE IN TOWN FACILITIES, BUT ARE NOT TOWN PROGRAMS IN ITS PUBLICATIONS SO THAT COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE AWARE WHO IS MANAGING THE PROGRAM.

Recreational programs in Jamestown can be provided with Department staff as instructors, with vendors hired by the Town as instructors, or by outside organizations, such as the Jamestown Soccer Association. While those who are very familiar with the program offerings may be clear about type of arrangement, it is not so transparent to others. For example, the posting for "Fall Soccer Registration" on the Town's website links directly to the Jamestown Soccer Association website without explaining that the Association is responsible for managing the program, but they are using Town fields.

The definition of Town program is particularly important as it relates to liability in the case of injury and in determining the proper rate to be charged for the use of the public asset (i.e., playing fields, recreation center, beaches, etc.). Liability, of course, is a significant issue because if an injury does occur on a Town field, the injured party will likely seek some type of remuneration. If a program is not clearly under the umbrella of the Town's insurance, yet is also not clearly marketed as being run by a separate organization and properly insured, the Town may be compelled to make payment without having the ability to access its own insurance policy.

A second issue is that in using the fields, an outside organization is using Town property much in the same way the private golf course operator is using that facility. A written agreement with an associated fee is routine in many communities today. The Town of Brookline, Massachusetts, has a particularly sophisticated registration and payment process for use of its fields. Fees range from \$10 to \$40 per hour depending on the level of amenities at the field (i.e., turf vs. grass, lighting, etc.) and the entity seeking to use the space (i.e., resident, not-for-profit, for-profit). The hourly rate applies even to groups that may use a field or fields for an entire season, although the Town does offer scholarships that can offset up to 30% of the costs. In Carver, it is the project team's understanding that some of the organizations offset their fees by performing in kind service. If the Town Council determines that this should continue to be an option, it would be appropriate to calculate the cost as if payment was to be made and then determine the value of the in kind work to be applied against the total fee.

Recommendation: The Town should go through a process to determine what constitutes a "Town program", ensure that all Town programs are included on the Town's insurance, and then clearly distinguish between Town programs and programs by other organizations that take place in Town facilities when advertising recreational program options.

5. THE PAYMENT STRUCTURE AND PAYMENT MECHANISM FOR INSTRUCTORS SHOULD BE FAIR, CONSISTENT, AND TRANSPARENT.

Since the Department has limited staff, outside instructors are regularly sought and paid by the Department. However, the means by which they are paid varies. Some get paid hourly on the Town's payroll while others get paid via check as if they are a vendor. For those paid through the vendor system, they are paid a percentage share of the revenue that is generated by each class taught (i.e., 25% instructor, 75% Town). In the case of the percentage share payment arrangement, the project team has

significant concerns. First, in a typical vendor arrangement, a vendor is paid a rate that is based upon the work that is to be performed, whether this be a fixed rate for a defined deliverable, an hourly rate for a service, or a unit price for something that may be recurring. In the case of the percentage share, the amount paid varies depending upon the number of attendees even though neither the length of the class nor the curriculum is being changed.

Second, this percentage share payment mechanism also raises question about whether the instructor is a vendor at all or rather is a private business operation that is leasing space from the Town and paying for use of that space through a revenue sharing agreement. If the instructor is actually paying the Town for the cost of using the space, that cost also should be fixed and not vary by number of attendees or at least not vary for anything less than large swings in attendance levels that would have significantly different impacts on facility maintenance.

Recommendation: The Town should determine whether instructors who are not on payroll are either vendors paid by the Town or whether they are private businesses renting Town facilities. If they are vendors, the rate paid should be consistent based upon the work being performed and not vary based upon the number of attendees. If they are private businesses, then a fair facility rental fee should be established.

FACILITIES

- 1. THE NUMBER, SIZE, AND TYPE OF RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL FACILITIES SHOULD BE DRIVEN BY THE TOWN'S GOALS AS THEY RELATE TO THE PROGRAMS THE TOWN WISHES TO OFFER.**

The recent closure of the Country Club and the second floor space previously used for adult recreational activities and theater rehearsals has exacerbated the tension that has existed for some time regarding the availability of indoor space for public activities in Jamestown. Residents are fortunate to have so many active groups interested in using space in the Recreation Center, but space limitations and scheduling in recent years has meant that some groups have not been able to use the space as often as they might like.

A particular challenge appears to exist between two of Jamestown's most popular activities: the Teen Center and the Jamestown Community Theater which both have evening activities. In addition, when the Art Show occupies the building, it is not available to anyone else. The perception of many is that the Teen Center takes precedence over other activities, including rehearsals for theater productions, regardless of how many youth are in attendance at the Teen Center. While the project team did not analyze the actual space allocation by week or day, and space allocation is ultimately at the discretion of Town policymakers and Department staff, the perception of unfairness is important. At present, no calendar is posted for the public to see when or if space is available. While transparency in government is always important, in an environment of constrained resources, it is even more so. In Jamestown's case, different groups want to be able to see when space might be available so that they can reserve it. A secondary benefit is that groups might be willing to switch dates/times with others, but may not be aware of that option since the scheduling information is kept closely by staff. It is therefore recommended that the reservation calendar for the Recreation Center be posted online so that interested groups can see when space is open.

Over the longer term, the Town needs to establish a vision for the level of recreational and cultural arts programming it seeks to offer so that comprehensive space needs can be determined. Theater, chorus, string ensembles, basketball, yoga, tai chi, the teen center, the craft show, and many other programs, events, and activities are currently vying for space on a regular basis. Many of these have storage needs, in addition to space needed for the activities themselves. If, as suggested in a recommendation above, the Town is to consider additional program offerings, they too, will require space to be able to function.

One of the projects that should be considered over the long term is a constructing a cultural arts facility. Residents' active participation in special events and the many recommendations for non-athletic programs that were gathered the survey, suggest that Jamestown residents highly value their arts-related activities. At the same time, sports activities are important to many families and individuals. At present, since the Town's stage and the open gym are located in the same room, scheduling conflicts are commonplace and neither group of users is particularly satisfied. Of course, building a cultural center will require a substantial financial commitment and strong community support, but successful examples of such developments do exist and could serve as a model for Jamestown. The Watertown,

Massachusetts Arsenal Center for the Arts consists of 30,000 square feet of space, housing two theaters, classrooms and workshop spaces, artist studios, gallery and exhibit space, rehearsal rooms, and informal gathering places. It presently provides a home for three resident companies: New Repertory Theatre; Watertown Children's Theatre; and the Quilters' Connection. The Center was made possible by \$6.5 million in donations. One consideration is that in Watertown and in many other locations, cultural facilities are built and managed by non-profit organizations. Jamestown will need to determine if the community is willing to engage in the type of multi-year effort needed to create a cultural center and, importantly, whether demand is great enough to support the operation over the long term. Nevertheless, it appears that the concept is worth exploring.

Recommendation: The Town should develop a community-driven long term plan that quantifies space needs for recreational programs and cultural activities and identifies actions to be taken to meet demand. Specifically, the Town should explore constructing a cultural arts facility.

2. THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE COUNTRY CLUB SHOULD BE DESIGNED IN A MANNER THAT MAXIMIZES ITS CAPACITY FOR MULTI-PURPOSE USE.

Currently, the Town is considering how best to renovate the Country Club, and expanding the facility is one potential option being explored. The Town Council has asked the project team to provide its thoughts on how the space could or should be used. First, the project team would like to suggest that although the Country Club is most immediately available space, it should be considered within the context of town-wide goals and needs. If the facility ends up being oversized, then public resources that could have gone into another building will have been expended there and if it is too small or too specialized, it may not meet long term community needs. As such, it should be considered as part of a broader picture that may take multiple years to fully come to fruition. Second, the project team wishes to suggest that the design of the building should be a community-wide decision that balances community needs/desires with the resources available. At present, since the project team does not know what resources might be made available, at best what can be offered are some process suggestions.

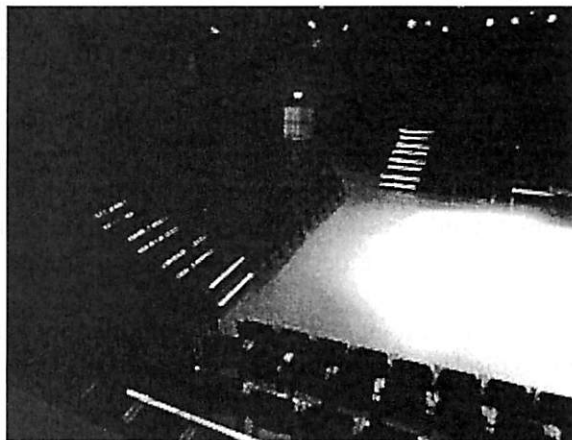
Even though developing a long range plan may take some time, some relatively quick steps could be taken to begin to frame what activities could take place at the Country Club. Steps would include:

1. Generate a list of possible activities that could take place in Town facilities, the number of potential attendees, and any unique space needs – for example, live performances for 200+ with a stage and lighting, adult athletic classes with 20 participants, weddings, open basketball, etc.
2. Group those that are similar or could potentially share a space, while also identifying the outliers that are particularly large or small, or have highly specialized requirements (ex. a kiln for pottery class).
3. Consider which activities should take place in a central location, such as the town center, versus those that could take place anywhere. This is a particularly important step since the golf course location and the downtown offer different strengths. The golf course has considerable land area and parking (at times when the golf course is not in heavy use), while the downtown is the true town center, with Town Hall and attractive restaurants and businesses, but has limited parking.

When considering location, ways to support the downtown businesses should also be taken into account. For example, live performances should perhaps take place near the downtown restaurants so that they could take advantage of the crowds, while small tai chi classes could take place anywhere on the island.

Those activities that do not need to be in the downtown could be considered for inclusion in the Golf Course project.

Since, it appears that the Country Club will be the facility most quickly available to begin address recreational and cultural space needs in Jamestown, design will be very important. If it is built for a single purpose, such as a theater with fixed seating, it will not provide much relief to the competing uses of space. If, however, its design is flexible, it could be creatively used for different purposes. One possible option is to use some of the design concepts in modern day black box theater spaces. These are typically unadorned spaces with (re)movable seating that allows for flexible staging. Instead of having a stage, the performance takes place on the floor with the audience on risers above. The example in the photo is a 4,125 square foot space, but one built at the Boston Center for the Arts is only 1,150 square feet in size while seating 90 audience members.



Edmonds Community College, Seattle, WA

A flexible space, together with substantial storage, on the second floor of the Country Club may begin to address some of the short term space needs in Jamestown.

Recommendation: In the short term, the Town should identify uses and a design for the second floor of the Country Club that alleviate some of the space challenges faced at the Recreation Center currently.

3. THE TOWN SHOULD PROVIDE AN INTERIM LOCATION(S) FOR THE PROGRAMS OFFERED AT THE COUNTRY CLUB UNTIL A NEW FACILITY IS BUILT.

Several respondents to the survey expressed dismay with the loss of the adult athletic programs previously offered at the Country Club. Based on the survey results and attendance records provided by Town staff, it is clear that these activities had regular constituencies who participated. According to staff records, yoga and pilates combined had nearly 100 attendees, while the survey actually showed a higher number of 154 combined. (Note that these figures may have some duplicates as a single individual may attend more than one type of yoga/pilates class.)

An alternate opinion was expressed by some participants at the community meetings for the study who indicated that they thought the Town should not offer any recreational programs that competed with businesses in Jamestown. Their thought appeared to be that the public sector should not be in the same market as the private sector. However, in researching this question, the project team found

multiple examples where classes offered in the private sector were also offered by the local recreation department. These include:

- Charlestown, RI – tai chi, zumba, pilates, yoga;
- Narragansett, RI – crossfit, senior yoga; and,
- Provincetown, MA – adult dance, yoga.

Prices ranged from \$5 to \$15 per class.

One potential location that should be explored would be the Senior Center on West Street. Although other groups do use the building at different times during the week, potential exists for some time to be made available for adult fitness programs. A second benefit is that this co-location could attract some seniors to the activities who might not otherwise participate.

While the project team would place finding an alternate location for the displaced programs as a somewhat lower priority than other recommendations in this report, if one or more of the potential uses on the revamped second floor of the Country Club is to be for adult fitness, then maintaining the Department's customer base during the interim may be a consideration. As one of the survey respondents indicated, "consistency is important".

Recommendation: The Town should identify alternate locations to hold adult fitness activities that were displaced from the second floor of the Country Club.

4. THE TOWN SHOULD IMPROVE ITS BICYCLE FACILITIES.

At least 22 respondents to the community survey raised the issue of bicycle facilities on the island, expressing support for improvements and dissatisfaction with the situation today. They expressed the need for adults and young people to be able to get around town, noting that bicycling is a good way to get exercise and also reduce parking demand. Those who ride on the existing road surfaces indicated concerns about the lack of bike lanes, despite what appear to have been years of discussion, and the quality of the road surfaces, which can make it uncomfortable and/or difficult for cyclists to ride safely. Many others, however, expressed a strong desire for bike paths to be built in town that can be used by families and individuals. Several called for the Town to prepare a bicycle plan that would especially help unite the north and south sides of town. Other specific ideas were for a north-south bike path and a bike path that ringed the island. Across New England and the country, many more people are getting on their bicycles and communities are responding by striping bike lanes, constructing cycle tracks (where the cyclists are separated from the moving traffic and are riding at the same level as the pedestrians), and building off-road paths for pedestrians and cyclists. With its relatively flat topography and beautiful parks and beaches scattered across the island, Jamestown is well-positioned to be attractive to cyclists, both local and people coming from elsewhere.

Recommendation: The Town should develop a bicycle master plan, but even while developing the plan, the Town should start striping some of the wider roads with bicycle lanes and installing "share the road" signs where appropriate to let drivers know there may be cyclists on the road.

5. THE TOWN SHOULD CONSIDER BUILDING A PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL.

The desire to have a year round swimming pool was expressed by participants in the survey and at the community meetings. In the survey, 212 residents indicated that swimming was “very important” to them when using the Town’s parks, beaches, and recreational facilities and at least seven mentioned building a swimming pool in one or more of the open ended questions. Several mentioned that they would like to swim year round for fitness, while others specifically mentioned the need for classes to teach local children how to swim. In the past, the Town transported children to the Newport/Middletown YMCA for a swimming program but that was discontinued in 2002. Since then, it has been up to individual households to transport their children to swimming classes off the island. Department staff indicated that there are not swimming classes on the island because of the water currents. In fact, lifeguards who work all beaches in Rhode Island must be surf certified.

One respondent suggested that the pool be open air during the warmer months and then closed in the winter. Another respondent suggested that a building at Fort Wetherill could possibly be used for this purpose.

It should be noted that Jamestown would be somewhat unique among some of its neighbors and other beach communities if it built a public swimming pool. The project team contacted five beach communities in Rhode Island and Massachusetts and found that none of them had public pool facilities and only one had a privately owned and operated pool.

PUBLIC POOLS IN SELECTED RI AND MA BEACH COMMUNITIES				
Town	Indoor Pool	Outdoor Pool	Private Pool	Town beach
Charlestown, RI	N	N	N	Y
Marion, MA	N	N	N	Y
Middletown, RI	N	N	Y	Y
Narragansett, RI	N	N	N	Y
Provincetown, MA	N	N	N	Y

Although the cost of a public swimming pool will vary depending upon the size and amenities offered, the project team did look for examples in other communities or public agencies. The Worcester Polytechnic just completed a multi-use fitness center and its marketing materials indicated the pool had a construction cost of \$5 million. In Concord, Massachusetts a 35,000 square feet fitness complex including a pool opened in 2006 at cost of \$11 million. More recently, in February 2013, the City Council in the City of Mission Hill, Kansas approved a \$4.1 million design build contract for a new pool, park, and amenities funded by a sales tax surcharge approved by local voters.

Recommendation: The Town should consider building a year-round public swimming pool.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

STAFFING AND ORGANIZATION

This section of the report analyzes the current organizational structure, alternatives for change, and the staffing levels that are required to meet desired service levels.

1. PARK AND FIELD MAINTENANCE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT BOTH DUPLICATE THOSE PROVIDED BY PUBLIC WORKS, AND DIVERT THE FOCUS OF THE DEPARTMENT FROM OTHER CORE SERVICES.

Currently, the Parks and Recreation Department provides park and field maintenance services at seven parks and beach areas, two schools (including three fields, a skateboard facility, and six tennis courts), a playground, a cemetery, the Recreation Center facility, and various facilities on the grounds of the aforementioned parks and grounds. Maintenance services are provided by a Parks Supervisor, a Maintenance Technician, and two temporary Maintenance Workers who generally work from May through October.

The project team did not analyze the services provided in the Town's Public Works Department, nor the adequacy of maintenance staff to provide services for the grounds and other infrastructure for which it is responsible. However, that Department is responsible for rights of way maintenance on at least 42 center line miles of roadway, as well as tree maintenance, water and sewer maintenance, paving and other similar services.

Local government organizational structures are often developed over time and not frequently adjusted to address changes in service delivery approach, workloads, and/or changes in technology. The "way we've done it" becomes the understood, accepted, and unquestioned approach to providing services. This sometimes results in an overall system that can be duplicative, fragmented, inefficient and difficult to alter once in place; especially when considering services that are similar in nature but provided by two related yet independent entities – such as the Town's Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments. Incremental changes with no overall strategy are often detrimental to the organization's overall performance or do not result in achieving the desired outcomes.

The Parks and Recreation Department and the Public Works Department both provide grounds maintenance services using low-skilled labor in a relatively small geographic area. Further, the services provided by the Parks and Recreation Department are much more cyclical than are those provided by Public Works. With a transfer of parks and grounds maintenance services to Public Works, a consolidated maintenance function would have the flexibility to allocate resources more efficiently and effectively as needs arose throughout the year. The equipment utilized in both departments for maintenance functions is similar, and the work occurs in locations that are, in many cases, contiguous, or in very close proximity. These factors weigh strongly in favor of consolidating the parks and grounds maintenance functions under a single department, and the project team recommends that they be transferred out of Parks and Recreation, and into the Department of Public Works. This is not only because of the similarity of functions to other services provided by Public Works, but because it allows the Parks and Recreation Department to focus more heavily on its core recreational services.

Recommendation: Transfer the responsibility for parks and grounds maintenance from the Parks and Recreation Department to the Public Works Department. This includes the responsibility for each of the parks noted in Appendix A, and the maintenance staff as well.

2. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTAINING FORT GETTY PARK SHOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

The largest area of responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Department is Fort Getty Park, which is approximately 31 acres. The operation of this park reportedly consumes about 80% of the Parks and Recreation Director's time by his own estimate. It likely consumes a similar amount of time of the maintenance workers assigned to its care and upkeep, although there are no departmental records of work to substantiate this estimate. However, multiple interviews by the project team with campers and staff indicate that there is a substantial amount of dissatisfaction with the degree of care provided there.

Observations by the project team, which were reinforced through interviews, indicate that there are some long-standing maintenance issues at the park. The restroom was maintained poorly on the single visit made by the project team, and interviews indicate that this is not an uncommon occurrence, with complaints about the restroom lacking hand towels and soap. There are several structural deficiencies at the park, such as a poor pavement condition on the road leading into the park, lack of potable water, lack of sewerage, and substandard electrical service.

The project team has previously recommended that transfer of parks and grounds maintenance from the Parks and Recreation Department to the Public Works Department, and reiterates that recommendation here as it relates to Ft. Getty, the largest single park in the Town. This responsibility should encompass not only the maintenance, but the identification and implementation of capital improvements as well.

Recommendation: Transfer the responsibility for the maintenance of Ft. Getty Park to the Public Works Department.

3. THE PROVISION OF SECURITY AND RULES ENFORCEMENT SHOULD BE TRANSFERRED OUT OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT.

Interviews conducted by the project team also indicated a general dissatisfaction with the level of oversight at Fort Getty Park provided by the Parks and Recreation Department. Specific complaints related to the inattention to rules enforcement of the Department and the Maintenance/Security Worker assigned to the Park during the duty hours that the employee is assigned. There were many anecdotal instances described to the project team of campers violating rules related to washing boats and trailers on site, campfires that are not extinguished until well after midnight, park visitors spending many hours at the pavilion after telling Gate Attendants that they are at the park for the purpose of going to the Sailing School, and others.

As is the case in many parks and camp sites at which groups of people congregate, there are rules violations at Fort Getty, and these can be expected. The rules violations, and the alleged inattention to them, may or may not have occurred as they were anecdotally related to the project team. It is notable,

though, that multiple interviewees related similar accounts. However, it is true that enforcement of rules and regulations and correction of structural deficiencies such as the ones related above, are not core services of a recreational services organization.

Recommendation: Transfer the responsibility for the enforcement of rules and regulations at Ft. Getty from the Parks and Recreation Department to another department in the Town organization. This organizational move will allow the Parks and Recreation Department to focus its attention on its core recreational services.

4. THE TOWN SHOULD CONSIDER THE CREATION OF A COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT THAT CONSOLIDATES RECREATIONAL SERVICES WITH THE SENIOR CENTER.

One of the recurring themes throughout the course of this study was the lack of coordination between the Parks and Recreation Department and the Senior Center in the provision of programs and services. Although there are some intergenerational programs, these are not provided through any cooperative effort between the two organizations. Moreover, there appears to be a certain amount of tension between the Parks and Recreation Department and the Senior Center, particularly in the use of the recently-purchased van. Clearly, the Town could benefit from a much greater degree of cooperation between the two organizations in terms of their programmatic offerings

In addition to the potential benefits related to programmatic coordination, many municipalities have found that they can save taxpayer dollars by consolidating existing organizations under a single management structure. The more successful of these organizational efficiencies, however, do not consolidate services simply to save taxpayer dollars, but rather they seek a logical nexus that capitalizes on the similarity of service provision..

The project team has, in the previous two sections, noted that Public Works has as its primary mission the provision of maintenance services. For this reason, as well as others, it was recommended that the Public Works Department assume the responsibility for the parks and grounds maintenance services currently provided by the Parks and Recreation Department. In turn, this will allow for a greater degree of focus of the Department on its core recreational programming. Similarly, as the Jamestown Senior Center provides health, recreational and leisure programming opportunities to the Town's senior population, these are logically related to the recreational programming offered to the Town's adult population by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Many local governments have consolidated the recreational services that have been historically provided by their separate parks and recreation departments and senior centers. The benefits of this consolidation include:

- A greater degree of focus on inter-generational programming
- Enhanced administrative support
- Shared information systems that require and maintain similar attributes for participants
- Potential shared use of facilities

In Jamestown's particular case, the recommended organizational consolidation is timely, as the current Senior Center Director's retirement was imminent as of the date of the project team's on-site activities. Although the operations of the Senior Center were not a part of this project's scope of services, the project team requested a tour of the Center, as well as a description of some of the services provided. The Senior Center, in fact, is a spacious facility that is suitable for programming that exceeds the uses for which it is currently utilized. The attendance of seniors at the Senior Center has reportedly declined markedly in recent years. This is in contradiction to trends not only nation-wide, but also in the actual experience of the project team, as seniors increasingly account for a larger percentage of municipalities' populations. Again, the project team was not engaged to conduct a study of the services provided at the Senior Center, however it was clear in a brief tour and interview that its programming efforts could benefit from a renewed focus on programming.

Another factor favoring consolidation of Jamestown's senior and non-senior recreational services is that the Town recently applied for, and received, a grant to purchase a new van for transporting program participants to recreational events. The Parks and Recreation Department reportedly initiated and applied for this grant, and included the Senior Center as a participant in the grant application. However, there has been some degree of confusion and disagreement between the two organizations in the past year as to the use of the van. The Parks and Recreation Department provides the van and a driver for the Senior Center's weekly trips to its bowling activity, however there is some lack of agreement over the Parks and Recreation Department's provision of the van and a driver for other senior activities. The project team cannot definitively state whether the sources of confusion are valid from the point of view of either organization, however, the consolidation of the two organizations would appear to offer a potential solution and would, in fact, foster a much greater degree of cooperation.

Recommendation: Consolidate the current Senior Center and Parks and Recreation Department operations under a single organization. The new "Community Services Department" should be responsible for all recreational and leisure services to the entire population of Jamestown.

5. THE NEW COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT SHOULD MANAGE LEAVE TIME TO ENSURE THAT STAFF ARE AVAILABLE DURING THE HEAVY VOLUME PROGRAMMING SUMMER MONTHS.

During on site interviews in the mid to late summer months, the project team noted that the Parks and Recreation Director had taken a relatively substantial amount of leave time. Investigation by the project team indicates that the Director took 21 days of leave time during the period of June 18, through September 30⁴, which is one of the primary periods of the year for programmatic services. Further, given that by the Director's estimation, 80% of his time is expended on Ft. Getty-related activities, the taking of leave time during the primary camping season leaves much of this burden to the Program Supervisor, who is otherwise engaged in providing and coordinating other programs.

The project team recommends that the Department Director and the Program Supervisor schedule time off, to the greatest extent possible, during time periods that do not coincide with the heaviest volume of programmatic activity. The Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department has a very small staff, and it

⁴ This included two sick days, one personal day and 18 vacation days.

may not always be possible to provide two employees in the Recreation Center at all times, however leave time for the times of heaviest workload and programming activities should be avoided if at all possible, and scheduled well in advance.

Recommendation: Schedule the leave time of the Department Director during lower-volume activity periods to the extent possible.

6. THE TOWN SHOULD CERTIFY AN EMPLOYEE AS A CERTIFIED PLAYGROUND INSPECTOR.

Interviews indicate that the Parks and Recreation Department is inspecting the equipment at the Town's playgrounds. Given the relatively small investment necessary to obtain certification as a Playground Inspector, this would appear to be a cost-effective initiative on the part of the Department.

A Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) is a career that was developed by the National Playground Safety Institute (NSPI) and is recognized nationally by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). No prior experience is necessary, but a candidate for the certification must attend a training course, pass a final exam and be re-certified every three years.

The training course costs, on average \$340, which includes all course materials, and is generally a two-day, 15-hour course. The course entails classroom lectures, discussions and examples of maintenance problems with playgrounds through hands-on-training. It is based on the Consumer's Product Safety Commission (CPSC) guidelines and the American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM).

The course focuses on understanding the standards and guidelines for public playgrounds, identifying safety hazards within the play environment, establishing repair priorities, fixing items on-site, providing the necessary knowledge to establish a comprehensive program of playground and safety within a given agency and developing long-term plans to upgrade playgrounds.

The project team has previously recommended that the parks and grounds maintenance functions be transferred to Public Works from the Department of Parks and Recreation. The project team did not interview Public Works personnel to determine whether that Department has a CPSI, however if there is no such position, the project team recommends that it certify at least one employee.

Recommendation: Certify at least one Parks Maintenance employee as a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI). The cost is minimal, and would result in greater flexibility as to when these inspections are performed, and could potentially result in a small cost savings for the Division.

7. THE TOWN SHOULD CREATE AN INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL FUND FOR FORT GETTY PARK.

Fort Getty Park is perhaps the centerpiece of Jamestown's rich collection of parks and beaches. Initially used as a U.S. Military fort during World Wars I and II, it overlooks the West Passage of Conanicut Island, and was used as an observation point protecting entry into the Narragansett Bay. Today, it is a Town park at which visitors may engage in a variety of leisure activities including sailing, fishing, hiking, or simply gazing at the Bay. The Park has a pavilion that has picnic tables, a charcoal pit, and a sand volleyball court.

In addition to these amenities, Fort Getty serves as a campground for visitors using recreational vehicles (RVs) and tents. The Town recently reduced the number of RV spaces from 105 to 83, and increased the fee from \$3,700 for 20 weeks, to \$4,500 for 16 weeks. In addition, visitors may pay fees for the use of the boat ramp, nightly tent space fees, parking and for the use of the dump station. In total, annual revenues from fees at Fort Getty exceed \$400,000.

The Fort Getty Committee, a group of residents and Town staff, updated the 1994 Fort Getty Master Plan in 2005. This Plan was approved by the Town Council, and assessed many options for the use of Fort Getty. These will not be discussed here, however, it is worth noting that many of the needed infrastructure improvements that were identified in the 1994 and 2005 reports could still be listed as being needed today. For example, in 1994, it was noted that additional showers should be constructed, the electric and water distribution systems should be upgraded, and that the Town should “seek outside funding for long-term restoration of forts to maintain (a) sense of historic setting.” None of these had been accomplished as of 2005, and the project team heard complaints from residents, campers and staff that these were particular concerns today.

One of the notable recommendations from the 1994 Plan was that “(c)apital improvements should be implemented by the years referred to in (the) Capital Improvement Section, or as funding permits.” In commenting on the actions taken on the 1994 recommendations, the 2005 Master Plan also noted that capital improvements should be implemented “(a)s funding permits.”

Clearly, sufficient funding has not been available to keep pace with the infrastructure improvements necessary at Fort Getty, as many of the same issues remain today that were identified in 1994. The project team acknowledges that the Town has budgeted and spent \$580,000 on Ft. Getty improvements from FY2006 through FY2013, however these expenditures alone have been insufficient to keep pace with needed infrastructure repairs.

The project team recommends that the Town create a “Fort Getty Improvement Fund” for the express purpose of making capital improvements at the site. As is noted elsewhere in this report, many interviews conducted by the project team during the course of the study made reference to sub-standard facilities, particularly the restrooms, the boat dock and the electrical services. Some campers expressed negative comments on the condition of these facilities, particularly in view of the nearly 22% increase in campground fees, and for a shorter camping season. The Fort Getty Improvement Fund should be maintained in a separate account that receives a percentage of the fees charged at Fort Getty, and should be used for capital improvements. Given that the revenues generated at Fort Getty exceed \$400,000 annually, the deposit of 10% of these revenues into the Fund would generate in excess of \$40,000 per year for capital improvements. This Fund may also be supplemented by other capital funding as is deemed to be necessary on an ad hoc basis.

The finding that many capital improvements at Fort Getty needed today are the same ones identified in 1994 is one that deserves notice by the Town. Clearly, funding needed infrastructure improvements on the basis of “as funding permits”, as was noted in the 2005 Master Plan, is failing to keep pace with the needs of the park. This is particularly true given the visibility of the park, and the pride that residents have in its upkeep.

Recommendation: Create a “Fort Getty Improvement Fund” that funds capital improvements at that

park. The Town may debate the appropriate percentage of revenues generated by Fort Getty that should be diverted into this Fund, but for illustrative purposes, if the Fund received 10% of all generated revenues, it would receive over \$40,000 annually for these improvements.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK