

Falls Village Recreation Commission
Annual Report
July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

The Falls Village Recreation Commission is composed of volunteers and municipal employees devoted to providing recreational, cultural, and leisure activities for residents of all ages and abilities in our town. The Commission believes in developing programs and activities that enhance and enrich the lives of our residents, and building the spirit of community within our town.

The Recreation Commission was repopulated in January 2021. Members during the 2020-2021 year included: Emily Peterson (Director), John Morrissey (Co-Chairman), Dan Carr (Co-Chairman), Melissa Lopes (Secretary), Susan Allen, Daipai Horace, Edward Moy and Thomas Wilson.

The town pool, which is considered our greatest recreational attraction, opened exclusively to Falls Village residents on June 28th, 2020. Unfortunately, no swim lessons or water fitness classes were offered. However, the pool season went smoothly overall, even with a lower attendance than years prior. Staffing was limited due to the pandemic which resulted in closing the pool season early on August 15th, 2020.

The new pool cover was delivered in August and was used to winterize the pool until the next season.

The Creative Kidz Club was cancelled in 2020, but will be returning in July 2021.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission began to create alternative and safe seasonal events for the town. In October 2020, the annual Halloween party was held outside on the town green and safely brought trick-or-treaters of all ages. The green was set up as an interactive, one-way walk through version of “Candy Land,” where game board pieces served as 6-foot social distancing markers. Treat bags and pumpkins were given out to trick-or-treaters at the end of sidewalk at the Candy Castle.

As winter set in, Santa made an appearance at the Town’s Annual Tree Lighting and Holiday Party. The event was a drive-through setup, where children got to individually visit with Santa through their car and receive a wrapped present. Music was projected over speakers and the town green was decorated with a centrally lit tree and giant candy canes for families to admire as they drove through. The left-over gifts were donated to the Torrington Homeless Shelter (Friend’s in Service to Humanity.)

The Ski Club successfully returned, with another generous grant from the Salisbury Winter Sports Association. The ski club had another fantastic season departing from the Lee H. Kellogg School every Wednesday, in February 2021, under the direction of Dan Carr. No bussing was available, so families provided their own transportation.

In February, the commission held a Valentine's Day card swap and drive up event where resident children created custom cards to trade with each other and placed them into a drop box located at the DM Hunt Library. In collaboration with the Kellogg K,1,2 class, students made Valentine's Day cards for senior citizens in town that were delivered via mail to help cheer up those who may have been "shut in" during the pandemic. A special thank you goes to Theresa Graney, the Social Services Director, for helping with this project.

The annual Easter Egg Hunt made its much anticipated return in March 2021 with help from several members of the Kellogg 8th grade class. The event had an excellent and safe turn out from Falls Village resident children on the Lee H. Kellogg School athletic field where eggs were spread out for small groups of children to collect.

In April 2021, the Commission began a pool improvement project with the help of Economic Development Coordinator, Felicia Jones, and Sustainable Connecticut. The crowdfunding campaign raised \$8,335, and with a matching grant of \$7,500, totaled \$15,835. The money was used for a new shade structure and native trees for the Recreation Center property.

A permanent pergola shade structure was built and completed by an anonymous local carpenter, just in time for the grand opening of the pool on June 23rd, 2021. The Commission would like to thank everyone that donated to the fundraiser; we are so grateful for their support and are excited to continue to transform the pool property.

The Commission would also like to thank the Town of Canaan Board of Selectmen, the town offices, Michelle Hanson, Emergency Management Director, and the Department of Public Works for all their assistance for helping to keep Recreational activities in our town safe.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Emy P", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Emily Peterson, Falls Village Recreation Director