

TOWN OF LEBANON

ACTIVE-RECREATION NEEDS ANALYSIS

2023-2028



Lebanon Recreation Commission

Active (versus passive) recreation facilities are sites and programs where residents are provided a structured individual or team activity that requires the use of special facilities, fields, personnel, and equipment. This report has been prepared by the Recreation Commission to help plan for adequate active-recreation facilities for Lebanon residents.

Lebanon Recreation Commission

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Lebanon Recreation Commission

Established by ordinance in 1961 and again in 1975 (see Appendix 1), Lebanon's Recreation Commission is responsible for developing and administering public recreational programs and adopting rules and regulations for each. The Commission is made up of nine (9) members appointed by the Board of Selectmen and is governed by By-Laws (see Appendix 2). The adopted "mission" and "goal" of the Recreation Commission are as follows:

MISSION: Provide a comprehensive array of high quality athletic and recreational programs for residents of town on a year-round basis without bias to race, income, age, sex or ability.

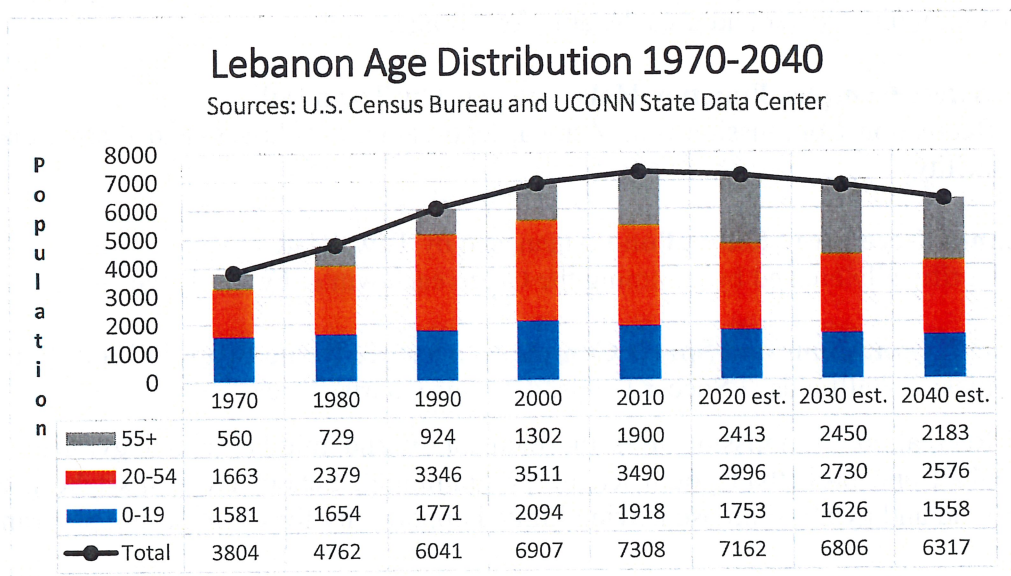
GOAL: Seek to provide adequate land to meet active-recreation needs while ensuring that existing active recreation areas are properly managed for maximum use.

The Recreation Commission employs a part-time (19 hour per week) Recreation Coordinator who is responsible for implementing the Commission goals and policies, as well as organizing programs and registrations, maintaining athletic facilities, and managing part-time staff and volunteers. The Recreation Department occupies a corner of the Town Hall downstairs conference room with limited and unsecured office space.

Population Characteristics

The Town of Lebanon contains roughly 7,150 year-round residents plus a number of seasonal residents who occupy the 250+/- summer homes located on Lebanon's three lakes. The estimated median household income in Lebanon as of 2021 is \$96,490, which is higher than New London (\$79,040) and Windham (\$83,572) counties, and the State median household income of \$69,021.

While Lebanon's overall population has slightly declined over the past decade, its number of children has decreased from a high of 2,094 in 1990 to 1,753 in 2020. At the same, its percentage of seniors, age 65 and older, has grown almost three-fold from 7.9% in 1990 to 20.1% in 2020.



Current state and local trends suggest that Lebanon's population peaked in 2010 and may continue to decline slightly over the 5-year planning period. This is primarily due to the limited number of new homes being constructed in town; a decline in the number of people having children -- and those who have children having fewer of them; an aging population where residents stay in their homes longer; and first-time homebuyers choosing to live in more urbanized areas.

Existing Town Recreation Facilities

Locations where public active-recreation facilities exist include the Aspinall Recreation Complex adjacent to the Elementary School; Tyler Field on Bascom Road; Town Pool/Community Center; Fire Safety Complex Function Hall; Lebanon Green Skating Rink; Elementary School; and Middle School. (In addition, Lebanon Soccer Club uses Lions Club soccer field on Mack Road.)

- 1. Aspinall Recreation Complex** – managed by the Recreation Commission
Facilities: 3 Ballfields (2 little league, 1 adult), 3 Bleachers, 6 Dug Outs, 2 Basketball Courts, Multipurpose Field, Beach Volleyball, Storage Shed.

The town acquired the 51-acre Aspinall property in 1977 and developed it for recreation in the early 1980s. In addition, the property contains the Ed Lazur Memorial Pavilion and an adjacent building with bathrooms, concession, and storage space.
- 2. Tyler Field** - managed by the Recreation Commission
Facilities: 3 Ballfields (1 baseball, 1 softball, 1 mixed use), 6 Dug Outs, 1-Car Garage, Storage Shed/Concession Stand.

The 27-acre Tyler Field property was acquired by the town in 1987 as part of the development of the Bascom Road Subdivision. The ballfields were developed in 2012 and are managed by the Recreation Commission. A playscape needs to be completed.
- 3. Town Pool/Community Center** – managed by the Recreation Commission
The Town Pool sits behind the Community Center. Funding for its construction and maintenance were gifted by Lebanon's benefactor Hugh Trumbull Adams. Pool staffing includes 9 summertime personnel. In addition, the Commission runs yearly programs in the Community Center and uses the attic for storage.
- 4. Fire Safety Complex Function Hall** – managed by Town Hall
The Recreation Commission runs Zumba, lego camp, art classes, and theatre classes at this facility.
- 5. Lebanon Green Ice Skating Pond** – managed by Town Hall
Pond artificially created by damming the Green each winter by the Town.
- 6. School Gymnasiums and Sports Complex** – managed by the Board of Education
Facilities: 3 Ballfields, 2 Soccer Fields, 4 Tennis Courts, Track

The Recreation Commission uses the elementary and middle school gymnasiums for volleyball and basketball youth league programming. School programs take precedent over field and gymnasium use leaving limited opportunity for Commission programming.

Recreation Commission Programs

The Commission runs 10 programs in FY 2022/23. In past years, 1,500+/- attendees have participated in these programs.

RECREATION COMMISSION PROGRAMS FY 2022/23

Program	Location	Estimated Participants
Swimming Lessons	Town Pool	212
Tai Chi Balance Classes	Senior Center	120
Basketball	Elementary and Middle Schools	160
Volleyball (2 sessions)	Middle School	80
Halloween Event	Lebanon Green	300
Zumba Classes	Fire Safety Complex	120
Lego Camp (3 sessions)	Fire Safety Complex/Middle & Elementary Schools	160
Art Classes (6 sessions)	Community Center/Middle & Elementary Schools	120
HITT	Fire Safety Complex	60
Soccer Shots	Aspinall Complex	30
Summer Concerts (3)	Town Green	<u>300</u>
Total Participants:		1,662

In addition to the Recreation Commission, other organizations work to provide Lebanon residents active-recreation opportunities, including:

- Lebanon Board of Education. The Board of Education maintains school gymnasiums and the Middle/High School sports complex and runs a comprehensive sports program that includes cross-country track, tennis, baseball, soccer, softball, basketball, etc. According to the School Department, in FY 2021-22, 49% or 291 of the 590 middle and high school students participated in organized sports.
- Columbia/Lebanon Little League (CLLL). Established in 2022, CLLL holds its own governing charter under Little League International whereby a constitution and adopted bylaws guide the programs. The CLLL oversees the little league program which serves approximately 300 young athletes ages 5 to 12. CLLL prepares an annual operational budget and fee schedule, appoints auxiliary members and coaches, schedules games and practices, and provides scholarships for those in need of assistance.

CLLL games and practices are held at Aspinall and Tyler Fields, where they provide in-kind field maintenance. Programmatic funding is provided by little league participants. The Recreation Coordinator works in conjunction with CLLL attending monthly meetings, disseminating information, and scheduling field maintenance.

- Lebanon Soccer Club (LSC). Established in 1984, LSC serves 200+/- children ages 5 to 14. Practices and games are held in the spring and fall at Aspinall Field, the Middle School, and Lions Club property on Mack Road. LSC administers all registration, uniforms and equipment, with funding provided by participants.

Analysis

An increase in childhood obesity is cited by the American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, and State of Connecticut as a threat to today's and tomorrow's children. Because Lebanon's population is fragmented throughout town with few densely populated neighborhoods, children have limited opportunities for exercise and socialization outside of school and an organized recreational setting.

The Commission is regularly contacted by children, parents, and grandparents and others looking for active recreation opportunities supported by the Town. This is especially true for new residents who move to Lebanon from more densely populated communities where greater recreational services and facilities are provided.

Recreation programs related to the use of the town pool continue to remain popular as evidenced by the 140 pool passes purchased in 2022 which allowed >300 residents the ability to use the pool and 180 children ages 2-12 to take swimming lessons. These and other town recreation programs are utilized by Lebanon children, some of whom are home-schooled, and adults looking for active-recreation opportunities. The Commission adjusts recreation programming based on community trends, attendance, and feedback.

The Commission is responsible for two sports complexes with half a dozen baseball fields, a multi-purpose field, basketball courts, beach volleyball, press box, storage buildings, and pavilion. In prior years, the lack of field maintenance was identified by the Commission as its number one challenge. However, beginning in 2022, the Selectmen hired a part-time seasonal maintainer who is managed by the town's DPW/Facilities Director, for the pool, Aspinall, and Tyler Field maintenance.

Since this report was last updated in 2018, pickleball has become a recreation phenomenon, with communities building courts to satisfy this growing recreation need. Pickleball is a fairly low impact game that is popular with all age groups and combines tennis and ping-pong. Courts are typically constructed in pairs. The Commission has determined that construction of pickleball courts is an important recreation need in Lebanon and recommends that two (2) pickleball courts be developed. The Commission recommends that when the DPW is relocated, the former DPW site be developed into a town park with two (2) pickleball courts and an accessible swing set.

A challenge identified by the Commission is the limited number of hours afforded its Recreation Coordinator. While it is recognized that the current Coordinator regularly volunteers additional hours beyond the 19 paid work hours to facilitate the workload, the Commission believes that some additional manpower is necessary.

Lastly, the Commission identified that the Recreation Department, located in a cubicle in the corner of the Town Hall downstairs conference room, has inadequate area and storage space. In addition to being in an open unsecure space, the office has no privacy for staff and residents who register for recreation programs, often with children in tow, sometimes paying with cash and needing to discuss sensitive subjects related to their children's recreation needs.

Implementation Plan

The Recreation Commission has adopted the following 5-year Implementation Plan to help assure that Lebanon's active-recreation goal is achieved. The plan calls for capital spending of \$360,000 over 5 years and additional funding to the annual Recreation Commission operating budget to provide for a fulltime recreation coordinator or an additional part-time staff person.

Implementation of the Recreation Commission's plan will result in an increase in use of town's active recreation facilities, including construction of two pickleball courts, refurbishment of an Aspinall ballfield, completion of the Tyler Field project, and creation of a town park. In order to prove effective, the Implementation Plan will require the support of the Boards of Selectmen and Finance. The following recommendations detail the Commission's 5-year Implementation Plan.

1. Aspinall Recreation Complex. Provide capital funds to replace pavilion roof, repair ballfield #2, and replace fencing and storage shed.
2. Tyler Field. Provide capital funds to construct playscape.
3. Town Pool. Provide capital funds to replace pool cement deck, fence, and install showers.
4. Pickleball. Provide capital funds to construct 2 pickleball courts at the former DPW, should a new DPW be constructed, or at the Senior Center site.
5. Recreation Department Office. Provide private, secure office space for Recreation Department at the new DPW complex or community center.
6. Recreation Commission Operating Budget. Increase operating budget to hire a full-time Recreation Coordinator position or an additional part-time recreation assistant to obtain grants and attend recreation programs.

RECREATION COMMISSION 5-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2023 – 2028

Item	Year	Est. Town Cost	Fund Type
1. ASPINALL RECREATION COMPLEX			
- Replace pavilion roof.	2023	\$ 30K	Capital
- Repair ballfield #2 and replace fencing.	2024	\$ 50K	Capital
- Replace storage shed.	2025	\$ 75K	Capital
- Public seating	2025	\$ 15K	Capital
2. TYLER FIELD			
- Construct playscape.	2023-24	\$ 60K	Capital
- Public seating	2025	\$ 15K	Capital
3. TOWN POOL			
- Replace cement deck and fence, and install showers.	2024-25	\$ 50K	Capital
4. PICKLEBALL			
- Construct two (2) pickleball courts.	2025	\$100K	Capital
5. RECREATION DEPARTMENT OFFICE			
- Provide secure private office with storage.	2025-26	To be determined	
6. RECREATION COMMISSION OPERATING FUNDS			
- Increase annual operating budget to hire fulltime Recreation Coordinator or second part-time assistant.	2026-27	\$40K fulltime or \$20K part-time	Operating

Appendix 1

Ordinance Creating a Recreation Commission for the Town of Lebanon

Section I.

1. The Town of Lebanon Recreation Ordinance effective November 2, 1961, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof.

2. There is hereby created in the Town of Lebanon a Recreation Commission consisting of nine (9) persons who shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen and who shall serve without any compensation. Members first appointed shall be so designated on January 6, 1975 and shall serve as follows:

- (a) Three (3) members for a term of one (1) year
- (b) Three (3) members for a term of two (2) years
- (c) Three (3) members for a term of three (3) years

Thereafter, members shall be appointed annually to serve for a term of three (3) years or until their successors are appointed and qualified. Vacancies in such Commission shall be filled for the unexpired term by the Board of Selectmen.

3. Within one (1) month of January 6, 1975, the First Selectman shall call and convene a meeting of the members of the Commission who shall select a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and such other officers as they deem necessary from their membership. If such officers are not chosen within one (1) month after the appointment of the Board, because of a tie vote of the members, the Board of Selectmen of such Town shall choose such officers from the membership of the Board.

4. The Commission shall be responsible for the administration, management, control and development of a public recreation program in the Town of Lebanon and may adopt by-laws, rules and regulations pertaining thereto; may accept contributions for the furtherance of its work; may levy fees or charges for services or for the use of facilities under its control; may work jointly with other towns Boards of Commissions in providing public recreation; and may provide, conduct and supervise public playgrounds, athletic fields, recreation centers and other recreation facilities and activities on any of the properties owned or controlled by the town or on any other property with the consent of the owners or the town authority having jurisdiction thereof.

5. The Commission shall have the power to appoint a superintendent or director and such other personnel as may be required.

6. The Commission shall make an annual report of its activities to the Town and shall submit annually a budget to the Town authorities for their approval.

Section II. Effective Date:

This Ordinance shall become effective fifteen (15) days after its publication in accordance with Section 7-157 of the General Statutes, Revision of 1958.

The effective date of this Ordinance is January 4, 1975.

Appendix 2

Town of Lebanon Recreation Commission

BY-LAWS

The mission of the Lebanon Recreation Commission is to provide a comprehensive array of high quality athletic and recreational programs for residents of the town on a year-round basis, without bias to race, income, age, sex, or ability.

The Recreation Commission is charged by the Board of Selectman with the responsibility of developing recreational programs and enhancement of recreational facilities associated with sponsored programs on various Town owned land or buildings and to manage said properties.

Article I Commission Make Up

- Section 1 The Commission shall consist of nine members.
Section 2 Said members shall be appointed by the Town Selectmen and will be of a term not to exceed three years per appointment.

Article II Commission Officers

- Section 1 The Commission shall, at its annual meeting (the fourth Monday in November), elect by majority vote of a quorum of its membership a Chairman, a Vice Chairman, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.
Section 2 The officers will comprise the Executive Committee.
Section 3 The Term of office will be for two years. Elections in even number of years will be for Chairman and Treasurer. Elections in odd number years will be for Vice Chairman and Secretary.
Section 4 A majority vote of the Commission Members would be necessary to remove a person from office during the terms of office.
Section 5 The Chairman shall preside at all meetings of the Commission and of the executive committee. In the absence of the chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall preside in his/her place.
Section 6 The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all meetings and see that said minutes are filed with the Clerk of the Town of Lebanon within the time constraints of the freedom of information rulings of the State of Connecticut.
Section 7 The Treasurer shall report to the Commission the budgeted balances as provided by the Town Treasurer and make recommendations as necessary.

Article III Executive Committee & Special Meetings

- Section 1 The Executive Committee shall be entrusted with full power of the Commission when a special decision is necessary, and a quorum of the Commission cannot be formed.

Town of Lebanon Recreation Commission

Section 2 A special meeting will be called of the entire Commission to act upon a special decision when necessary.

Section 3 Upon the lack of a quorum at a special meeting, the Chairman can ask the Executive Committee to go into session. A quorum of three officers will be necessary at an executive committee meeting to act upon issues.

Article IV Committee Make Up

Section 1 Committees will be appointed by the chairman and consist of at least one member of the Commission.

Section 2 The Recreation Director acting as ex-officio to all committees can be authorized to collect and expend moneys as necessary by the committee chairman.

Section 3 Duties of the committees shall be defined by the members of the Commission at a regular meeting of the Recreation-Commission.

Section 4 The Chairman shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

Article V Meeting & Notifications

Section 1 Regular scheduled meetings will be on the fourth Monday of every month.

Section 2 The annual meeting will be on the fourth Monday of November.

Section 3 The Director will notify each member by mail of the time and place along with an agenda of the coming meeting. With the exception of a Special Meeting, which can be mustered by other means.

Section 4 A quorum consisting of a majority of its members will be necessary to conduct a meeting.

Section 5 Members who miss three consecutive meetings will be submitted to the Executive Committee for removal or stay with reason.

Article VI Fund Accountability

Section 1 All funds received by the Commission and held by committees will be deposited to the Finance Department, and a record kept of said deposit.

Section 2 All funds will be accounted for by the committee chairman.

Article VII Recreation Director

Section 1 The Commission shall employ a director whose function will be to carry out the direction of the Recreation-Commission.

Section 2 The director will report to the Commission at its regular meeting of the status of events and upcoming events.

Section 3 The director will be an ex-officio member of all committees.

Town of Lebanon Recreation Commission

Article VIII Budget Allocation

- Section 1 Allocation of the expenses will be designated by a majority vote of the Commission in the form of a budget, at the July meeting.
- Section 2 Committee chairpeople will be allowed to spend the allocated amount of money designated to the function they chair.
- Section 3 The director may spend money as needed with the approval of the Committee Chairperson to run a function not to exceed the amount allocated to that function.

Article IX By-Law Amendment

- Section 1 The bylaws may be amended by a quorum of the Recreation-Commission at a regular scheduled meeting as long as the agenda of the warned meeting states that it is an agenda issue.

Town of Lebanon Recreation Commission

Business Policy and Practices

The following are the policy and practices of the Lebanon Recreation Commission, Lebanon, Connecticut. The following practices are to be accepted manner by which the Commission will conduct any financial agreements or arrangements. Primarily these agreements will be between town, as represented by the Commission, and vendors or suppliers for supplying goods and services needed to conduct sponsored activities.

Article I

- Section 1 All payments or authorizations to pay or expend funds under any recognized activity sponsored by the Recreation Commission must follow Article VIII of the Recreation Commission By-Laws.
- Section 2 The defined Policy & Practices shall be reviewed at the July meeting of the Recreation Commission.
- Section 3 Articles within the Business Policy & Practices may be amended at any warned meeting.
- Section 4 All bills/invoices/orders shall be sent to the business address of the Recreation Commission. The business address for the Recreation Commission shall be:
Recreation Department Phone: (860) 642-4085 Town of Lebanon
Fax: (860) 642-7716
579 Exeter Road
Lebanon, CT 06249

Article II

- Section 1 Each Sub-Committee will be responsible for keeping track of or staying within the defined apportionment allotted for that sub-committee. A listing of budgeted items or activities may be found on the Treasurer's Report.

Article III

- Section 1 Payment of submitted invoices or bills shall require two signatures prior to being submitted for payment.
- (a) One signature being a member of the Recreation Commission whom is also a member of the respective Sub-Committee overseeing that activity.
- (b) The second signature being that of the Recreation Director for the Town of Lebanon. In the absence of, or in lieu of, the prior being superior, the Chairman of the Recreation shall be authorized to co-sign all invoices/bills.

Town of Lebanon Recreation Commission

Section 2 In the case where the Recreation Director is the organizing body for an activity/event/trip, the cosigner will be the Recreation Commission Chairman.

Article IV

Section 1 Only the Recreation Coordinator, Subcommittee Chairman, and the Chairman of the Recreation Commission shall be authorized to purchase from businesses.

Section 2 All purchases beyond that which is authorized by the Recreation Commission and made as an addendum to an activity/event/trip shall be brought to the Commission for approval. The commission shall not be responsible for any payment (in full, partial, or interest) which approval has not been secured.

Section 3 All pricing and /or discount policies must be stated on the registration form for any program or event. Any and all exceptions to this policy must be approved by a majority vote of the Recreation Commission.

