



# Essex Community Parks & Recreation

A New, Shared Entity

## Recreation Directors' Perspective – A New Path Together

We write today as the Directors at Essex Parks & Recreation (EPR) and Essex Junction Recreation & Parks (EJRP). The vote on December 13 reminds us to reflect on the core purpose of community recreation and our responsibility to provide the best parks and recreation opportunities for our residents. We are part of a vibrant community, one that is fortunate to have two parks and recreation departments. Our community is passionate about recreation programs and parks, and similarly, we are passionate about the departments that we oversee. We also recognize that, while change can be scary, it can open new doors and possibilities. Essex now has an opportunity to unify the best qualities of each department, operate them at optimal efficiency, and continue to be a model program of community recreation, by forming a recreation district called Essex Community Parks & Recreation.

EPR and EJRP provide enjoyable, healthy, and educational experiences that create memories and foster relationships. For over 40 years, our departments have worked within a mile of each other. Our staffs enjoy working together on community events, but why should the collaboration end there? Forming a recreation district is an opportunity for recreation staff to work in the same building, with a coordinated vision for parks and recreation that encompasses all of Essex. There will be one department, one budget, one leadership team, and one elected board organizing recreation services for the entire community.

We support the formation of a recreation district between the Town and Village. It is time to become **one**. Recreation district staff will work diligently to bring accessible opportunities and innovative programs to all residents of Essex – both in the Town outside the Village and in the Village. By unifying, redundancies will be eliminated and a coordinated recreation environment will be facilitated. A recreation district will offer a comprehensive system of childcare, enrichment programs, adult opportunities, senior services, and parks management that will reduce confusion and create cohesion within our community. It will result in equity between all neighbors for program access, pricing, and taxation.

This governance model recognizes our communities' current status of having two departments and allows both to preserve what they have developed, bringing together the two entities on equal ground. It is the only option that allows voters the right to review and approve an independent recreation budget by Australian ballot, and reinvests all recreation revenues into parks and programs.

As recreation directors, parents, residents, and taxpayers, we believe this opportunity is thoughtful, responsible, and exciting for the future of parks and recreation in our community. We support creating a new, shared entity called Essex Community Parks & Recreation.

Yours Truly in Recreation,

Ally Vile, Director, Essex Parks & Recreation

Brad Luck, Director, Essex Junction Recreation & Parks