

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of Memo

The purpose of this memo is to gather and record the various information gathering tasks into a single report that will inform the remaining work on the Memorial Park Master Plan. It will serve as a guide throughout the rest of the master planning process and will be included as an appendix in the final Memorial Park Master Plan Report.

B. Relationship to Other Tasks

This Task provides:

- Summary background information on the status of the existing park and individual features in the park,
- Current available public opinions, desires, likes, and dislikes about the park the history;
- A list of potential uses for the site;
- Applicable recreational standards for the Town of Stowe;
- A method of evaluating the most appropriate uses for the site.

C. Organization

After this introduction, this memo is divided into seven additional sections:

- Existing Park Features & Resources,
- Recent Studies and Plans,
- Park Use,
- Interviews,
- Public Work Session,
- Issues and Opportunities, and
- Park Use Evaluation Criteria.

II. EXISTING PARK FEATURES & RESOURCES

A. Overview

The Town portion of the original 25.3 acre parcel (not including recent Ampersand land addition) acquired in 1945. It was originally planned as a living memorial to Stowe's "boys who went to war." An initial evaluation of the parcel, indicated that, "Since this playfield is to be dedicated to honor those whose lives have been of service, particularly those who did not have the enjoyment of a full life span, the memorial features should not be overlooked." It goes on to say, "It is exceedingly

important and essential to have a well conceived plan prepared by a specialist in recreation planning in order to get the most out of a long range development.”

An editorial in the St. Albans Messenger from 1945 praises the idea. It concludes, “Here is a plan any community might copy. It shows what can be done if the people will it. And it all adds up to the kind of memorial that will live in the daily lives of the members of the community, for it will be a constant reminder of what those boys died for – a healthy, strong America.”

A recreation master site plan for the property was prepared by F. Peter Scheuerman, but this plan has not, as of yet, been found. Aerial photographs hanging in the Jackson Arena lobby shows earlier development and features of Memorial Park, circa

As **Figure 3-1** shows, The Park property lies in three different zoning districts:

- The more developed portion of the Park, consisting of 14.2 acres - the northwestern section - is in the Village Commercial District (VC10);
- The southestern, more natural portion of the Park, consisting of 11 acres, is in the Agricultural and Rural Residential District 2 (RR2); and
- The recently acquired Ampersand addition 10.5 acres in the southwest portions of the park is part of the Village PUD / Residential District (VIL PUD/Res).

The most northerlyportion of Memorial Park in the VC10 District is also included in the Stowe Village Historic District Overlay District. Information contained in a draft National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Old Congregational Church, however, shows the park adjacent to but not within the Stowe Village Historic District (not a zoning district).

Development in the Park is subject to Act 250 review. The Stowe Elementary School lies directly to the north of the Park, and the Stowe Library and Helen Day Art Center are located directly north of the School. **Figure 1** shows the overall layout of the Park today and the adjacent land uses and context.

The Park’s sole vehicular access point is from Park Place at the north end of the park. . It shares this access point with the Stowe Elementary School. The Park also has approximately 130 linear feet of frontage on School Street, approximately 90 linear feet of frontage on Stowe Hollow Road, and approximately 150 linear feet of frontage on Thomas Drive. None of these additional frontages are currently used for regular vehicular, pedestrian or bicycle access. Extremely steep slopes, wetlands, streams, and lack of urgent need have left these potential access points undeveloped.

The entire Park is open to the public from 5:30 AM to 11:30 PM. Restricted access is noted on signs that indicate use of the ball fields is by permit only and use of the playground is restricted to Elementary School use when the School is in session.

There are no known deed restrictions to the use of the Park.

B. Facilities

Figures 1 and 2 provide a graphic overview of the Park and the existing features. Memorial Park currently contains:

- Several Wetland Areas;
- An 11 + open rolling meadow in the southern portion of the property with a mowed walking path;
- A sloping area adjacent to the southern wetlands with mature forest;
- Simmons Brook which is partly channelized within the park;
- One baseball field and adjacent batting cages;
- One little league field;
- One softball field and adjacent batting cages and practice areas;
- On recently constructed playground for ages 3 to 12;
- The David Gale Center Memorial building housing a recreation center , Park and Recreation Department offices, and storage;
- One lighted, paved basketball court;
- Two lighted paved tennis courts;
- The old Congregational Church (the Rotary Barn)
- A gravel parking lot for approximately 60 cars;
- A paved roadway leading into the park ending at a paved parking area adjacent to the Jackson Arena;
- The bus drop off area for the adjacent Stowe Elementary School;
- A small outdoor picnic area;
- The Jackson Arena, an unheated ice rink with support facilities;
- A paved parking area accommodating approximately 25 automobiles;
- The Parks and Recreation Department maintenance area consisting of three garage buildings and numerous outdoor storage and maintenance areas;
- A degraded skatepark constructed of wooden forms on one corner of a paved parking area;
- A second gravel parking area between Simmons Brook and Jackson Arena accommodating approximately 35 automobiles;
- A snow machine trail; and
- Several other open grassed areas.

C. Vegetation

Park vegetation is predominately planted white pine trees and herbaceous and woody wetland vegetation. There is a well developed common alder wetland in the southern portion of the site. Most of the planted trees in the park consist of either white pines or ash of unknown species. There are just a few additional individual tree plantings scattered through the park of 'Crimson King' maple, crabapples, and little leaf linden.

D. Wetlands & Streams

Figure 1 shows the existing wetlands in the Memorial Park as well as appropriate 50 foot regulatory buffers. The recently completed Natural Resource Study of the Park completed by Lamoureux & Dickinson provides more information on the size, location and characteristics of the wetland areas.

Figure 1 also shows the location of Simmons Brook. This brook drains a large area to the south and east of the property. The Town of Stowe requires a 50 feet setback from streams for development which would include park construction of trails and placement of signs and so forth.

E. Buildings

1. David Gale Recreation Center

The original David Gale Center is 28 by 46 feet metal frame building with a center ridge line constructed in 1969. The Town has made two subsequent additions to the building:

- An unheated/uninsulated shed extension to the west approximately eight-feet wide and 35-feet long currently used for storage, and
- A second shed extension to the east approximately 18-feet wide by 28-feet long currently housing offices for Stowe Parks and Recreation Department.

The eastern addition, built about 2000, is aligned with the rear of the building, with a covered patio in the front. There is currently about 1,800 SF of usable space inside the Center.

Each portion of the building is currently in need of repairs to the roof. The roof of the original building needs replacing and the interior ceiling appears to house some level of mold growth. There is regular leaking between the original building and the two additions which has not been able to be repaired by spot work on the roof. A totally new roof for all three sections to address the problems is estimated to be approximately \$50,000.

The outside elevations of the buildings are set too high, bringing the soil next to the buildings close to or sometimes over the top of the elevation, especially on the south and east sides of the building. This encourages moisture build up in the walls of the structure and some deterioration of exterior walls exists.

2. Jackson Arena

The Jackson Arena is a steel framed open air structure housing an ice rink, locker rooms, and other small ancillary functions, some of them housed in small shed structures attached to the main building. The main Arena building is approximately 100 feet by 200 feet with a center ridge roof. The Jackson Arena was built with private funds and officially presented to the Town in 1975 for \$10.00 after the transaction was approved at Town Meeting. Since that time through 1993, the Town has spent approximately \$704,000 on the upkeep of the facility.

Several structural evaluations have been made of the buildings. Among the repairs they have recommended include:

- Upgrading the roof to increase its ability to hold heavy snow loads - the SP&RD maintenance staff currently shovels the snow off the roof when the depth exceeds 12 inches;
- Replace the ice making machinery, which is several years past its projects life span;
- Replace the ice rink floor as part of the upgrading of the ice making machinery.

The Arena has a conditional occupancy permit from the State Department of Labor and Industry predicated on the continued snow removal from the roof when accumulations exceed 16 inches.

3. The Old Congregational Church (Rotary Barn)

The Rotary Barn was placed in the Park by the Town for temporary storage in 1993 and has remained there closed and boarded up since then with no assigned use. The building is 35 ft x 65 ft and contains approximately 2675 SF. There is currently no real foundation under the building. The center, temporary, wooden support has rotted away, causing a collapse of the interior floor. For more information on the Barn, see Section III.D.5 - the summary of the *Stowe Rotary Barn (Formerly the Stowe Congregational Church): a Rehabilitation & Reuse Proposal*.

4. Maintenance Buildings

There are two garage structures in the maintenance area to the southeast of and lower in elevation than Jackson Arena. The older garage structure, located closer to Jackson Arena, contains 3 bays and is 24 ft x 40 feet. It is partially heated and is approximately 23 years old. The second garage contains 6 bays and an office area. It is approximately 100 ft x 40 ft and is unheated. The original portion of this garage, containing the middle four bays, is five years old. Two additions have been made since it was initially constructed, one on each side of the original building. These buildings are used to store vehicles and equipment, although there are still many pieces of equipment that are still stored year round outside in this area. There is also a temporary metal and vinyl tarp garage structure to the east of the new, longer garage housing additional equipment and fertilizer.

F. Utilities

Electrical and telephone service for Jackson Arena enters the Park underground from Stowe Hollow Road, skirts the eastern edge of the baseball and softball fields, passes under Simmons Brook and feeds a distribution box on the east end of Jackson Arena.

Electrical service for the Gale Center, as well as water and sewer for the whole Park, enters underground from Park Place

III. RECENT STUDIES & PLANS

A. Overview

The excerpts highlighted in this section are those portions of the cited documents that are relevant to the development of the Memorial Park Master Plan. These notes are not meant to represent a full summary of the documents.

B. Townwide

1. *Town of Stowe Plan*, ----- 2009 Final Draft, prepared as part of the overall update of the Stowe Town Plan
 - Support the expansion and more efficient use of existing town facilities by visitors and residents (e.g., the ice rink, recreation path, a possible community center in the village, other town lands).
 - The Town will support and encourage efforts to maintain and renovate historic structures, as defined by the Stowe Zoning Regulations.
 - Renovate or replace the Jackson Ice Arena to serve as a high quality venue for ice skating and hockey.
 - Explore the feasibility of construction of a town pond or lake for boating, fishing and swimming.
 - Explore the options for the creation of additional ball fields.
 - Construct a shelter at the Mayo Farm recreation fields for the safety of participating users of the area.
 - Work with Stow Vibrancy to continue to prioritize and implement the recommendations of the 2007 Stowe Village Vibrancy report for the purpose of implementation.

Additionally, the designated Village center does not include the rear, natural part of Memorial Park.

2. Recreation Commission Vision Statement, adopted by the Recreation Commission in November 2005 and endorsed by the Selectboard in June of 2008.
 - The Community will build facilities to keep pace with the Town's growing recreational needs.
 - Stowe's parks and facilities will serve the needs and interests of a diverse community of all ages and abilities.
 - Stowe's parks will play a significant role in the attractiveness of Stowe as a destination.
3. Recreation Commission's Prioritized Recommendations through 2015, Adopted by the Recreation Commission in November 2005 (not officially endorsed by the Selectboard)
 - Develop dedicated playing fields at Mayo or seek additional space if the fields cannot be developed at the Mayo field.

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- Proceed with the Jackson Arena restoration/construction.
 - Rehabilitate the Gale recreation Center for use by Multi-aged groups.
 - Develop the Village Recreation Complex (Memorial Park?) Master Plan.
 - Provide a skate park within the community.
 - Provide the conduit for communications with the Shaw family in regards to their sledding hill adjacent to the Memorial Fields.
 - Explore the redesign of the Moscow Riley field area into a family park, including provisions for improvement of playing fields.
4. Mayo Farm Management Plan
- Approximately 33 acres of fields J, K and L are designated for recreational uses, including ball fields.
 - Construction of a permanent structure requires the approval of the Town at a vote by Australian ballot.
 - Fields A, B, and C are designated for events, but may be used for sports activities when not used for events.
5. *Recreation 2015: The Stowe 10-Year Recreation Master Plan*, prepared by Crane Associates LLC, December 2005, advisory document not formally accepted by the Selectboard.
- On an average day, the number of people in Stowe is twice the total resident population of approximately 4,800 people.
 - The Recreation Path is Stowe's greatest community asset.
 - Stowe has an inadequate amount of indoor recreation space to meet the needs of seniors, teens, and youth programs.
 - Stowe has sufficient land for recreational fields and team sports, however some of the land needs improvement.
 - Stowe should modernize its image to be more youth friendly and extreme sports oriented.
 - Stowe recreation programs should be expanded, especially for seniors and teens.
 - Improvements to Jackson Arena ranked third in a list of 25 possibilities for recreation facility improvements, behind expansion of the Recreation Path - #1, and expansion of the Quiet Path - #2.
 - The majority of Stowe Residents feel that new facilities should be financed through user fees and fundraising.
 - In the next ten years, the Town of Stowe should:
 - Rehabilitate the Gale Recreation Center to accommodate more multi-generational programs;
 - Renovate Jackson Arena;
 - Develop three new recreation fiels on Mayo Farm;
 - Move high school baseball and softball team fields to the High School;
 - Advance skateboard park; and
 - Create an outdoor ice skating pond.
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6. *A Feasibility Study and Plan for Safe Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Between Stowe Schools and Playfields* prepared by Goodhue Land Design, the Johnson Company, and the Archeology Consulting Team, Inc., February 2007
 - The Elementary School can be linked to the Mayo Fields by a bicycle/pedestrian link using Park Street and Main Street to access the Recreation Path.
 - An alternate link between the Stowe Elementary School and the end of the Recreation Path could use the sidewalk on the north side of the school leading to Stowe Hollow Road, and then using Stowe Hollow Road to head north to the Recreation Path.

Stowe Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Improvement Plan, Lamoille County Planning Commission, April 2006

- Recommends maintaining and improving sidewalks in the Village area.
- Suggests making the existing snow mobile trail a year round off-road connection between Main Street and Stowe Elementary School.
- Encourages greater education and awareness of walking and bicycling.
- Recommends greater maintenance and use of signage and pavement lines.

C. Village-wide

1. The *Stowe Village Vibrancy Report*, 2007, prepared by Crane Associates, LLC for the Town of Stowe
 - After analyzing existing conditions in the Village and collecting primary data on economics, resident opinions, and Town needs, the report made recommendations on how to improve village vibrancy in Stowe.
 - The Village functions well for daily living but is “dead” on nights and weekends and does not serve as a good place to socialize.
 - Both visitors and residents would like more festivals and performing arts in the Village.
 - In general, what is good for residents is also good for visitors.
 - Create an “entertainment district” adjacent to Memorial Park.
 - Build and market a new Stowe skatepark.
 - Develop a performing arts center in the Village.
2. Report of Village Center Committee, December 2008 prepared by the Village Center Committee, appointed by the Stowe Selectboard to analyze the recommendations of the *Stowe Village Vibrancy Report* and report to the Selectboard with its findings.
 - There should be three “centers of gravity” in the Village: the Main Street corridor for shopping and major events; the Memorial Park area for sports and recreation and a variety of “micro-venues” throughout the Village for ongoing smaller events.
 - Insure that the consultant investigating Memorial Park focuses on optimizing onsite parking.
 - The sports and recreation in Stowe needs to be both of very high quality and highly accessible.
 - Facilities in Memorial Park should represent key assets in the Stowe experience.

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- A master plan is needed before any re-development of the Park commences.
 - Jackson Arena should be replaced with a facility that can serve both the needs of the highly active and growing hockey community, as well as providing skating opportunities for a much broader audience of both residents and tourists.
 - The Town should consider the possibility of preserving and repairing the existing Jackson Arena for other community uses while building a new skating facility in close proximity to it.
3. Stowe Parking Study 2003 Update prepared for the Town by Lamoille County Planning Commission, September 2003
- Parking supply in the Village is adequate.
 - Improved management of existing parking spaces is the primary parking need.
 - The Elementary School and Jackson Arena parking goes unused at times when school is in recess; the Town should consider these areas as potential parking reserves for special events.
 - Consider adding parking to Park Street by the creation of a one-way traffic system to allow parking on both sides of the street. (Recommendation of 1998 parking study.)
4. Historic Preservation Guidelines

The zoning regulations include special provisions for property located within the Historic Overlay District, including:

- No structure can be erected, reconstructed, substantially altered, moved, or demolished without review of the plans by the Stowe Historic District Commission (HDC) and approval of the Design Review Board (DRB).
- Minor revision, repairs and upkeep of buildings does not need the review or approval of the HDC or DRB.
- New or replacement fences, retaining walls, or landscaping walls need the review of the HDC and the approval of the DRB or the administrative approval of the Zoning Administrator.

Other part of general statutes exempt work in the Park from these special reviews since it is a Town facility.

D. Memorial Park

1. General Regulations, Memorial Park, prepared by the Stowe Recreation Commission and approved by the Stowe Selectboard in August of 2008.
- Permits to reserve the ball fields, Jackson Arena, or other facility in Memorial Park are required, but the Regulations do not appear specifically to require permits to use these facilities as long as users don't want to reserve them.

2. *Stowe Jackson Arena Feasibility Study*, November 2004, prepared by Black River Design, Architects to assess the future potentials for Jackson Arena.

- The Study explored the options available to the Town, including renovation and enclosure of the rink, demolition and rebuilding a new enclosed facility or repair of structural roof problems and minor renovations.
- The conclusions indicate that the roof needs to be reinforced to withstand heavy snow loads and provide several recommendations as to how the reinforcement can be done.
- The report's cost estimates in 2004 dollars were:
- Renovation of existing rink construction of a new lobby and locker area – \$3,935,000 to \$4,085,000;
- Construction of a new building on the same site - \$4,030,500 to \$4,180,500;
- Correction of existing deficiencies without correcting ice system - \$653,000 to \$803,000;
- Replacement of ice system with similar system - \$100,000; and
- Replacement of ice system with newer concrete system - \$706,700.

Includes cost estimates showing that rehabilitating the existing structure, including replacing the aging ice making equipment, would cost almost the same as constructing a new ice arena using 2004 dollars.

3. Land Use Permit Amendment for Memorial Park, November 2008, granted to the Town of Stowe as Permittee for the construction of a new ice arena (Expires October 2011 without and extension)

- Allows the construction by the Town of Stowe of a new 36,000± square foot winterized facility after the demolition of the existing Jackson Arena based on plans submitted by the Town of Stowe.
- The new arena is for use as an ice rink and as a venue for exhibits, concerts, and similar purposes during non-winter months and which includes a small indoor track, and a second floor indoor recreation (2,500 SF) and office space (2,000 SF)
- The new facility would be 250 feet by 120 feet, provide seating for 740 spaces, an indoor track.
- The facility should generate 278 peak hour motor vehicle trips, 20 more trips than the existing facility peak hour traffic for hockey events which does not coincide with the peak hour for the surrounding roadways in Stowe Village.
- Special traffic management will be used for special events.
- Special events that will include more than 740 people will require approval from the Selectboard.
- Vehicular access remains generally as it is now, with some slight improvements to the upper parking area.
- Pedestrian access is via a sidewalk on the east side of the existing roadway access and a new stairway from the lower parking area up the hill to the north of the arena.

- With additional landscaping along the top of the hill to the west of the parking area, the arena should not have an undue adverse impact on either aesthetics or the Simmons Brook; additional landscaping is a condition of the Permit.

The application also included a traffic report prepared by RSG which indicates that the traffic generated by the renovated Jackson Arena is not anticipated to cause undue adverse traffic or safety conditions on the local roadway network.

4. Letters to Town of Stowe from Knight Consulting Engineers, Inc, the Department of Labor & Industry, and Dufresne-Henry, September through November 2001 addressing the continued ability of the Jackson Arena roof to support snow loads and meet State safety requirements.
 - Indicates that the snow on the roof should be removed if it exceeds 33 pounds per square foot, after a bent steel frame is straightened.
 - Indicates after additional analysis that the snow on the roof should be removed if it exceeds 16 inches in depth, unless it can be shown that the density is less than 23.1 pounds per cubic foot.
 - Includes requests from the Vermont Department of Labor & Industry for guarantees that the roof snow will be shoveled when it exceeds a depth of 22 inches.
5. *Stowe Rotary Barn (Formerly the Stowe Congregational Church) Stowe, Vermont: a Rehabilitation & Reuse Proposal*, December 2006, prepared by Jean Innamorati, Kurt Jergensen and Carrie Mardorf, as part of UVM Graduate Historic Preservation course work for HP 204 Development Economics
 - The “Rotary Barn” was constructed in 1839 as a Congregational Church.
 - The use of the building was changed to a gymnasium in 1923.
 - The building was moved behind the Stowe High School (currently the Town Library) and continued its use as a gymnasium.
 - The buildings use was changed to classrooms in 1974.
 - The Stowe Chapter of the Rotary Club leased the building in 1981 for storage and to house their annual charity auction.
 - The building was moved to its current, temporary site in 1993 and set on corner footings with insufficient floor supports.
 - The building is in need of serious attention if it is to be saved.
 - Overall, the roof is in poor conditions and the replacement of the roofing is of critical importance.
 - Overall, the siding is in poor condition and conservation is of critical importance.
 - The foundation is in poor condition and the installation of a new foundation is of critical importance.
 - Overall, the windows are in fair condition and the need for significant attention is of critical importance.
 - The flooring is in fair condition and its preservation is of critical importance.
 - The interior wall treatment is in good or fair condition and requires minor treatment.

- Despite loss of integrity of location and site, the loss of historic fabric to renovations and neglect, the value of the materials that still comprise the Rotary Barn outweighs the detriment of any historic significance it has lost over time.
- The building may not be eligible for inclusion on the National or State Register of Historic Places; it still holds a place of prominence in the unique history of Stowe.
- The Rotary Barn could act as an addition to the Gale Center or could replace the Gale Center.
- A second floor is recommended for the Rotary Barn, but it should not be used as a public space, so that an elevator or other access mechanism is not necessary.
- The structure could be rehabilitated to be used as combination community space and offices for Town commission and departments, educational space, recreational and gathering spaces, community exhibit space and/or other community uses.
- Moving the Rotary Barn to another nearby location and rehabilitating it is estimated to cost approximately \$433,500 in 2006 dollars.
- The Rotary Barn should be viewed as significant to the history of Stowe and valuable for its historic building materials.

6. *Stowe Meeting House and David Gale Recreation Center Business Plan*, created at the request of the Selectboard by Historic Stowe II, August 2008

- The business plan envisions the historic old Congregational Church as a new focal point for family recreation in Memorial Park.
- The objectives of the project are to:
 - Provide a place where families can enjoy activities together;
 - Provide educational and recreational opportunities for all through affordable programs;
 - Provide additional performance space;
 - Provide a unique dance venue;
 - Provide children with activities guided by adults;
 - Bring people together and create a greater sense of community; and
 - Link Stowe historic past with the present.
- The use of the building for this purpose will help address the need for indoor recreation space highlighted in the *Stowe 10-Year Recreation Master Plan*.
- An ideal location would be the location of the current Gale Center, which it could replace.
- No second floor should be added to the space.
- Restore the building close to its original appearance, using the photographs from 1869 to 1915 as a reference.
- The restoration work could be done in three phases:
 - The *Stowe 10-Year Recreation Master Plan* and the *Stowe Village Vibrancy* report provide justification for the use of the site as a recreation/activity space.
 - The building should be managed by the Stowe Parks and Recreation Department.
 - The Parks and Recreation Department should coordinate events and activities with other organizations in Stowe, Sharing the operations work and the benefits to the community.
 - “Fun for Families” concept can be used for marketing purposes.

- Funding for the restoration will come from Historic Stowe II, which also intends to establish and endowment from a portion of the raised funds for the facility to address future building needs.
 - Future events can be income producing.
6. Memo to Tom Jackman, May 11, 2007 from John Johnson, Historic Preservation Consultant addressing the Town's question of eligibility of the old Congregational Church on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Properties are considered qualified for listing in the National Register of Historic Places if they have historic significance, historic integrity and historic context.
 - The Stowe Rotary Barn has marginal historic significance since there is no evidence remaining of the buildings initial use of 84 years as a Greek Revival Style church.
 - The building has lost its historic integrity of location after having been moved twice.
 - The building is no longer part of the historic contexts of architectural and religious trends in Vermont.
 - The building does not convey historic significance, historic integrity or historic context and would not be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
7. Letter to Tom Jackman, January 8, 2005 from Keefe & Wesner Architects, P.C. presenting a diagnostic assessment of the conditions of the old Congregational Church.
- Engage in a process of Documentation and Destruction of the Rotary Barn, salvaging useful materials.
8. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, completed by Jean Innamorati, (Incomplete and not yet submitted) December 2008
- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
 - Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
 - Significant for architecture and social history.
 - Significant period is 1839 to 1958 with significant dates of 1839, 1864, 1923 and 1932.
 - Previous documentation on file with the National Park Service - previously listed in the National Register
9. Stowe Skateboard Coalition presentation to the Stowe Selectboard to present background information and raise support for a skatepark in Stowe Village, August 25, 2008

- The Skateboard Park is estimated to cost between \$240,000 and \$320,00 based on an 8,000 SF park and \$30 to \$40 / SF construction costs.
- Including the Town of Stowe donation and independent donations, the Coalition now has \$130,264.
- One in every seven youths in the nation is a skateboarder.
- Figures show that the Stowe Skater population is 206±, with over 500 Stowe skaters estimated for the future.
- The space needed for the skatepark is a bit more than a tennis court.
- The skatepark should be part of the Village Recreation Complex in a visible location.
- Skateboarding is growing, with 14.4% growth between 1987 and 2001 while baseball and football participation both declined by more than that rate.

9. Land and Water Conservation Fund Documents, 1991 to Present

Because the Park was developed using federal Land and Water Conservation Fund money, the change must be consistent with the original intent of the Park and must be approved by the State Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) and the National Park Service (NPS). The original roadway into the park went close to the Elementary School. As part of the expansion of the School in 1991, the Town and the School district developed a plan that rerouted the roadway to its current position further from the school and converted two tennis courts to parking. It also created a bus drop off area close to the school. The Selectboard Office maintains a file with numerous correspondence and records relating to the process of gaining approval from ANR and NPS for the change. The highlights of those records include:

- 1990 - The Town proposed to remove two tennis courts and replace them with a rerouted access road, a parking area, and a bus drop off area for the Elementary School.
- January 1991 – ANR approves the change and sends it to NPS for their approval.
- January 1991 – NPS, while sympathetic with the reasons for the change, does not approve it, since it appears that it is being done more to benefit the school than the Park, which is against the regulations. They indicate that the land being changed to parking must be replaced offset by land of equal or greater value, usefulness and location.
- April 1991 – Ampersand offers to donate 10+ acres to the Town adjacent to the Park to replace the 0.69 acres being converted to parking.
- August 1991 – NPS approves the exchange and indicates that, “Upon receipt of required amendments, revised 6(f) maps and accompanying signed deed, final approval will be granted.”
- September 1991 to 2005 – No exchange of land takes place.
- February 2005 – The lack of resolution of the exchange comes to light as the Town pursues plans to modify or replace Jackson Arena.
- October 2008 – The exchange of the land to be donated takes place.
- April 2009 – The Town received the updated survey of the Park showing the outline of the entire Park area, including the donated land.

- September 2009 – The updating of the Section 6(f) maps remains to be completed and submitted to ANR and NPS for final approval.

IV. PARK USE

Table 1 (in draft form) shows approximate levels of use of the various different parks and recreational facilities in Stowe.

V. INTERVIEWS

A. Interview Objectives and Process

Numerous individuals in the Town, who have been associated with Memorial Park or some of the activities within it, may have information, ideas, or suggestions on the current and future uses of Memorial Park and/or its facilities that would be important to capture as part of this examination of background information. Accordingly, BRPD conducted numerous interviews with these people, either individually or in small groups. BRPC promised them that the information or opinions they provided would not be identified as theirs, so that they would be more inclined to speak openly. Consequently, BRPD did not record the interviews, but did take written notes.

B. Interview Subjects

BRPD interviewed individuals in the following positions:

- The Town of Stowe Selectboard,
- Town Manager,
- The Town Planner,
- The Town Public Works Director,
- The Stowe Parks and Recreation Director,
- The Elementary School Principal,
- The Stowe High School Principal *,
- The Stowe Middle School Principal *,
- The Stowe Parks and Grounds Superintendent,
- The Stowe Recreation Department Staff,
- The Historical Society and Museum Director *,
- A Representative of Historic Stowe 2,
- The Recreation Commission,
- A Representative of the Stowe Skateboard Coalition,
- A representative of the Stowe Performing Arts,
- A representative of Stowe Area Association*,
- A representative of Friends of Jackson Arena*, and
- The Chair of the Stowe Historic Preservation Commission*.

(Interviews marked with * still remain to be completed.)

C. Summary of Interview Comments

1. Overview

The following is a summary of the comments or opinions received in the interviews. They are loosely organized by subject matter.

2. General Comments

- The Town needs to do some planning for the park and not let it be a hodge-podge of things.
- The Town needs to look at facts and set priorities for limited budget.
- The Park plan must set the tone for a positive, welcoming facility.
- The Park plan should address recreational and athletic functions needed for the Village.
- The Park now has two separate areas, the front developed area and the back natural area, which was done intentionally to keep the land open.
- The Stowe Area Association is targeting tourists that are at least 45 years old and upper class so the facilities need to appeal to them.
- This should be thought of as a 20 year plan.
- If the Town has not maintained what it has, how is it going to maintain the “More! More! More!” mentality now in the Town.
- The plan should have hard data on intensity of existing uses.
- There should be reasonable alternative locations for uses not accommodated in the Park.
- What are the current deficiencies in the Park?
- The majority of current users in the Park go the playground (about 20 users per day) or the skate park (about 50 per day in the summer).
- Most kids just hang out in the Park and don’t actually use any of the facilities.
- The Park is not good for relaxing or passive recreation.
- The Park is viewed as a recreation area but is also considered a location for community events.
- The Village may get left behind as energy moves up to the Mountain.
- Do we risk overdoing it and ruining everything because there is too much?
- High school kids typically hang out at the basketball court or the existing skate park in the Park.
- The Park users are now mostly Town residents and not tourists.
- There are always lots of out of state license plates in the parking lot.
- Consider the needs of tourists when planning the Park.
- Lots of groups consider the Park a great location for their particular use.
- Memorial Park is a very important portion of the Town’s recreation facilities.
- The machinery that maintains an area should be located close to that area.
- The Park is pretty easy to maintain.

- The water table in the Park is really high.
- If the ice rink and the play fields are in the Park, then the maintenance area should also be there too.
- Moscow fields are not expandable.
- If the fields and ice rink went to Mayo, then there would be more room for events in the Village.
- The Town needs to consider how much it is going to put into capital dollars and where is its best use it.
- The proximity to the school allows the potential to create partnerships.
- The school thinks of the playground as primarily theirs.
- The Town needs to find a way to fix the wetland adjacent to the tennis courts.
- The stream could be an asset rather than ignored.
- Don't create a sequential plan that requires one task to be completed before another can proceed, because if one bogs down, the implementation of the whole plan comes to a halt.

3. Access and Traffic

- Use the right-of-way from Stowe Hollow Road as an access.
- Traffic flow is a particularly bad problem.
- Another vehicular access point is needed, especially if anything new is done
- Add a bridge across the wetlands.
- Is the bridge across the wetland from Depot Street practical?
- There is no good pedestrian access to the Park.
- A second access from Depot Street would be highly unlikely.
- The existing road divides the children's playground from the children's recreation center, creating a dangerous situation.

4. Future Changes to the Park

- There needs to be something that draws people to Memorial Park.
- The Park is good now the way it is.
- There should be a green space for kids to run.
- The Park needs more shade.
- Remove the big pine trees near the Gale Center.
- Have the maintenance facilities and the Recreation offices share space.
- Move the maintenance areas to Moscow.
- Sledding hill should be controlled by the Town.
- Winter sledding is by far the most popular winter sport.
- Put some food in the park.
- Town needs an indoor toddler crawling place.
- The back area won't get developed.
- The Park needs a small water feature that kids can play in.
- The Park needs more drinking fountains.

- The Park needs better bathrooms, especially accessible ones.
- The Park needs a picnic area with tables and grills.
- The Park should stay the same as it is now.
- The Park should be linked to the mountain bike trails.
- Would like tennis, skateboard, ball fields, playground, badminton, and other suggested ideas to be in the Master Plan.
- The low spot to the east of the Gale Center, near the flagpole needs to be filled because it always gets wet; put an outdoor pavilion there.
- A running track and outdoor ice skating in the Park would be great.
- Add horseshoe courts, sand volleyball, new indoor recreation space, racquetball.
- The park needs more electrical outlets.
- Look into the trends in recreation and plan on addressing future trends.
- A good indoor/outdoor space in the Park would be great.
- The Park programs need more nearby storage.

5. Old Congregational Church (Rotary Barn)

- Put the skate park in the Rotary Barn.
- Because the building is 170 years old, it should be saved.
- Use the Rotary Barn as a pavilion by taking the siding off.
- The Rotary Barn should be used as a community center in the Park.
- There is no use now for the Rotary Barn; maybe the beams could be used for something.
- There will be few grants available for the Rotary Barn since it is not eligible for the National Register.
- This is a building in search of a use.
- The Rotary Barn should stay in the Park.

6. David Gale Recreation Center

- There is sentimental value to the existing David Gale Center.
- There are ice problems every year on the roof of the Gale Center.
- Older teens don't want anything to do with the Gale Center.
- Gale Center should be expanded.
- The Gale Center was a 30 year building that has lived out its life.
- Add an open pavilion next to the Gale Center.
- The Gale Center, or other community center in the Park needs to provide space for seniors and other under-served groups.
- The Gale Center is now in a central location.
- The Gale Center is not big enough.
- The Gale Center is good enough to keep now; there is no need to tear it down.
- We are putting good money after bad when we fix the Gale Center; it shouldn't be fixed.
- The roof and front entrance of the Gale Center are the only things that need fixing now.
- Storage for Recreation Department's equipment for programs is needed.

- A kitchen would be great in the recreation center.
- Kids would flock to an area for video games and internet that is indirectly supervised.
- Swimming Hole is not an option for use as an instructional space for Town programs.

7. Parking

- Parking is the biggest problem; parking in the whole area near the Park and the school is a mess.
- There is a parking shortage in this area, especially during the winter when the school uses the Park's parking area.
- Parents parking cars near the school to pick up their kids sometime block the access to the Park.
- Perhaps move the maintenance area and put parking there.
- The existing bus drop off area along the edge of the parking area typically works well.
- The existing, tight parking and access to the Park are safety issues not congestion issues.
- The topography of the rear area behind Jackson Arena lends itself to putting in deck parking.

8. Ball Fields

- The existing play fields are not welcoming.
- It might make sense to move the ball fields to the High School.
- The use of the ball fields is by permit only.
- The grade school does not use the ball fields much and occasionally uses the tennis courts.
- Many people think of the grade school and the play fields as one entity.
- The ball fields are a high maintenance area with very low use.
- The ball fields were added to the Park as they were needed.
- Baseball and softball fields are used concurrently by High School.
- Get rid of one small field and light the second one.
- Who would cover the cost of moving the ball fields to the High School?
- Maybe remove the fences but keep the fields.
- The ball fields could stay since they are open and green, but maybe the fence could come down.
- The ball fields could be moved to the back area.
- The fields could be moved without a lot of work, but moving the fields would require abandoning the dug outs.
- There are potential flooding problems on the ball fields.

9. Jackson Arena/Ice Rink

- Would like to see new improved ice rink.
- The deficiencies in the ice rink drive the Master Plan – is a new one needed, is old one fixable?
- Jackson Arena needs to provide exactly what it is now providing.
- Jackson Arena should be totally renovated or a new facility should be built.

- Jackson Arena could be enclosed and insulated to be a year round facility.
- Will a new arena actually attract enough people to make it a success, given the experiences of Morrisville and Waterbury?
- The space in the Jackson Arena serves a huge function in the summer when it is used by the Recreation Department's summer programs.
- We either need to go big or not do anything here.
- Keep the rink area either redeveloped as a new structure or occupied with the existing arena.
- You could put the arena where the Little League field is and move that field to the softball field.
- The Act 250 Permit is for replacing the existing facility, not for adding a second one.
- The Town has consistently voted to keep the Mayo fields open, so putting a new structure there could be difficult.
- Hockey is waning as a team sport.
- The Town still has an overall positive impression of the Jackson Arena.
- The Town has lost a variety of events to other facilities due to the age and the coldness in the winter of Jackson Arena.
- A year round rink would attract a whole new group to Stowe, but the groups that rely on it as a year round back-up would be upset.
- The Arena could be used for another five years by fixing the roof without a lot of money.
- An ice rink is a good part of the entire Stowe package.
- Start to think of the permitted "replacement" rink as a community center rather than just an ice rink; it provides service areas, recreation center offices, gale center replacement and much more.
- Think of using the new rink building to solve a number of problems and compare that to how much it would cost to renovate Jackson.

10. Skate park

- Use the open area in the back for the skate park and motor course.
- Skate park should be indoor.
- Skate park should be up front and visible for both kids and adults.
- Putting the skate park in Memorial Park would be best for bringing the kids into the Village in a good way.
- There is not a big need for support facilities for the skate park.
- The current skate park is not really maintained; it's surprising that the Town wants to put its name on it.
- Not sure how much support there is for the skate park.
- The biggest immediate need in Stowe is a skate park.
- Skate park could be revenue generator, but that is not the current goal of the Skateboard Coalition.
- The skate park would not create conflicts with other uses now in the Park.
- Skate park users would not often come by vehicle.
- The skate park would need to be monitored and supervised.

- There have been some incidents of deviant behavior in front of Jackson Arena that would end if the skate park were in a more visible location.

VI. PUBLIC WORK SESSION

A. Overview

The Town held the first public work session for the Memorial Park Master Plan on September 16, 2009 at 7 PM in the Akeley Building. BRPD presented basic information on the Park and then invited those attending the session to put comments on the maps pertaining to any aspect of the park, the surrounding area, or their likes, dislikes, or hopes for the Park. BRPD then reviewed the comments with the group to see which ones had general acceptance and which were comments not shared by others. The important comments from the meeting, which seemed to have general support are listed below.

B. Comments

1. General/Multiple Items

- Move the Gale Center to Jackson; put skate park on Gale Center site to eliminate illicit activity potential – it will be highly visible; move Jackson Parking to other side of rink and develop access road from Stowe Hollow.
- Use renovated old Jackson for alternative Music in the Meadow rain site, indoor sports, and indoor skate park.
- Move rec center to skate rink and incorporate skate rink rec office and recreation.
- Need more parking! (This is school lot.)
- Put the tennis, skate park, and basketball altogether.
- Put in a science area for kids to study wetlands.
- Add a pedestrian bridge over the wetlands to link with Depot Street.
- Stowe has snow sometimes from October to May! Sports need to be inside when possible for maximum use.
- Stowe Vibrancy wants more events in Village so indoor space is needed.
- Need more indoor space for toddlers, teens ...
- Add more natural play areas for children.

2. Ampersand Addition

- It would be great to have an “in town” area for walking in the woods.
- Support for exploring permit issues for nature walks or trails in the woods.

3. Skate Park

- The use of the skate park is very large and would increase with a better park.

- The skate park is very run down and beat up and needs to be rebuilt.
- Add a skate park for sure!
- No skate park!
- Put skate park next to Gale Center for safety and visibility.
- The idea of swapping the location of the skate park and tennis courts is a great idea; the land of the tennis courts is level and already has lighting and fencing; it's ideal for a skate park.

4. Ice Rink

- Make an indoor skate rink for year round use.
- Scott Hamilton skated at Jackson but can an ice rink make money now? Those in Morrisville and Waterbury have financial problems.
- Can new ice rink be attached to Old Jackson? Rename Old Jackson as David Gale Center call new rink Jackson.
- Great memories!

5. Old Congregational Church

- Move the Rotary Barn somewhere useful and dry.
- Save the Old church – historic towns restore their historic buildings for community use/multi use.
- Move old church to David Gale Site either along or combined and turn into The Annex for use for kids after school activities, computers, arts & crafts, theater recreational uses, elder uses, bingo, bridge ...keep upstairs open for dances – bring in dance festivals – wedding and other small income producing events; library, Helen Day Center and Rec Department all need extra space.
- Use Rotary Barn as an indoor skate park.
- Move old church next to Gale Center using existing plans to do this; put it on a full basement.
- Don't save the Rotary Barn.

6. Gale Center

- The Gale Center is too small and old.
- Teens don't like the Gale Center – say it is only for little kids.
- Combine with old church or save historic pieces and reuse the Jackson Arena as new Gale Center after new arena is built.
- Move Gale Center into new ice arena and maybe incorporate an indoor skate park.
- Keep the Gale Center

7. Ball Fields

- Are there easement restrictions on the use of ball fields? The Stowe Historical Association thinks there are.
- How often are ball fields used? They don't seem to be used much.
- Can they be moved to Mayo Fields?
- Move the ball fields to the high school.
- The ball field area is a great place for green space and development.

8. Sledding Hill

- Are there liability issues with using the hill without a use agreement?
- The sledding hill should be purchased.

9. The Southeast Back Area

- Beautiful views! Bring the whole town here!
- The best use for the back area may be a natural facility with occasional access via an improved trail system – the land is not easily developed.
- Move the maintenance facility – this is prime acreage – move tennis and basketball here and still light it.
- Great woods, great grass – looks like a natural theater.

10. Stowe Hollow Access

- We need more than one road in and out.
- The Stowe Hollow access could serve the sledding hill.
- This particular frontage may not solve the Park's access problems.
- Use the other access to the Park and keep the school children at Stowe Elementary School safe.

VII. ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Figure 3 provides an overview of the various issues and opportunities that have emerged from this initial analysis of the Park.

VIII. NATIONAL RECREATION TRENDS

As stated in Recreation Trends and Markets, The 21st Century; John Kelly and Rodney Warnick, 1999.

Provides information on a few of the activities contemplated for future use in Memorial Park.

- Tennis experienced a decline in popularity in the 1990s but has stabilized and is projected to remain roughly at the same level of popularity with localized pockets of increased activity.
- Walking for exercise has experienced a general increase in popularity which is expected to gradually continue.
- Basketball participation remained generally at an even level although there is a slight increase in female participation in the sport.
- Participation in ice hockey remains steady.
- Participation in baseball and softball remains steady.
- Participation in volleyball remains steady.

VIII. EVALUATION SYSTEM

In order to help in evaluating the relative appropriateness of the various facilities proposed for Memorial Park, BRPD has proposed developing an evaluation system that can be applied to each of the proposed uses. The evaluation system should be set and accepted prior to beginning of the actual evaluation process. The following list is an initial suggestion for an evaluation list. It includes some weighting, to reflect the relative importance of the various elements. This list will be used to evaluate each of the uses suggested in the various interviews, public discussions, or site evaluations, first for their desirability in the Park and then for their priority. The results will be tempered by local discussion, BRPD's professional recommendations, and the Selectboard's final opinions to create the final list of prioritized uses to be included in Memorial Park as part of the Master Plan.

- The support for the use by residents of the Town (Up to 2 Points);
- The overall need for the use in the Town (Up to 4 Points);
- The difficulty of locating the use elsewhere in the Town (Up to 3 Points);
- The desirability of having the use in the Village center (Up to 3 Points);
- The ease of realizing the use based on costs (Up to 10 Points);
- The ease of realizing the use based on permitting (Up to 10 Points);
- The ease of realizing the use based on other factors (Up to 4 Points);
- The overall amount of space required for the use (Up to 3 Points for small area requirements);
- The compatibility of the use with other proposed Park uses (Up to 3 Points);
- The support for such a use in other official Town plans or recommendations;
- The current existence of such uses in the Park (Up to 7 Points);
- Historical/memorialized importance or value of the use in the Town;
- The expected frequency of use (Up to 5 Points);
- The value of the use to the Town residents, and
- The historic availability of the use in Memorial Park (Up to 2 Points).