

ABOUT ME – LARRY SIMPSON (REC and PARK Commission)



My name is Larry Simpson, and I am running for the Recreation and Park Commission. I have been a homeowner in Marblehead for over 30 years, raising three children and running a garden design business. The children attended public schools and participated in recreation programs for years, - principally summer camps and sports.

MY BACKGROUND

I grew up in Michigan and one of my favorite pastimes during college was developing a small sugar bush with my younger brother. He and I would camp on family land and tap our small

grove of sugar maples. Mid-March was a magical time as the nights were cold and the days cheery as we turned sap into syrup. I was studying botany as an undergraduate and earned a Bachelor of Science in Ornamental Horticulture. After graduating I spent 12 years working for The Trustees of Reservations managing the 114-acre Sedgwick Gardens at Long Hill Reservation in Beverly. I also managed a 104-acre passive recreation property, Agassiz Rock in Manchester and the 12.5-acre Halibut Point Reservation in Rockport where I worked with the organization to offer and lead outdoor recreational programs. My time there taught me the value of working with committees as well as how to propose an annual budget and stay within that budget.

My primary work since moving to Marblehead has been designing, installing, and maintaining numerous local native gardens. This has required good communication skills and flexibility, working with many clients and subcontractors. For the last twenty years I have taught plant classes at North Shore Community College. In addition, I have over the years lectured at the Arnold Arboretum, Tower Hill Botanic Garden, and numerous garden clubs. I consider myself a designer as well as educator.

Recreationally I have played a couple racquet sports (pickleball and badminton) for years in Marblehead as well as I kayak with family and friends in the local waters. I have a passion for native, sustainable landscapes and believe we should continue to manage the turf fields organically. I am a member of the Sustainable Trees committee and have volunteered planting trees for the town as well as recently designing and installing a pollinator garden at Chandler Hovey. I believe our Recreation and Parks Department must support outdoor sports/activity programs for children and adults as well as provide support for nature.

My goal in running is to encourage more enlightened stewardship of our park land and open space. Marblehead does a phenomenal job with its recreational programs, and I would like to see the same success with the Town's open spaces. Many environmentally friendly practices should be employed that could save the town money and at the same time make our landscapes more resilient. I think the Town can do more to create habitat for wildlife which helps make our natural spaces more sustainable. Marblehead doesn't have large tracts of open space but cities like New York create pocket parks, small oases of greenery, and I feel we can do the same thing here in Marblehead. My vision is for Marblehead to enter the 21st century in terms of how it thinks about and manages its park land. Like the changes we all know about in transportation and communication, landscape stewardship has evolved tremendously since I began my study of open space nearly 50 years ago. Practices such as thoughtful plant communities can help manage stormwater runoff and flooding. I spent 12 years working as a land manager for The Trustees of Reservations and I learned better practices requires more thinking/education, but they don't have to cost the Town more. I hope I can count on your vote for these ideas.