

Mayor Mitchell leads celebratory opening of New Bedford's historic bowling greens

Mayor Jon Mitchell formally opened the restored historic lawn bowling and croquet greens at Hazelwood Park in a celebratory event this morning, before a large crowd of community members and lawn sports enthusiasts. Elected officials, city leaders, project supporters, members of local lawn-bowling and mallet clubs, local youth organizations, and national lawn sports advocates all joined the event.

"Lawn bowling and croquet have rich histories in New Bedford, beginning with textile workers in the early 20th century who made these greens a social hotspot," Mayor Jon Mitchell said. "Restoring the greens has entailed a multi-year project involving public-private partnerships. We thank all those who contributed, and we look forward to the revival of play for players young and old."

The \$583,000 restoration project includes \$253,000 in City funding. Groundbreaking occurred in September 2020. The extensive improvements already have caught regional attention from lawn bowling and croquet enthusiasts.

Veronica Sum, president of Bowls USA, attended today's event and said the facility is one of only three of its kind in the northeastern U.S. Bob Kroeger, director of the USCA Instructional Schools at the National Croquet Center in Palm Beach, Florida, also attended and touted the greens' high quality and regional appeal.

The restored greens also are having an enormous local impact. Members of The Friends of Hazelwood Park, Marion Mallet Club,

and other local groups attended today's event and celebrated the potential for local events, competitions, and gatherings.

Lawn bowlers 8 years old to 94 years old were on the greens today, reflecting not only the sport's accessibility for all ages and physical abilities, but also its capacity to enable intergenerational exchange and learning.

The City's Department of Parks, Recreation and Beaches is coordinating use of the greens for club and family events, and offering clinics for anyone interested in learning the sports of lawn bowling and croquet.

Learn more at:
<https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/parks-recreation-beaches/>