

Monthly Parks Department update March/April 2017

It has been a busy time for the Parks Department as we prepare for the rush of spring activities that fill out the calendars of April-June. Games for soccer, baseball and softball at Pirone will start in April, not leaving much time following the late snows to prepare the fields properly. We also have been working with the school to help them with their fields, which need to be ready even sooner due to their seasons requiring early games to ensure their seasons are complete by May 31. Fortunately, much of the infield prep work was able to be done in the late fall and gave us a head start on getting them together. The biggest concern is the sensitivity of the turf, which took a significant impact last summer following the water ban the town imposed in mid-July. This led to much of the turf drying out to an unhealthy level and limited ability to enhance its recovery during the fall. We hope to get favorable conditions through the spring that will allow the remaining turf and newly planted seed to fill in prior to the heavy use through the spring season.

The Parks Commission has decided to continue the Sandy Pond Beach user policies introduced last year with no modifications. This includes retaining the entry fees (\$5 for adults, \$3 for children) for non-residents. Residents will once again be required to show a proof of residency prior to entering the Sandy Pond facility. Those who do not have an ID showing their residency can get a card to give them access. These are available on the third floor of Town Hall, and can be obtained by bringing in a proof of residence. The policies for resident and non resident use and parking at Sandy Pond Beach can be found on the Parks Department website.

Plans for the opening of the Dog Park along Snake Hill Road continue to move along. The Friends of Ayer Dog Park will be putting together an event at Pirone Park on May 7 from 10:00 AM-12:00 PM to bring dog owners interested in the park together and discuss potential ideas for its usage. The Dog Park is expected to begin construction this fall.

The schedule of Summer Camps offered throughout the Ayer Parks Department has been released, and registrations are now being accepted. Most of these programs fill up fast due to their low cost and popularity, so those hoping to take advantage of them should sign up as soon as possible. This year's camps and clinics include those for basketball, softball, baseball, soccer and football. Information about the camps and registration material can be found on the Parks Department webpage.

The upcoming election will feature four questions, including one to see if the Town will choose to accept the Park Department's proposed project of erecting a storage/office building at Pirone Park. If the initiative passes, the question moves to Town Meeting on May 8. Town Meeting will also vote on accepting the Park Department's proposal to fund a perimeter path at Pirone Park. We hope to get the word out to the public as to the importance of passing each of these initiatives. If they pass, it is expected to begin each project after July 1, the start of the FY18.