

Monthly Parks Department Update
December/January

The basketball program continues to go well, with all levels of play currently in session. This includes the Panther Elite program, which offers a more advanced level of play for players in the 5th-8th grade travel levels. Currently, there are four teams entered into the Mid-Central Mass League, and all are doing exceptionally well, particularly coming from a smaller population town than many of their opponents. The 3rd-4th grade levels are currently having scrimmage sessions with the Shirley program, which has really helped their game development. They were also fortunate to have a clinic put on for them prior to the holiday break by the ASRSD Varsity/JV Panther teams and their coaches. This is an annual event that is always a favorite among the kids, and this year was no exception. Thank you to coaches Pete Page, Justin Carlson and Steve Belanger for once again helping to put these together.

The skating rink at Sandy Pond beach was erected following Thanksgiving, and we were able to get some early skating in when things finally started freezing up around New Years. Unfortunately, there was a tear in the liner that developed, and when we had a recent thaw, further damage to the liner occurred to the point that it appears irreparable. We will try to patch it, but it may need to be closed down for the season. There is consideration to moving the location of the rink next year back to Pirone Park, where a more stable configuration might help keep future breeches from occurring.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan is nearing its completion, and should be available for public viewing soon. For those not familiar with the OSRP, it is something the town puts together every ten years or so to review goals and objectives for improvements to open space areas and enhancements to recreational activities. Jason Mayo has been representing the Parks Department on the committee, co-chairing with Beth Suedmeyer to put together an optimal plan for the town's future.

Jeff Thomas
Ayer Parks Director