

Monthly Parks Department Update

June/July

All of the spring teams sports seasons have come to an end, and we are currently in the middle of our camps and swim lessons as well as several summer baseball teams utilizing Pirone fields. There are currently nine camps and clinics being offered through the Parks Department throughout the summer, all designed to be fun and affordable for our residents, many available for free or nominal cost. We appreciate all of the volunteer support, mostly from High School players donating their time, that allows us to put these on each year.

The new policies implemented at Sandy Pond Beach are going well, and have been well received by the vast majority of residents who utilize the facility. Non-residents have also voiced an overall positive opinion of the new policies, which require those from out of town to pay a fee of \$5 to use the beach. The consensus among those who have offered comments is that it is fair to ask non-residents to pay a small fee to help pay for the staffing and services that are required to keep the facility open. Through June, the gate attendants have collected nearly \$3,000 so far, which projects to be about \$10,000 for the season. We are also now able to monitor the total number of guests that use the facility each day, which will be helpful in determining the best way to maximize Parks Department and Town resources through the swim season.

The July 4 Town Fireworks at Pirone drew its usual large crowd, and once the show was over there was the usual mess to clean up. Fortunately there was only a small amount of damage overall (comparable to other years), and we should be able to get things back in order without too much difficulty. The July 4 Committee as well as the DPW, AFD, APD and Recycling Committee all pitch in to make it work.

This appears to be one of the driest spring/summers on record, and it has been difficult to near impossible to maintain the turf at Pirone Park and Sandy Pond. Volunteers have been putting in extra hours trying to keep the flower beds from wilting with extra watering when possible. With limited availability to irrigate due to town restrictions, much of the grass has already browned over and clay infields require daily watering just to keep from becoming dustbowls. With some luck we will be able hold onto as much as we have and reseed in the late summer to get fields back to at least a usable state.

Jeff Thomas

Ayer Parks Director