

Monthly Parks Department update

September

Labor Day has come and gone, and with it another successful season of swimming and summer fun at Sandy Pond Beach. The new facilities use policies implemented in May proved to be very popular with the majority of beach users, with many favorable comments offered throughout the summer. We were especially pleased with the performance of our gate attendants, lifeguards, and Waterfront Director Heidi Januskiewicz, all of whom worked diligently with both residents and non-residents to help them understand the new policies and reasoning behind them. Along with their regular duties, our gate attendants also were able to track data regarding patronage at Sandy Pond, which will be extremely useful in planning and managing the facility. This season, Sandy Pond Beach served 9,635 residents and 1,466 non-residents for a total of 11,101 patrons. Attendants collected \$6,108 in fees, which will help pay for lifeguard wages and maintenance costs. We finished the season at Sandy Pond with an outing for the 7th Battalion, 98th Regiment of Devens and their family members. This was in line with the Parks Commission's policy to offer veterans and armed service personnel services whenever possible as a way of expressing our gratitude to for their diligence in serving our community.

Soccer season has started, and Pirone Park is once again a busy place on Saturday mornings and afternoons. Flag Football has also returned, an activity that continues to grow in popularity each season. Registrations have opened for youth basketball as well, with the older players beginning workouts in early November and the younger ones starting closer to winter. We are currently negotiating with the school regarding facility use for the basketball program, and hope to be able to continue with our shared facility use policy that has allowed us to keep registration fees low and allow more players an opportunity to participate.

The Parks Commission will be having their annual Volunteer Appreciation Cookout on Sunday, September 25 from 1:00-3:30 at Pirone Park. This event, currently in its ninth year, is an opportunity for the Parks Commission to offer their thanks to all the volunteers that make the youth programs in town such a success. For most small towns, it is a challenge to find enough volunteers to coach and manage the various programs that are offered, but the Ayer community has been terrific in stepping up to give our kids quality individuals to teach skills and act as a role model for developing youth. We appreciate all that our volunteers do and hope as many as possible can come out for the event.

Jeff Thomas

Ayer Parks Director