

## Monthly Parks Department update - October

Basketball registrations have been pouring in over the last few weeks for the Parks Department sponsored program that annually serves over 400 players throughout the community. This includes levels K-8, as well as a Miniball program for pre-K players and the Nashoba Valley Youth Basketball program, that works with players who prefer a less structured venue. The 5th-8th grade players will be getting started over the next few weeks, followed by the 3rd-4th graders in mid November, K-2 players at the beginning of December, and Miniball and NVYB once we return from the holiday break. As always, gyms space for this many players is a challenge, and we hope to be able to continue to work with the school to ensure all the levels of play have sufficient resources to offer players the best opportunity. The soccer program continues to do well, benefiting from mostly unseasonably warm weather. Frost can be found across the fields for some of the early groups on Saturday, but for the most part it has been dry and comfortable for both players and their enthusiastic fans!

The rehab on the main youth baseball diamond has been nearly complete.

Grass is starting to emerge on the newly loamed areas and the tilled and edged clay is settling enough to start grooming. We are also finishing up with the High School fields' fall maintenance to ensure they will be ready to go for next year's April opening. Baseball and softball fields are tricky to maintain in the New England climate because the primary season for most school and recreation teams starts in early April. Many seasons, including some very recent ones, offer little to no window of opportunity to perform any maintenance on the fields prior to the scheduling of the first games, so we need to get creative and find ways to do as much of that work during the fall season as possible. This includes aerating, adding clay, edging, leveling, planting grass as needed, etc. We like to take pride in our fields' appearance and playability, and have been fortunate to get a lot of support from the community in that effort, both in terms of volunteerism and resources.

We will be helping to honor Eagle Scout candidate Emmitt Boyd later at his Court of Honor in appreciation for his Eagle Scout Project that resulted in four decorative flower box/beds installed at the entrance to Pirone Park.

Emmitt's was the fourth project we have had completed at Pirone over the last two years by Eagle Scout candidates, and each has been a wonderful addition to the facility. We have several upcoming candidates that have proposed projects for next year, and look forward to continuing our continued corroboration with Ayer's Troops 1 and 2.

We will be working with Mark Wetzel over the next few weeks with the ongoing Dog Park project, including trying to set up a community group to help manage the park once it has been completed. We hope to get the group down to Pirone park in a make shift fenced off area with their dogs to go over some aspects of developing a dog park community.

The OSRC is nearing completion of the OSRP. This has been a monumental effort by the volunteer board that has overseen its development, particularly Beth Suedmeyer, who has co-chaired the committee with APD Chairman Jason Mayo and has worked diligently for the past two years to get it complete. There are a few final details to finish up before it is ready for final approval and publication. There are numerous benefits of an OSRP (which is required to be updated every ten years) to a community, including the ability to apply for municipal grants that might otherwise be unattainable. Thank you Beth, Jason, and the entire OSRC for working so hard to put this together!

Jeff Thomas

Ayer Parks Director