

Monthly Parks Department update

December

The fields of Pirone are currently snow covered, an unusual sight for this time of year in recent seasons. The Parks Department decided not to erect the skating ring this year due to the liner and many of the boards in need of replacement, as well as concerns of vandalism and limited use over the last few seasons. We are hoping to move the rink's location to Pirone Park with the hopes that we can expand the size of the rink and be able to provide more maintenance and security for it there. The ideal system requires the availability of a water source, which neither Pirone or Sandy Pond currently have during winter months. We hope to be able to rectify that if we are able to get a four season garage erected at Pirone that can have water available year round.

The basketball program is now in full swing, with the exception of the Pre-K and Unlimited groups, which will begin their sessions when we return from the school holiday break. Players from grades K-8 have all been placed on teams and are working hard to improve their game. This of course is due in large part to our volunteer coaches who work with the players each session to make things fun and give them exceptional role models both on and off the court. We are so fortunate in our small town to have an incredible level of volunteerism for our programs. We could always use more, but during this season of gratitude, we are so thankful for those individuals who give so much to our community.

We have received a nice assist from Town Engineer Dan Van Schalkwyk and DPW Director Mark Wetzel in putting together cost estimates for the proposed perimeter path and garage at Pirone Park. These will be extremely helpful in trying to determine funding for each. Both estimates include contingencies for different types of designs, depending on how much funding can be made available. While the garage would likely only be able to be funded as a capital expense, the path, or at least portions of it, might be able to be funded through alternative sources such as CPC funds allocated for recreational purposes. Both of these projects, as well as several others, will be part of the Town of Ayer Master Plan, currently being compiled by a committee of Ayer citizens and town officials. Dan Graham is the Ayer Parks Department representative on this committee, who will be meeting with the APD over the next month to discuss elements of the Master Plan relevant to our department.

Jeff Thomas

Ayer Parks Director