

May/June

The Parks Department initiatives for construction of a new building and perimeter path at Pirone Park passed by a wide margin on the April ballot and were approved unanimously at Town Meeting. We greatly appreciate the support from the community on these projects, as well as many individuals outside the department who helped to piece everything together. The Selectmen's Office, DPW, CPC Committee, Finance Committee, Capital Planning Committee, Building Inspector and many others contributed to piece the essential parts together to help allow the citizens of Ayer to make an informed decision to finance these projects. The next steps will be creating RFP's for bids on each which we hope to get together by July 1 when FY18 begins. We hope to have both projects completed by the summer of 2018.

The baseball, softball and soccer seasons are coming to a close in mid-June, and we will then be focusing on summer camps, tournaments and other activities at Pirone Park. This will of course include the annual July 4 celebration and fireworks on July 1. The July 4 Committee has reported to us that they are currently having difficulty securing a cleanup crew for after the event, which is extensive based on the estimated 10,000 attendees and dozens of vendors who will be on hand that night. They have asked if our department can provide the service, which we cannot due to limited numbers of staff available, all of whom are already needed to perform maintenance tasks that morning to get the park back to operating condition. They hope to procure the services of a private cleanup company, and we will continue to work with them to help in that endeavor.

Sandy Pond Beach opened for weekend use on May 27 and will open full time for swimming from 12:00-7:00 on June 21, the first day of summer vacation for the ASRSD. Patrons have already been coming in large numbers during the recent heat wave, and we have opened on several additional dates to help meet that demand. Swim lessons will once again be offered at the beach, with two sessions available through the summer.

Finally, the Park Commission will be having its first turnover in several years with the retirement of longtime Commissioner Dan Graham. We are extremely grateful for Dan's many years of service to the community. We also want to welcome newly elected Commissioner Kevin Williams. Kevin has been volunteering with a variety of youth organizations for many years and will be taking on Dan's role as APD's representative of the Master Plan Committee as well as taking over the Chairmanship of Ayer Youth Basketball from Eric Hebert, who will be continuing with the program as an advisor and acting as one of Ayer's three representatives on the ASYB Board.

Jeff Thomas