

Monthly Parks Department update

June/July 2018

As always, it was a very busy spring at Pirone Park. Youth sports, family outings, and scouting events highlighted much of the usage, with most fields filled on a nightly basis. Following the end of the school year, much of the activity switched to camps and summer activities for families and local groups. The Parks Department offers a camp series each summer that includes basketball, baseball, softball, soccer and football, all for an affordable (in some cases free) fee. A new addition to the summer lineup was the start of an Ayer adult mixed softball league, which has attracted five teams to compete each Sunday morning. They will continue play through September, and early reports indicate this will be a growing program.

The swim season at Sandy Pond began on Memorial Day weekend, and the beach opened up full time on June 20. Swim lessons are in full swing, coordinated by Waterfront Director Heidi Januskiewicz and lead instructor Jillian Folger. Enrollment is on pace with previous years, and is offered at a reasonable price to fit the demographics of our community. We expect to have our new interior dock delivered in mid-August, which will create a U-shaped swim area that will be especially beneficial for young children. We continue to evaluate the policies and procedures implemented in 2016 for residential/non-residential use, and the vast number of comments from patrons are positive. Incidents of poor behavior and non-compliance to facility usage regulations have decreased dramatically over the last two seasons.

We have several scouting projects recently completed or under way. Three members of the Ayer Junior Girl Scout Troop #75447 completed their Bronze Award project "Keeping Wild Animals Wild", and three others are finishing theirs, which will consist of erecting bat houses at Pirone to reduce mosquitos. Ed Ernst completed an Eagle Scout project in June that enhanced the dugouts at Pirone with bat/helmet racks. Ryan Kilcommins is currently researching his Eagle Scout project to install three benches along the incoming Perimeter Path at Pirone, and Matt Blood is designing flowers boxes for beautifying Sandy Pond Beach. These are all remarkable young men and women who continue to show they are the shining light of our community.

The Parks Department also benefitted from the Youth Works group of the DPW, who loaned us their services to perform enhancement work on the baseball/softball diamonds at Pirone. This was done during a very hot and humid time of the summer, and we greatly appreciate their efforts in keeping our fields the best in the area.

Jeff Thomas

Ayer Parks Director