

Monthly Parks Department update August 2018

The new dock at Sandy Pond Beach came in mid August, and the waterfront staff and Parks Commissioners were able to get it assembled and in the water in time for patrons to be able to enjoy it for the remainder of the swim season. So far people (particularly children!) have really enjoyed it as a major upgrade to the preexisting 4'x8' dock it replaced. The current setup creates a 34'x40' U-shaped configuration, but we may try to move some of the modular pieces around next season to conform with the needs for swimming lessons and other waterfront activities. The beach officially closed for swimming on an unusually warm Labor Day with a very large crowd, and we finished the season with a family outing for military personnel. All waterfront staff completed exit interviews to help us evaluate how this year went and identify areas that we are strong and those we need to improve on. Many of them had great ideas that Waterfront Director Heidi Januskiewicz and the Parks Commission will review over the winter. We are very fortunate to have a very hard working and dedicated staff, with a nice blend of veterans and newcomers that we hope will remain with us for many seasons to come.

Baseball and softball activities have mostly come to an end, prompting our crew to begin rehab work on the five diamonds at Pirone and the baseball and softball fields at the High School. This work consists mostly of edging, tilling and releveled the clay, rebuilding worn out turf areas, repairing irrigation heads, aerating, etc. Some fields will require a bit more due to excessive wear, but we hope to get them all solidly rehabbed by November so they can be "put to bed" for the winter and then reopened as early as possible in the spring when teams are clamoring for them to start their seasons. We have been getting a nice assist from the DPW, who have been providing us with loam for the fields that they have created by mulching the town's leaf refuse. Normally we would have to pay a premium price for such high quality material.

Fall sports are already underway, with the most activity at Pirone coming from the soccer program. Saturday mornings are once again very busy with activity from the U4-U8 programs, and several of the U10-U18 teams use fields for their practices during the week. Basketball registrations will be starting up in September. Other activities being planned include creating a list of "family Friendly" events, something Commissioner Sarah Gibbons has been spearheading. Ideas for these include outings to the Spinners, parent exercise nights, family hikes, and movie nights under the stars at Pirone.

Jeff Thomas
Ayer Parks Director