

Parks Department Updates

December 2020

As the Parks Department closes out 2020, we need to reflect on the uniqueness of this unprecedented period. This has been a year like none other, with the health crisis limiting use of our facilities and cancelling many of our activities. The lifeblood of much of what the Ayer Parks Department does is based on volunteerism, and with restrictions limiting personal contact, we have not been able to function anywhere near the capacity we would normally would. Much of our volunteer base consists of coaches and support personnel that booster our youth programs, but we also rely on so many more individuals who help with maintenance, projects, etc. Our philosophy has been centered around the idea that a community is so much stronger if it plays an integral part in its social programs and public space upkeep. We feel it is far more rewarding for everyone if our community invests in itself with not just tax dollars and fees, but with their personal commitment through volunteerism to the parks they enjoy and programs they enroll in. 2020 was an exceptional year in so many respects, but for our department it was especially difficult to lose out on having opportunities for our residents to take part in what we do. Between coaches, program supporters, and those fulfilling school or court order requirements, we annually have hundreds of individuals that help our department fulfill our obligation to give our community clean, beautiful parks and enjoyable, well run programs. We look forward to 2021 and getting back to that model of success.

On a brighter note, the program initiated this fall to create decorations to be placed around the perimeter path at Pirone Park was a great success. There were close to 100 snowmen and Christmas trees decorated by residents, and 100's of people would walk through each day to see them. We thank all of those who put these together, many of which were truly works of art! We will be making this an annual event going forward. It was especially nice to have an early snowfall to give the pathway a little more of a festive look. It also gave our department a chance to test out our new truck and snowplow to do our own snow removal at Pirone and Sandy Pond Beach, which will help free up the DPW's hard working Highway Department to focus on other areas in town following snowstorms.

Jeff Thomas

Ayer Parks Director