

Parks Department Updates

February 2021

We have been spending much of this month setting up work stations in the new garage/office building at Pirone Park. This will greatly enhance our ability to work on various tasks, such as building picnic tables and other woodwork projects, doing repairs and maintenance on our equipment, and storing tools and recreation program supplies for four season access. We will be continuing this effort through the spring and summer to maximize the efficiency of our department.

With the COVID health crisis appearing to go in a positive direction, we have been maintaining tempered optimism to restarting our recreation programs for the spring and summer. The soccer program for U6 and U8 is on track to start in May, and the Ayer-Shirley U10-U18 soccer levels will start a bit earlier, though they will once again limit their games to in-town. Baseball and softball will also be having spring seasons, and the school teams are set to play, though they will likely start a bit later than usual and have a somewhat truncated schedule. We will be working on field prep starting in March, weather permitting.

Scouting project proposals are starting to come in. We received one from a Girl Scout Silver Award candidate hoping to create a display along the Grove Pond waterfront pointing out the various wildlife to look for while going through the Park area. An Eagle Scout candidate will be completing his Little Free Library project soon, once the ground is defrosted enough to sink a support pole in. We may be getting a proposal from an Eagle Scout candidate to set up stands for a Story Book path soon, though his efforts have been postponed due to the health crisis. It is our hope to erect a Storybook path this spring, and it would be great if it could be put together by one of our local scouts.

The Park Department's FY2022 budget has received approval from the Fin Com and Select Board and will be put forth for approval at the spring Town Meeting. It for the most part calls for level funding, with the exception of increases for life guards and maintenance workers in alignment with the increase in the Massachusetts minimum wage. Due to the uncertainty of the fiscal situation following the health crisis, the Parks Department chose not to submit any Capital Planning requests for the upcoming fiscal year.

Jeff Thomas

Ayer Parks Director