

## Parks Department Updates

April 2021

Lots of projects and spring cleanup going on with the Parks Department this month as we get Pirone Park and Sandy Pond Beach ready for spring and summer, our busiest season at those facilities respectively. As more people are getting vaccinated for COVID, there is more hope of a return to regular operations by early summer. To that end, we have put together our summer camps and clinics schedule, with some type of activity offered each week through the end of July. Of course, much of that will depend on the restrictions currently in place being lifted, but appears more likely each passing day that we will get there in time to be able to do so.

Town Meeting passed the Parks Department annual budget without any inquiries. We are now mostly level funded through the FY22 cycle starting July 1, with some marginal bumps to wages due to the rise in minimum wage in Massachusetts. We are still working out what to do with the signs at Pirone Park, which have been in place for the last 20 years as a means for local businesses to advertise in return for a fee, which are used to complete projects throughout the facility. The signs generate around \$6,000-\$8,000 annually, and projects funded by sign revenue have included the construction of dugouts, a batting cage, replacement of almost all the fencing for the ballfields, and numerous other improvements over the years. With the passing of Tim Nolan, who had volunteered to oversee the sign program since its inception, the Parks Commission is in the process of transitioning the management of this fundraising enterprise to either another individual or volunteer board.

We have received word from the Nashoba Allied Board of Health that our application for opening the beach for swimming this summer has been approved. We will be implementing our plan to reopen starting May 29, which will include a policy of residents only to ensure safety of beach users and staff members. We are currently setting up our staff for the swim season, and will be making improvements to the facility and grounds over the next month before we open.

Jeff Thomas

Ayer Parks Director