

## Parks Department Updates

June 2021

It is Camp/Clinic season at the Parks Department, and we have kicked off our series of youth sports camps with girls' basketball and baseball. Those will be followed by boys basketball, softball, boys and girls soccer, Mini-Soccer and Mini-Ball. The last two are rather unique, as they are designed for children aged two to seven, ages generally too young for most sports camps. All of our camp/clinic sessions are reliant on volunteers, both adult and junior coach, to ensure their success. Many of our junior coaches are High School players earning community service hours, but it is clear they are there because they enjoy giving back to their community. Almost all of them participated in these events when they were younger and enjoy the novel experience of being on the other side of the clipboard.

Sandy Pond has seen quite a bit of action over the last month as the weather has warmed up. Unfortunately we have had a fair amount of rainy weather as well, great for the grass, but not so hot for those wanting to go for a swim. Still, numbers are very strong for the days we have been able to open, often reaching 200+ patrons in a day. This is fairly consistent with numbers for resident use in the past, and we still have concerns of overcrowding if we were to expand access to non-residents as well. The Commission will continue to review the admission policy through the summer.

The Bocce Court was completed at Sandy Pond, and has seen a good amount of use since it was opened. We are very grateful to Zach and his volunteers for building this as part of his Eagle Scout project. We will be working on a number of other projects at the park and beach through the summer and fall months.

Planning has begun for the remediation of Kiddie Junction. We are currently developing a plan for the removal of the structure and the eventual replacement of a more modernized playground. The timeline calls for the plans (including a cost estimate) to be completed by late fall, in time to submit it to the Capital Planning Committee and Select Board for approval to be put on the Spring Town Meeting Warrant. If approved, ideally construction could begin in the summer of 2022.

Jeff Thomas

Ayer Parks Director