

## Parks Department Updates

August 2021

The swim season at Sandy Pond Beach is coming to a close. It was, as expected, a challenging experience, but overall pretty well managed under the circumstances. It seems so long ago, but actually only a few months past, that we were planning to try to open with extremely constrained conditions. In the end, the only difference in terms of regulations from most other years was limiting the use to residents only and not selling concessions. Both of these measures ensured the safety of both the beach patrons and our staff members, which were paramount to continuing operations. While the overall attendance was significantly lower than in previous seasons, the total number of residents was on par with a normal year. The Commission will review the summer's beach activities at their next meeting and evaluate what may be the best course of action for next season. Much of that will depend on state and local health restrictions, which is indeterminate at this time.

The Ayer Shirley Youth Basketball Board has been meeting with hopes to reopen the ASYB program this fall. The entire season had to be cancelled last year due to COVID restrictions, and every effort is being made to find a way to have some form of season this year. There are several new members of the bi-town six member board, including Chris Tavares and Rob Weeks joining holdover Jason Leone as the three Ayer representatives. Chris was voted to be the Co-Chair this year along with Shirley's Jarod Libby. Jeff Thomas and Keith Begun will act as advisors to the board as they navigate through what will likely be a challenging reboot of the program.

The Parks Commission voted on recipients of the Gibson Award for volunteerism at their August meeting. Due to the health crisis, there were no awards handed out in 2020, so the recipients for that year will be honored with the 2021 recipient. The Commission will be honoring the award winners in September.

Planning continues on the Kiddie Junction remediation project. Incoming DPW Director Dan Van Schalkwyk has put together an RFP for the removal of the old structure and the contaminated soil, and a plan for replacing it with modular sections of playground equipment. It is expected this will be put out to bid in mid-September. This also call for a cost estimate for both, which will then be used as a basis for seeking funding at the Spring Town Meeting.

Jeff Thomas

Ayer Parks Director