

## Parks Department Updates

### February 2022

The AYB and ASYB programs finished up this month, and it was a very good season by most accounts. There were considerable challenges from the start as we worked to get the program back on line after an extended layoff, with the primary one trying to negotiate the health protocols put in place by state, local and school officials. For the most part players, coaches and parents adhered to the gym rules that had to be established, with a small handful either heavily complaining or flat out refusing to do so. In the end it all worked out and the final sessions concluded on February 19. One area that worked out surprisingly well was the number of coaches who volunteered throughout the K-8 levels. There were over 75 coaches who offered their services this season, and that does not include the dozens of junior coaches and HS teams that assisted with practices and clinics. We have always said volunteerism is the backbone of our department, and it could not have been demonstrated more than what we saw in the basketball program this winter.

The Parks Department and OED worked together to set up a public forum at Kiddie Junction Playground to give a presentation on what was currently happening with the playground and set up some discussion groups to get ideas of what the community might like to see for a replacement once the site is remediated. It was a typically cold winter Saturday, but there were still a good number of residents and non-residents who came down to participate. We also finished up our online survey for those who had ideas for the new playground. There was a phenomenal response, over 400 in total, giving the playground committee a good idea of what the community hopes to see in a new play area.

Planning is underway for spring programs and summer camps/clinics. Coaches are currently being recruited for each of the eight summer camps that are staggered throughout the school vacation period to allow children opportunities to do as many as they would like. All are priced well below general costs for similar camps to ensure those with tight family budgets can afford to participate. We had planned to move the volleyball program to the fall to keep it in line with the traditional school season, but after having it unavailable for both the spring of 2022 and 2021, we decided to offer a less formal "reboot" program starting in April and then go back to our traditional program format in the fall. These will both be coordinated by Andrea Tavares, who has been coordinating the program for the last five years.

Jeff Thomas  
Ayer Parks Director