

Parks Department Updates

October 2022

Works has begun on the playground remediation. Brighter Horizons has started with tree removal and are currently removing the old structure piece by piece. They will be removing stumps and footing next, then using a vacuum to pull contaminated soil from between the root of the remaining trees. The final step will be to remove about a foot of soil from the remainder of the playground area, then level it for preparation of the rebuilding process.

It was a difficult process, but the Parks Maintenance and Waterfront crews were able to pull out the ropes and docks from Sandy Pond Beach. This could not be done until the Board of Health gave the OK to safely be in the water after almost two months of observing an algae bloom that had contaminated Sandy Pond since late August. The Board of Health had posted the conditions as hazardous, and we could not get in the water for equipment removal until it was cleared. We were unsure if they would lift restrictions in time for us to get the work done, but received clearance late in the month and were able to get everything out. We will be doing minor maintenance work on the beach facility through the winter and hope to get it in shape for the 2023 season.

Pickleball continues to be popular, with the newly formed courts still getting a lot of use. We will keep them available as long as the weather holds out.

Work on the FY24 Capital Plan has already begun. The Commission met in October to review the Parks Department's current five and ten year capital plans and make a few alterations. This year there will be a request for funding for a study for a replacement building at Sandy Pond Beach. The current building has a number of flaws, particularly being outdated for ADA compliance in its bathroom facilities. Ideally the study can be completed in time to include a cost estimate for a replacement building that can be put in with capital requests for FY25.

Jeff Thomas
Ayer Parks Director