

## Parks Department Updates

December 2023

Work began on the Nature Play Area of the new playground this month. This section is being put together through town resources and is not being built in conjunction with the elements contracted out to BETA Inc and Cella Construction. The materials are almost entirely from the trees that had to be removed as part of the remediation phase of the project and were milled into boards by Brad Spinney earlier this fall. Several platforms and play stations have been erected and more will follow in the spring once weather allows. The main playground area will start work in the early spring once the equipment has arrived.

The basketball program is fully underway and doing well at all levels. It is always a bit of a challenge at the competitive 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade level due to having to partner with other organizations to create enough teams in our small-town environment. Our current partnering organization, Townsend/Ashby/Pepperell Basketball (TAP) has been great to work with since we began collaborations five years ago, but each organization has its own preferences for various aspects of how to organize things. Cooperative efforts continue each year to try to maximize the experience for all players involved.

Discussions are already underway for the upcoming spring soccer season. The ASYS travel levels need to get their teams organized early due to the league they play in (NVYSL) requiring team numbers for all levels well in advance. Planning is also underway for the AYS U4-U8 program. Last fall we had enough girls signed up at U8 to create both boys and girls divisions, which was very beneficial to both groups. We are hoping we can do the same this spring and will be reaching out to Shirley Recreation to see if they may want to mix girls at that level to ensure there are enough for their own division. Registration is currently open for all levels of play.

We ended up with about 75 snowmen/Christmas trees that were put up around the perimeter path this holiday season. While they were a great addition to the park and helped create a festive atmosphere, there was no snow through all of December. Snowfall gives our decorations at the Pirone and Sandy Pond that much more character, so it was a bit of a disappointment, though having no snow removal balanced that out a bit.

Jeff Thomas  
Ayer Parks Director