

On January 16, 2019 Tryna Hope and Dennis Tarpey met with Captain Andy Pelis from Northampton's Fire Prevention Office. He was asked to come to Laurel Park to answer some questions regarding the safety of recreational fires in the Park. We showed him the brick fireplace to the right of the Dining Hall, the brick fireplace just off of North Warren a few feet into the woods, and a couple of individual fireplaces in yards.

We were told the following:

- Recreational fires need to be in a contained area and no higher than the fireplace;
- A fire needs to be at least 25 feet from any other structure;
- Do not make a recreational fire when it's windy;
- Never use leaves or pine needles because they cause embers to fly. Before starting, clean the bed of the fire place of leaves and pine needles to prevent flying embers.
- Use tree wood. Pallets are not acceptable. Furniture parts are not acceptable.
- Trees above the fire place, if any, should be too high to be affected by the heat;
- There should be a water-type fire extinguisher nearby any fire. (We need to ask if the other kind of fire extinguisher is acceptable.)

We were also told:

- The fire place near the Dining Hall, once cleared of leaves and pine needles, is a safe place for a fire;
- The fire place in the woods off of North Warren is completely unsafe and should not ever be used since it is surrounded by leaves, trees, pine needles, power lines, etc.;
- The fire containers individuals buy for private use are bound by the same fire regulations as above, ie at least 25 feet from any structure, no leaves or pine needles, a way of putting out the fire, etc.
- The fires do not need to be covered.

Bar-b-q grills are all right and don't need to observe the 25 foot rule.

Permits are not necessary for the kind of recreational fires discussed above.

Inspector Pelis also pointed out that if someone has concerns about the fire, they can call the Fire Department who will come and put it out.