

SUPERINTENDENT'S AUGUST 2019 REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

With the approach of Fall, staff are preparing for the change of season. A key part of the Fall season within the City is the budget process and staff will be working with the Mayor's Office and the Common Council to develop the best possible budget for the park system given resource constraints. Parks is hopeful that the budget can address some of the needs of a growing system. One of the key elements of this growth is the expansion of Olbrich Botanical Gardens. The Learning Center and Greenhouses project is nearing completion and staff anticipates it being operational this year. Current plans include a soft opening during the winter, with a more formal grand opening in the Spring in collaboration with our partners at the Olbrich Botanical Society.

As usual, it has been a busy summer in the parks system. Attendance at programs, events, and organized activities has been high, with multiple events reaching historic peaks. Unfortunately, most of this data is anecdotal and is not easily comparable across venues or types of event/program. One of our goals in the work around Performance Excellence is to better establish metrics and methods for tracking these data points to better inform policy decisions in the future.

Future Commission Items

- Urban Forestry Taskforce – The Urban Forestry Taskforce's recommendations are being entered into the legislative process at the July 2nd meeting (File #55206). At this point, it is likely the report and recommendations will come to the BPC in September.
- IPM Taskforce – The IPM taskforce is working to extend its work throughout 2019 to better inform recommendations. Staff will present on the current status as a part of a land management update in November.
- Golf – The Common Council adopted a resolution (File #56004) to establish a Task Force on Municipal Golf in Madison Parks at its June 18, 2019 meeting. The Task Force will begin meeting in September and will focus on making recommendations on the multiple systematic issues related to golf.
- Dog Policy – The Long Range Planning Subcommittee has started work on reviewing the policy related to dogs in parks. LRP and staff have done substantial public engagement on this issue and are continuing to work on policy recommendations.
- Off-Leash Dog Parks – Staff is continuing to work on potential off-leash improvements in the main remaining priority area (after West/Odana School and East/North Star projects) of Atwood/East Isthmus. This is a particularly challenging location and staff hopes to have additional concepts for discussion in the coming months.
- Performance Excellence Initiative – Staff is working on an informational presentation to share with the Commission on the City's Performance Excellence Initiative. This is anticipated to be ready for the Commission at the September meeting.
- Alliant Energy Center Master Plan / Destination District Plan – Parks staff is working with Planning staff to prepare a presentation to the Commission on the County's work and plans for the Alliant area. This is anticipated to occur later this year.

Section reports

Operations

Conservation

- Worked to control Asian bittersweet, porcelain-berry, sweet clover and teasel on 8 acres at Edna Taylor, Knollwood, Owen and Prairie Ridge Conservation Parks and also Japanese hedge parsley on 10 acres at Cherokee Marsh, Edna Taylor, Elvehjem and Turville Point.
- Held a series of training events for volunteers to assist with vegetation monitoring. Trainings were held at Cherokee Marsh, Edna Taylor and Owen, where volunteers will be sampling plant species richness and vegetation cover along permanent transects established by staff.

Construction

- Completed a number of construction projects including the installation of the temporary fence for the Quann dog park, construction of the council ring at Patriot Park, removal of the old playgrounds at Walnut Grove and Doncaster in preparation for new playgrounds, and installation of a new boulder retaining wall and drainage system to protect the playground at Hill Creek.

Facilities

- Completed maintenance and repair projects; including the installation of new drinking fountains at McPike Park, Brittingham Boat House and Bernie's Boat House, installed the refurbished pier at Cherokee Marsh (positive feedback was received from users) and painted the Lake View Heights and Sycamore shelters, Portland Park Sun shelter and Olbrich Bridge.
- Progress was made on projects including Elver tennis court bounding boards, Focus on Energy lighting efficiency projects, and upgrading the doors at Brittingham Boat House.

Forestry

- Began preemptively removing 800 street ash trees in the central (Isthmus) and western parts of the City. These are the final preemptive ash removal areas outlined in the approved Emerald Ash Borer Plan. Tree replanting at these sites will be completed over the next year and a half (starting in fall 2019).

General Parks

- Mowing and trimming continued to be the major area of focus. The challenge of securing seasonal workers continued to put additional pressure on staff to keep up with this work. They continue to do an excellent job.
- Finalized the Burial Mound policy. The policy was reviewed and supported by the Ho Chunk Nation and will be presented to the Habitat Stewardship Subcommittee on August 20th.
- Special event support continued to require time and focus in preparation, staffing of the actual event and post-event turf restoration. A few examples include La Fete de Marquette, Westfest and Opera in the Park.

Mall Concourse

- Considerable effort was committed in support of summer events preparation and cleanup including Art Fair On and Off the Square, Maxwell Street Days, Concerts on the Square, Live on King Street concerts, and numerous BID events.

Planning and Development

Law Park Preliminary Report

- Parks staff and SmithGroup have announced the community engagement workshop dates for Law Park. Three workshops will be held over the next two months with a general open house scheduled for October. In addition to the larger workshops, the public outreach includes on-site intercept interviews, tabling at community events, user group meetings and an on-line survey. The technical and regulatory investigation has begun as well with initial meetings with WDNR staff, UW School of Limnology representatives and WDOT staff. The final report is scheduled for completion in late 2019.
- Workshops and Open House Dates (all are 6:00 to 7:30 PM)
 - Thursday, August 15, Workshop at the Atrium on Park Street
 - Wednesday, August 21, Workshop at Warner Park Community Recreation Center
 - Wednesday, September 18, Workshop at Madison Central Public Library
 - Tuesday, October 1, Open House at Badger Rock Neighborhood Center

Summit Maintenance Facility Lot

- The regrading and paving of the Summit West Maintenance Facility Lot has been bid and awarded to S&L Underground for \$177,889.00. This project will address much needed grading and drainage improvements at the site and includes approx. 500sf of permeable concrete pavement. Construction is expected to begin September 6th and be complete by November 1st.

Olbrich Park (at Walter Street)

- Work by the contractor, Drax, Inc. has started on phase II of the project – which includes replacement of the parking lot, construction of new basketball court and path connections linking the recently completed restroom building to the new parking lot. Work is anticipated to continue through late fall 2019.

2019 Playgrounds – Group 1

- Work is underway by the contractor, Madison Commercial Landscapes at Walnut Grove Park and William Slater Park. Doncaster Park playground was the first site completed under the contract. Playgrounds at Lucia Crest Park and Segoe Park will also be replaced under this contract.

Orchard Ridge Park Master Plan

- The second public information meeting for the Orchard Ridge Park master plan was held on July 18. This neighborhood has had excellent participation in the master planning process. Minor revisions will be made to the master plan document, which will be presented to the Board of Park Commissioners this fall.

Brittingham Dog Park

- The improved Brittingham dog park is anticipated to open in early August. This project includes installing synthetic pet turf to accommodate the heavily used park which was frequently used too often for turf to establish. The project included installation of new fencing, picnic tables, kiosk, and utilities including water, irrigation (to flush the drinking fountain and clean the turf), sanitary (to collect the dog waste), and electrical. As part of this project, the existing light pole at this park was converted to a LED fixture.