

Community Services Report October 2025 – Terrence Thompson

Community Events (Kelly Post)

Street Use permitting:

- Common Council adopted updates to [MGO 10.056 – Street Use Permit](#) at the January 14, 2025 meeting. We have worked through some practicalities of these changes and things are running smoothly.
- The new requirement to have pre-meetings for certain types of Street Use events is super helpful. While, it means more meetings for some of us, it is really helpful to discuss details before coming to a meeting for final approval.

Park Event permitting:

- We continue to see an increase annually in the number of Park Event permits we issue. We are assessing how to manage this increase from a staff workload perspective. One area we are looking into is if / why we are over permitting events.
- The increase we see each year is mostly with the number of Community / Neighborhood Park Event permits. This permit reduces and waives fees for qualified events.
- We are developing the Qualified Discount Program for Community / Neighborhood Park Event permits to determine which events qualify. The intention is to have a more equitable qualification process for these permits that reduce fees and that will naturally reduce the number of Community / Neighborhood Park Event permits issued each year.

| # of permits issued | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Street Use Events | 77 | 137 | 138 | 146 | 149 |
| Park Events | 189 | 262 | 249 | 273 | 298 |
| Block Parties | 88 | 101 | 112 | 90 | 99 |

Parks Alive (Debra Alleyne)

Fall Parks Alive planning

This year, we will continue the third year of Fall Parks Alive. We will continue our partnership with the Rangers and incubate the pilot Jr Ranger program centered around Ranger core values, including park stewardship and conservation. Ranger Rah has established connections with community groups that feature activities supporting the growth and development of their programs, including the Madison Astronomical Society, the UW Herpetology lab, WI Bat Ambassadors, and local naturalists. We still plan to have the staple Parks Alive elements, such as DJs, food, and a few organizational tables. We plan to continue innovating and advancing the Parks' mission.

Violence Prevention

Parks Alive is a member of the Madison Dane County Violence Prevention Coalition. This month, they held their quarterly, half-day coalition meeting. The coalition is further divided into Prevention and Intervention groups to discuss barriers as well as effective tactics around each. Members of the cohort partnered with Parks Alive this year to provide wellness activities, conduct research, and have fun with the kids for our sports event. As we continue to fine-tune the program, staying connected to the coalition enables us to establish connections with relevant partners and remain informed about violence prevention research and applicable tactics within our program.

Customer Service (Joanne Austin)

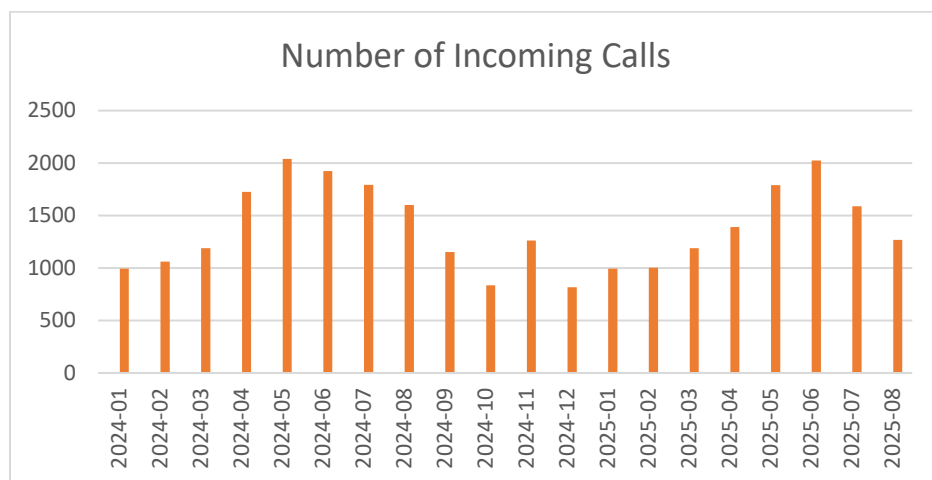
Shelter and Athletic Reservations

2025 shelter reservations are winding down for the season and we're happy to report that we've had over 2,300 shelter reservation uses this year. The new Door Creek shelter opened in 2025 and we had 54 reservations. The Gates of Heaven Synagogue in James Madison Park hosts many wedding reservations each year and there are often numerous reservations held each weekend, which resulted in a total of 255 reservations this year. The Highland Manor Storm Shelter is available year-round and has reservations booked every weekend, resulting in a total of 182 total reservations this year. Keep in mind that we have half-day and full-day reservations, so the numbers may be skewed from one year to the next. The Reindahl Park shelter was removed mid-summer, making way for the new Imagination Center, which is scheduled to be complete in late August 2026. There will be two large rooms available for public reservations when it opens to the public. We are currently preparing for opening day of 2026 reservations, which will take place on Monday, November 3.

2025 Athletic fields will close the end of October, and users can begin placing 2026 athletic reservations in late February. Although this year's athletic season is not quite over, we've had 7,715 scheduled field reservations and 4,939 court reservations, resulting in 34,178.50 hours of scheduled athletic use in 2025. The Athletic Qualifying Discounts Program Pilot continued this year, with plans to proceed with the program in 2026.

Incoming Calls by Month

The number of phone calls received at our front office begins to taper off each year starting in September, thankfully so as we prepare for 2026. This resulted in 900+ hours communicating with both internal and external customers.



Mooring and Watercraft Storage

In 2025, 29 of 30 mooring spaces were rented. Customers are highly interested in watercraft storage for their canoes, kayaks, and standup paddleboards. Out of 16 park locations with storage racks totaling 441 spaces, most are full. Currently, there are 220 people on waitlists, with the majority hoping for a space at Merrill Springs, Spring Harbor, Tenney, and especially Vilas.

Recreation Services & Aquatics (Tracey Hartley)

The Goodman Pool had 42,921 patrons visit this season. Lifeguards made 44 saves, and there were zero major life-threatening emergencies. The main story of the summer was the numerous behavior issues and the Pool Monitor pilot program. The Pool Monitor's job was to help prevent issues from escalating to the point where a patron may be asked to leave the facility. Cameron, our Pool Monitor, did an outstanding job this year helping with behavior issues. While Cameron was a very strong addition to our team, we still had numerous behavioral issues, resulting in 15 suspensions by mid-July. Several of those suspensions were season-long. There was a total of 9 physical altercations in and around Goodman Pool/Park.

In response to the behavior issues at the pool, a meeting was held with various community members and organizations to come up with a plan to prevent physical altercations in the short term and to get in front of the youth age group most responsible for the issues in the spring. This group created a new entrance policy for Goodman Pool. On July 17, youths aged 11 – 15 years old could not enter the pool without a responsible parent or guardian aged 18 years or older. This caused the number of issues to drop significantly. Additionally, there were no physical altercations for the remainder of the year. On August 18, a letter was sent to all season pass holders letting them know how youths aged 11 – 15 years old would be able to re-enter the pool. Goodman Pool closed without any more incidents.

Rangers & Volunteers

Rangers (Steve Dray)

Recruitment

We have filled our full-time Ranger staff positions as well as one seasonal Ranger position. Two Rangers are currently in training and expected to be working solo by mid-October.

Enforcement Contacts

Rangers have had 211 enforcement contacts, resulting in 114 warnings, 57 citations, and 40 bans. One hundred and seventy parking tickets were also issued from July 1 through September.

Community Outreach

Rangers have been busy participating in community outreach at various events, including Parks Alive, Westmorland Summer Nights, Aldo Leopold Fall Fun Series Events, and Trucks and Treasures.

Training



During the third quarter, Rangers underwent comprehensive medical training, which included CPR, first aid, AED use, and severe trauma first aid. We also participated in self-defense training to enhance our safety while working alone in parks, both during the day and at night. Additionally, Rangers completed a vehicle operations course, which is crucial since we spend a significant amount of time driving between parks throughout the city.

Volunteers (John Weichelt)

We hosted a three-day planting event at Olbrich Park, which attracted over 50 volunteers. Additionally, the first fall plant giveaway successfully engaged restoration and gardening volunteers, and the UW Service Fair connected more than 50 students with various opportunities to get involved. Volunteers contributed significant hours, enabling impactful projects that enhanced biodiversity, created pollinator habitats, and improved the park's overall aesthetics. Looking ahead, fall planting and seed collection efforts will continue. We will leverage student and community partnerships for recruitment in the winter and spring. A Volunteer Appreciation event is scheduled for December 2025.

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Zach Watson)

The Warner Park Community Recreation Center expansion project is nearing completion. The project officially broke ground on October 14, 2024, and we are eagerly looking forward to opening several of the new spaces for our community beginning in November 2025. The entire project is scheduled for completion by December 31, 2025.

During the construction phases, we have been able to provide adequate spaces for our internal partners, MSCR and New Bridge, to provide all their programming without any major impact on quality or class sizes. Our anticipated new spaces will include the addition of an 8,400 sq ft second gymnasium, updated restroom and locker room areas, and an added comfort room. We will also be converting the existing Game Room space into the new Fitness Center and repurposing the current Fitness Center space as a multi-purpose recreation studio. We reached out to over 4,000 stakeholders to gather their perspectives on the anticipated changes to the existing spaces through a survey.

Upon project completion, we are confident that we will be able to host events of all types and sizes, whether they require a single small meeting space or the entire facility, while providing multi-purpose activity spaces for individuals and groups of all ages to play, study, learn, connect, and grow.