

SUPERINTENDENT'S APRIL 2021 REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

It is clear spring is upon Madison Parks. After a record setting winter recreation season, staff expect even more park users as the seasons change and the community begins to recover from the past year. The most recent Public Health Orders, especially Order #15, have meant going from full-stop to nearly full-go in a matter of weeks. Staff are working hard to provide safe access to shelters, restrooms, athletic facilities, and more, including special events, the pool and splash pads. Plumbing is being turned on, field lines painted, and after a year without events, shelter reservations and athletic reservations they are now pouring in. People want to be in parks. As vaccines continue to roll out, outdoor spaces are still the safest spaces for gathering, and the Parks team is making sure we are ready. Near-normal pre-COVID programming levels are expected across the system in addition to the same high rates of park use experienced in 2020. Golf courses, disc golf courses, and boat launches are being heavily used already and permit requests continue to be high. Most partners are returning to service as well. The Olbrich Biergarten is set to open in mid-April and Forward Madison FC has worked diligently with PHMDC in order to return to Breese Stevens for the 2021 season, a welcome return after a year in Wauwatosa.

- Work continues on the Glenway Golf Park project, with a number of team members recently met at Glenway to discuss both the ecological aspect and the programming aspect of the project. The teams of Madison Parks employees and outside experts are working together to shape a sustainable, inclusive space for all. Thanks to the great spring weather we've had so far we've been able to open Glenway for some final rounds before shovels hit the ground. Now's your chance to see the course as it stands.
- The return to athletics will surely fill spaces that sat mostly empty in 2020. Thus far more than 360 reservation requests have been entered for athletic spaces, most of them for recurring reservations like league play and practices. We'll see the return of MSCR softball, MUFA ultimate, MAYSA soccer, Madison Cricket Club, USTA tennis, high school athletics, and many more. We have groups that usually play fall seasons playing in the spring to make-up for lost time, meaning more field space is being used at once than ever before. These groups are following PHMDC orders and many are going to lengths beyond the public health orders to ensure safe play.
- The City's Encampment Workgroup is working with outreach partners to develop solutions for the Temporary Permissible Encampments that have been in place since the summer of 2020. The Reindahl encampment will be ending by May 10 and outreach partners are working to help relocate these individuals.

Future Commission Items

- Lake Monona Waterfront (formerly Law Park) Master Planning – Staff continue to work towards completion of the preliminary report and to prepare for the next phase of the master planning project. There have been project delays due to staffing levels and significant extraordinary efforts required of active projects. Staff anticipates an update to the Commission in April/May.

- Vilas Park Drive Intermediate Solution to promote ped/bike safety – Staff anticipates an April or May presentation on proposed intermediate solutions in advance of master plan based project work to promote a safer and more enjoyable Vilas Park Drive experience for all park users, with an emphasis on peds/bikes.
- Olin Park Facility Update – Staff will be seeking Commission review and approval for the project plan that has been discussed to repurpose the building acquired as part of the expansion of Olin Park. The plan would convert the building to a Park facility that serves the park and its users for generations to come.

Section reports

Park Operations

Conservation:

- Groomed the natural ski trails at all sites until March 2, and the machine made loop at Elver until March 21.
- Prepared fire suppression equipment for burn season. Sent notifications for prescribed burns. Burn season to commence in early April.
- Burned brush piles generated by volunteer work at Cherokee Marsh – South Unit.

Construction:

- Started to perform the spring playground inspections.
- Continued to prepare topsoil for construction season.

Facilities:

- Performed seasonal closing of winter recreation facilities, and began seasonal spring openings.
- Worked on capital projects including pier rebuilding, park signature sign refurbishment, and Hoover Boathouse window replacement. Completed the Elvehjem shelter remodel.

General Parks:

- CXC held their Winterfest ski race at Elver Park, closing out the winter events there.
- Transitioned from winter activities and snow removal to spring/summer preparation, including removing ice rinks, painting and returning picnic tables and trash containers, and repairing or replacing sports nets.
- Supported contractor clean-up of McPike Park encampment.
- Began the seasonal hourly employee hiring process.

Mall Concourse:

- Focused on spring transition. Placed flower planters for spring planting, replaced benches and bike racks in need of repair, and increased efforts to clear winter debris.

Planning and Development

- Pump track project at Aldo Leopold out for bid; bids are due 4/28.
- 2021 Playgrounds contract was approved for plans & specifications and to bid at Board of Public Works 3/31
- 2021 Sport Courts Resurfacing (Garner pickleball Kennedy, Richmond Hill & Waunona tennis) has been awarded to Fahrner Asphalt Sealers; work to begin in mid-May.