

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S JUNE 2019 REPORT COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**

### Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

June has arrived and with it the parks system is buzzing with activity. Madison Parks hosted the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Ride the Drive on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and it was a successful event on a perfect Madison day. There will be hundreds more special events in parks this year, most hosted by other entities. Recreational sports, both organized and not, are also kicking into high gear with thousands of reservations on the books and thousands more participating in these activities at our parks across the system. With the warmer weather, our community is turning to the lake for the myriad number of ways to enjoy our treasured assets. The warming weather does mean a continued need to focus resources on mowing as turfgrass (and undesirable species) are all growing at rapid rates at this time of year.

At the end of May, the Parks Division was able to close on the Medical Society property that will expand Olin Park, including the preservation of public lakeshore. This project took years to complete and was greatly assisted by multiple City agencies, especially the City Attorney's Office and the Office of Real Estate Services. Staff is working diligently to implement maintenance plans for the landscape which we are taking over effective immediately, as well as initial discussion and review of the future of the building structure once the leaseback period ends at the end of 2019. This acquisition has been on the very short list of mission critical acquisitions and it is a great day for current and future residents to have been able to work together with the Commission, Council, and two Mayors on it.

#### Permanent Staffing Changes

- Claire Oleksiak resigned as Parks Community Services Manager effective 5/28/19 to take on a new role as the Executive Director of Sustain Dane.
- Anna Wilkie was hired as Landscape Maintenance Worker with Central Parks effective 5/20/2019. She replaces Spencer Werner who was recently promoted to the East Parks Operations Leadworker position.
- In addition to these permanent staff changes, Parks has brought 228 Hourly staff on to the payroll between March 1<sup>st</sup> and May 31<sup>st</sup>. This brings the total active payroll for the Division to 486. Staff anticipates filling another 25-50 positions for the peak summer period.

#### Future Commission Items

- Urban Forestry Taskforce – The Urban Forestry Taskforce is requesting an extension from the Common Council to complete their work. They expect to be completed towards the end of the year. The task force was created by resolution and its recommendations will be reviewed by the BPC.
- 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 the Fall.
- Golf – The Mayor has introduced a resolution to establish a Task Force on Municipal Golf in Madison Parks. This Task Force 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. Staff is hopeful that any policy changes will be brought to the Commission in the next few months.

- Off-Leash Dog Parks – The Odana School Park expansion is open to the public with some remaining finishing touches yet to be made. This will significantly aide the West side need, but additional focus is still likely needed given the number of residents and dogs on the West side. Staff is continuing to work on potential off-leash improvements in the two other priority areas of Atwood/East Isthmus, and Far East/Grandview. The Approved Master Plan for North Star Park will address the deficiency in Grandview.
- Capital and Operating Budgets – Parks staff will be working with President Leopold to discuss how to best present and take input from the Commission on the Division's budgets. This is anticipated in either July or September.
- 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 in July.
- 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. Staff anticipates presenting this information after additional consultation with the Planning Division given the departure of Director Natalie Erdman this spring who was leading the City's coordination on this issue.

### Section reports

#### Olbrich Botanical Gardens

- Construction: The structural slabs – or sub floors -- of the Learning Center and production greenhouse are complete. The exterior walls have begun on the Learning Center. The greenhouse structure will arrive on site the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of June.
- Bolz Conservatory: Conservatory staff will enhance the exterior of the Bolz Conservatory by extending tropical plantings to the parking lot side of the building which includes a small pond for tropical water lilies.
- Outdoor Gardens: Staff are working hard to ready the Gardens for summer. The cool spring has extended the bloom time for bulbs, native ephemerals, trees and shrubs which has been great. Interns began to arrive 5/20 with more to come through the first week in June. Interns will receive training on working with and supervising the work of volunteers the first week in June. This valuable training helps them succeed at Olbrich and prepares them for future internships and their professional employment – especially if they pursue careers in non-profit and/or public garden work.
- Programs: The 50<sup>th</sup> Olbrich Plant Sale concluded very successfully and exceeded revenue goals. The weather cooperated and shoppers turned out in droves. It was helpful to have park ranger staff on site to assist with flow and traffic management. Tents were removed Saturday late afternoon in order to accommodate the expected Mother's Day crowds. Thanks to New Horizons Concert Band for performing outdoors and accommodating a large audience, despite the sunny but somewhat chilly afternoon.
- Education: Youth and Family Programs Manager, Kim North, has received a scholarship to attend the American Horticultural Society's National Children & Youth Garden Symposium which meets here in Madison in July. Kim and colleague Sarah Ellis are presenting a program titled *Identifying Gaps in Accessibility: Strategies to Cultivate Equity in Programming*

## Community Services

- Front Desk/Customer Services: A new electronic keypad lock has been installed at the Warner Shelter, allowing reserving customers the ease of not needing to pick up or return keys.
- WPCRC: WPCRC received a \$2,500 grant from the Opportunity 34 Foundation and a \$3,000 grants from the Cap Times Kids Fund to support teen and family programs.
- Recreation Services: Ride the Drive will be on Sunday, June 2, 2019. The event closes down John Nolen Drive for a great day of biking, roller-skating, skate boarding or any way you would like to stroll, roll, pedal or glide your way to fun, food, and entertainment between Olin, Law and Brittingham Parks. 86 volunteers help make this event a success. New this year will be Battle Darts, an interactive nerf play activity with inflatable walls. The climbing wall is back at Law Park, along with a larger presence from Madison Roller Derby with demos. Kids activities will fill Brittingham Park.
- Rangers and Aquatics: New Hourly Park Rangers have completed training and have begun independent patrols. Our major focus for the month of May have been monitoring permit programs as more people begin to use the park system.
- The pool is scheduled to open on Thursday, June 13. As in years past, Goodman Jewelers is generously sponsoring free admission to the first 500 kids. BB Clarke and Vilas opened Memorial Day Weekend for weekend service and will be open each weekend until Jun 8. The rest of the beaches will open on June 13.
- Park and Street Use Events: June marks the eighth month we have had multiple new events for approval on the BPC agenda. We are also receiving applications for new street use events. With Memorial Day in the books, we have reached the “Unofficial Start of Summer” and you will find multiple events in Parks and on the Streets, almost every day until the end of September. Enjoy!

## Planning and Development

### North Star Dog Park

- Staff currently designing new dog park on the far East Side, bidding anticipated in fall 2019 for fall construction and completion in 2020. The dog park is anticipated to open once turf is established in 2020.

### Law Park Preliminary Report

- SmithGroup has been hired to prepare a preliminary report for Law Park. The report will provide site background information and the findings of an initial public engagement effort for the future park master planning process. Multiple workshops and user group meetings will be held over the summer, with the final report completed in late fall, 2019.

### 2019 Landscaping Contract

- The 2019 Landscaping Contract was awarded to Dan Larsen Landscaping for \$34,968. Work is to begin shortly, sites receiving improvements include Allied Park (signature sign bed), Olbrich Park (at Walter St), Warner Park (boat launch area), Warner Park (Mallard's parking lot medians), and Yahara Place Park (tree plantings). Plantings efforts are scheduled for spring and fall of 2019 with maintenance to continue through 2020.

### Forest Hill Cemetery:

- Phase 2 of the storm sewer improvements and roadway resurfacing will be completed in June at Forest Hill Cemetery. Starting in 2016 Parks has taken steps to reduce storm water runoff from the cemetery to surrounding properties. Storm water from the cemetery is now connected to the City's storm sewer system and flooding impacts to surrounding properties will be reduced. Phase 3 is scheduled in the future.

#### Vilas Park Master Plan

- The project kick-off meeting was held at the end of May with consultant MSA Professional Services, Inc. who will be leading the master plan effort working with subconsultant Urban Assets LLC. Parks staff attended a planning event with school age children from Franklin Elementary School at the park on May 31. The event was led by Friends of Lake Wingra, who received a planning grant from the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin to engage children to envision the park's future.

#### 2019 Playgrounds

- The Group Two playground contract, replacing five playgrounds, will be awarded to Madison Commercial Landscapes for \$305,884.50. Construction is scheduled to begin in mid- August.