

SUPERINTENDENT'S SEPTEMBER 2024 REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

The end of meteorological summer has come with Labor Day and kids returning to school, though it looks like the remainder of astronomical summer will feature some traditional summer like weather. This will likely mean busier parks through the month of September and sustained efforts of mowing, trash/recycling, and general maintenance. The summer season was a busy one with high permit usage as well as a busy event schedule. The Golf Enterprise remains in a strong position starting September, with over \$4.4M in revenue and rounds of over 126K. This is about 4.5% ahead of last year's record year. It should mean that \$5M and 145K rounds are in sight. Pool attendance was solid this summer despite some shaky weather and a closure due to glass in the pool. The Royal Thai Pavilion restoration work is nearing completion, and the team is ready to welcome back visitors to see its grandeur. Numerous projects to improve parks are underway, notably with building/shelter construction going on right now at Tenney, Door Creek, and Country Grove parks. Each of these projects is moving along reasonably well and we anticipate all being available to the public next year. We also anticipate the start of construction for the Warner Park Community Recreation Center to commence in the coming weeks.

Staff continues to work to provide support to the City's Finance Department and Mayor's Office as they work to produce the Executive Capital and Operating Budgets. This year's process is challenging given the City's fiscal realities, and I remain hopeful that we will be able to establish budgets for 2025 that sustain as much of our operations as possible, while also ensuring sustained reinvestments in our system's ageing assets.

Future Commission Items

- Marshall Houses – Parks staff continues to work with Real Estate and the City Attorney's Office to engage with the property owners of the historic homes in Marshall Park. The goal is to bring an update and potential options for moving forward to the Commission in the next couple of months.
- Olin Houses – We will be working on a management plan for the Olin Houses as we acquire them. We own three of the houses at this point and would like to have a management strategy in place moving forward. We anticipate buying more of these and it would be good to begin developing the plan for holding strategy. We are hopeful to have a plan in place by the Fall.
- Parks Division Work Plan / Roadmap / Results – Staff will present the Division's roadmap to the Board and update on progress for 2024, as well as seek input for inclusion of important things for the 2025 Roadmap. A part of this presentation will include some key performance results for Parks.
- Park Sponsorship – Staff are working with the Parks Foundation on a plan to create opportunities for sponsorship of parks and park amenities to secure additional resources to support the system. The Commission will be briefed on this in October or November.

Section Updates

Olbrich Botanical Gardens



Blooming Butterflies – This year's Blooming Butterflies exhibit welcomed over 23,500 guests! The exhibit showcased a wide variety of butterflies in the Bolz Conservatory. Other events included Bicycle for Butterflies, Butterfly Action Day, and Breakfast with the Butterflies. A huge thank-you to Chocolate Shoppe and the Jerry Frautschi Family Foundation for their sponsorships.

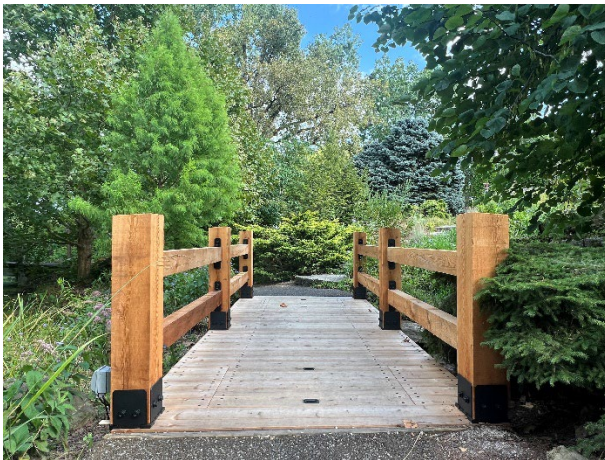


Royal Thai Pavilion – The scaffolding was removed in mid-August. Kalam, the contractor, is finishing up the detailed mosaic tile work. The estimated completion date for the whole project is mid-September. The public can view the Royal Thai Pavilion from the Thai Garden and will be able to enter it once again.

once the restoration is complete.



- **Olbrich After Hours** – We've wrapped up the first year of Olbrich After Hours, our newly rebranded and enhanced summer concert series, with great success. Our average attendance jumped from 493 in 2023 to 913 in 2024, totaling 7,307 attendance (3,945 last year). Beyond these numbers, the musicianship this summer was outstanding! Highlights included Leslie Demaso & Mr. Chair's captivating performance of *SIRENA*, blending storytelling with Filipino kundiman, and the sensory-rich performance by Cycropia/Searchlights/Ho Etsu Taiko, which drew a record crowd of 2,410. Mokoomba's infectious energy had the great lawn full of people dancing.



- **New Dry Garden Bridge** – Parks Woodworker, Brian Powell, designed and constructed a new footbridge in the Dry Garden. The bridge features cedar wood and is wide enough to accommodate guests in wheelchairs, strollers, and on foot in both directions. Not only is the bridge extremely stable and functional, it also complements the garden nicely.

Community Services Report September 2024 – Terrence Thompson

Community Events (Kelly Post)

- The Community Events team is excited to be near the end of a very busy and successful event season.
- We will shift our focus to tying up any loose ends from the 2024 season, such as invoicing and payment collection, and getting ready for the 2025 season.
- We will contact our annual events to obtain their 2025 date requests so we can enter them into our system before November 1, 2024, when reservations open to the public.
- At this time of year, we also focus on process improvements, such as updating forms, websites, and files and overall work planning for 2025.

Parks Alive (Debra Alleyne)

Parks Partnerships

This year, with Parks Alive's administration fully situated in the Parks Division, we have been able to grow our interdepartmental collaboration. These collaborations created an exciting diversity of activities at the event. These collaborations include:

- Sina Davis Movies In The Park Program:
 - The Recreation Services team has continued to provide admirable service and added enormous value to the event.
- Event Support
 - This year, Parks staff have been supportive in filling in the gaps for on-site and in-office event support. The staff who volunteered their afternoons scooped ice cream, made popcorn, and cleaned up after the event.
- Golf
 - This year, with the Golf Director's support, the golf program debuted at Parks Alive. Golf equipment was set up at the park, and there was a high level of engagement with youths, including some who had never played golf before.
- Park Rangers
 - In addition to taking on signage installation for the program, Park Rangers, supported by the Ranger Supervisor, have become a staple at Parks Alive. The event's Rangers have intentionally provided high-quality engagement with the community members.

Customer Service (Joanne Austin)

- We are already preparing for next year as we continue to manage the current season's reservations for shelters and athletic facilities. This involves confirming shelter opening and closing dates with operations, inputting new shelters into our reservation system, and blocking off dates for locations designated for pre-approved special events and elections. Starting on Friday, November 1, 2024, customers can begin making their 2025 shelter reservations. Reservations can be made via phone, in-person, or through our online reservation system for added convenience.

Recreation Services & Aquatics (Tracey Hartley & Shane Martin)

- On Sunday, August 11, Ride The Drive took place and the relaunch was a great success. The event drew 12,000 people who enjoyed 4 miles of closed streets with 6 park activity hubs on the beautiful day. The positive impact of the event on our community was significant, and we are thankful to everyone who contributed to its success. We will start planning for next year soon.
- We recently hired Amy Zabransky as the Event Services Assistant. She will start working the week of September 3, 2024.
- The Goodman Pool closed for the season on Sunday, August 25, marking the end of another successful summer. The pool reopened on Saturday, August 17, after glass was found in the pool on Tuesday, August 13. The facility is now starting the process of closing for the winter and preparing end-of-season reports. The beaches and splash pads will remain open until Labor Day, on Monday, September 2.

Rangers & Volunteers

Rangers (Steve Dray)

- Rangers are loving the continued connection with park users as we continue to use our limited resources to the best of our abilities. Summer is winding down, but it's still hot out, and plenty of exciting events are happening across parks. August was a busy month full of events that Rangers participated in. National Night Out is a yearly event held in Warner Park that showcases various members of the public safety system. Most people are amazed when they find out that Ranger trucks are fully electric. It's a fun conversation starter to get people talking about Madison Parks.



- Madison Park's signature event, Ride the Drive, was back in 2024 after a multi-year hiatus. Rangers were essential in the six parks that served as hubs for this year's event. The Rangers recently implemented the Bike Patrol Unit, which was put to good use. Rangers who have been bike patrol trained were able to patrol the route and be the safety coordinator at each of their respective hubs.



Volunteers (John Weichelt)

- **Ride the Drive:** Over 300 volunteers contributed nearly 700 service hours. Roles included intersection guides, merchandise sales, informational support, and site setup/cleanup.



Heifetz Park: A local community group, 1 Pyramid at a Time, adopted the park and will conduct monthly cleanups and programming.

- **Owen Park:** The Department of Transportation is now connected with Friends of Owen Park, providing 10-15 volunteers for monthly activities.

- **Volunteer Software:** The City of Madison approved the software purchase and we will begin onboarding for the Get Connected program, enhancing volunteer management.

- **Epic Systems:** Epic Systems in Verona partnered with The Glen for monthly volunteer workdays.
- **Madison Country Day School:** Over 45 students assisted with invasive species clearing at Cherokee Marsh on August 28 and 29.



- **UW MBA Resource Fair:** Madison Parks participated in the first annual fair on August 29, aiming to engage business students in local volunteer and educational initiatives.

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Zach Watson)

- Vogel Bros. Building Co. was awarded the WPCRC Expansion Project at a bid of \$9,069,900.00.
 - The Expansion Project has been entered into Autodesk, and we anticipate breaking ground on it between the end of September and early October.
- WPCRC has updated our ID Application to include access for our members to both off-site programming and the KNOW Program Van.
- KNOW Program had 8 members complete a 6-week “Learn to Cut” barber course led by JP’s Hair Design.