

SUPERINTENDENT'S MARCH 2020 REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

The spring season is coming and with it the challenges of getting the system ready for the highest intensity use of the year. There are a multitude of things that need to be done and our professional staff do an excellent job of working through the lists in a manner that gets things ready as soon as they can be. We often receive questions about restrooms, fields, and drinking fountains (bubblers to some of the locals). These are all examples of amenities that are a struggle to get operational as soon as possible due to weather concerns. We cannot just turn on the water to restrooms and drinking fountains that are unheated due to concerns about hard freezes and the potential for costly damage. By having to wait on the weather, we also run into the issue of not being able to get everything open on one day. This leads to a lag that we do our best to manage, but it always feels a little like we are behind. Similarly closure of athletic fields and dog parks are often frustrating to residents, but they are important to ensure the vitality of the land over the entire year (and into the future). There are many more tasks than this to get everything in order (picnic tables, trash and recycling can placement, etc), and it is important to recognize the magnitude of staff's efforts on these fronts across the park system.

Future Commission Items

- IPM Taskforce – The IPM taskforce has started active work again after a brief pause to realign the group. Staff will present on the current status as a part of a land management update in April/May.
- Task Force on Municipal Golf in Madison Parks – The Task Force has been working diligently towards their goal of completing a report and recommendations by May 1st. The public engagement portion of the work is ongoing includes public meetings, a survey, and focus groups. Staff anticipates this timeline to be met and the Commission to review the recommendations in May and/or June.
- Staff is working with both Brittingham Boats and the Madison Mallards to extend their current agreements to ensure continuity for the future.

Section reports

Community Services Monthly Highlights

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (WPCRC)

- The Kids Need Opportunities at Warner (KNOW) program, sponsored by Madison Parks Foundation is off to an excellent start to begin the year. For February, Teen Night had 27 participants, and Family Fun Night had 164 participants. Recruitment for the WPCRC Programmer is well underway to support this important work.

Recreation Services

- Ride the Drive is officially scheduled for Sunday, May 17, 2020. Preparations and planning are underway! Reserve your volunteer spot today online. 80+ volunteers are needed to support the event.

Park Rangers

- We are currently completing hiring for summer Rangers and will begin training the first week in April. We are happy to be entering the summer season without a vacancy in permanent staff for the first year since 2016. Off-leash dog contacts have been a major focus through our relatively mild winter and will continue to be a priority as we move into spring.

Aquatics

- Hiring is in the works to replace what was a great 2019 Aquatics team and we hope to have those positions filled by mid-March. Swimming lessons are available online and have been filling up pretty early this year. Preparations are underway for the 2020 All-City Dive meet which is scheduled to be hosted at the Goodman Pool.

Park and Street Use Events

- The Street Use Racial Equity Social Justice Initiative (RESJI) team continues work on the First Amendment policy for the City. Staff are in the process of drafting a “Park Events” ordinance and a permit enforcement policy for community events, and we continue to update and “tweak” the Community Event website and the on-line application (Accela) for Street Use permit applications.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

- Construction: Punch list items continue in both the Frautschi Family Learning Center and the Production Greenhouse.
- Programs & Exhibitions:
 - Friday, February 28 @ 7 – 11 pm -- Cocktails in the Conservatory with DJ Dudley Noon
 - Friday, March 6 @ 5 – 7 pm – Canopy Sessions with B-Free & Quinten Farr
 - Spring Flower Show, daily, March 7 – 22, 10 am – 4 pm
- Education: Youth and Family programs – including Explorer School Programs -- are now being held in the Frautschi Family Learning Center (as of 2/17)
- Bolz Conservatory: Orchid Escape – a celebration of orchids – is ongoing in the Bolz Conservatory through 2/29
- Horticulture: Preparations to begin outdoor clean up and work are ongoing. Winter pruning is ongoing.

Planning and Development

Single Track Bicycle Network

- Madison Parks is currently in the planning phase of developing a citywide system of multi-use, bike optimized, off-road trails. One of the recommended strategies from the [2018-2023 Park and Open Space Plan](#) is to improve connectivity to enhance access and create a comprehensive system of greenspace connections. Currently, the City is working with IMBA to compile land records and planning files to produce a citywide natural tread trail network. We will soon be vetting this preliminary concept plan with other City agencies. We hope to present the network plan to the public through a series of public informational meetings in the early summer. From there, more detailed planning and design can take place on individual trail segments and locations.

East Side Dog Park Public Meeting

- Parks staff are holding a public meeting on March 19th to review potential east side dog park options with area residents and park users. OB Sherry Park and Eastmorland Park are the locations under consideration, with the potential for one of the two sites to become Madison's next off-leash dog exercise area.

Basketball Courts

- Parks will be undertaking the replacement of basketball courts at Flad, Greentree, Portland, Sherman Village, Sunset, Walnut Grove, and Yahara Place parks in 2020. These courts are all rated a 3 out of 10 or less for condition. This generally means the asphalt has reached a point where it is no longer playable. Historically, it has been a challenge to maintain the high number of basketball courts in the Parks system and this year's effort is part of our systematic program to keep our courts playable.

Various Site Improvements

- Parks staff awarded construction of the Reynolds security lights at the Bike Polo court to Robert J. Nickels Electric for the low bid price of \$79,950. The lights will extend the use hours of this popular feature on the roof of the City well.
- Warner Park Pier has been awarded to VW Docks for the low bid price of \$44,172.00. The contract for installation of the pier and to improve ice access is currently out to bid.
- Staff is currently working with Engineering Facilities to review options for acoustical improvements at the John T. Wall Shelter at Tenney Park. The improvements are anticipated to be installed in fall 2020 or spring 2021.