

SUPERINTENDENT'S MAY 2019 REPORT COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

The grass is growing, spring burn season has come and gone, and we are planting hundreds of trees. There are many signs of spring in Madison Parks and they are almost all present, which means staff is busy. One of the items that takes a lot of resources at this time of year is the recruitment, hiring, onboarding and initial training of hundreds of seasonal staff. This work requires leadership and diligent work from staff at all levels of the organization and we do it quite well, so well that it might not be as noticed as it ought to be. We more than double our staff between March and June, which is quite impressive and an uncommon thing when comparing to most organizations of our size.

Another sign of spring that is new this year is that of professional soccer on the pitch at Breese Stevens Field. Madison Forward FC played their first home game in snowy conditions in late April (the frozen tundra of Breese?), with attendance at around 4,500 people. This marks a significant achievement in the adaptive repurposing of an historic asset in our parks system. Early indications are that about 170,000 people will visit Breese this year, which is at least 8 times the number who visited in 2012. Another landmark in the system is the Garver Feed Mill and work being done to preserve it by Baum has continued with a few vendors now operating out of the Mill itself. These two stories along with our work at Forest Hill Cemetery and Gates of Heaven really highlight the importance and priority Madison Parks has placed on preserving our historic landmarks.

Permanent Staffing Changes:

There were no permanent staff changes in the month of April. However, staff have been very busy working to recruit, hire, and onboard a significant number of seasonal staff. As of the end of April approximately 150 hourly staff have been added this year. Another 100 to 125 will be added in May.

Future Commission Items

- Urban Forestry Taskforce – The Urban Forestry Taskforce is likely to have a completed report with recommendations in the next few months. 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 2019 Golf season is underway and early pass sales and revenue are positive. There are still major systematic issues related to golf, both financially as well as land use considerations.
- 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 first half of the year.
- Off-Leash Dog Parks – Staff is working to determine potential off-leash improvements in the priority areas of the West side, Atwood/East Isthmus, and Far East/Grandview. The Approved Master Plan for North Star Park will address the deficiency in Grandview. Staff are working on concepts for the other two priority areas and anticipate moving forward with engagement processes in 2019.

- 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.
- 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 June.
- 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 in June or July.
- Law Park Master Plan – Staff have been working to engage a consultant for an initial study of Law Park that incorporates both existing conditions as well as early engagement with the community. Staff anticipates briefing the Commission on this work in June.

Section Updates

Operations

Conservation:

- Completed prescribed burns on 110 of 188 acres (59%) planned for spring 2019. The work included volunteer-led burns at Bear Mound Park and Odana Golf Course, as well as staff led burns at Cherokee Marsh - North and South Units, Heritage Prairie, Knollwood, Olin, Owen, and Turville.
- Secured quotes and requested purchase orders for spring invasive control work on 52 acres at Cherokee Marsh and Turville Point.

Construction:

- Completed the Northeast Green Space manure pit abandonment project and restored the land for tillable farm use.
- Removed the tennis courts at Northland Manor Park in preparation for the new court.
- Replaced the drain pipe under Vilas Road, which required the road to be closed for a day. The final road repair work will be completed after the blacktop plants open.

Facilities:

- Rebuilt two piers and installed all piers with exception of the Convention Center and James Madison piers.
- Installed the Mooring field and completed capital improvement work including the HVAC projects at the Summit facility and Gates of Heaven and installing water meters, completing 46 of the 49 meters required.

Forestry:

- Completed inspections for Engineering's reconstruction and sidewalk repair projects. Pruning for the projects was completed prior to start of construction season.
- Spring planting efforts are underway. We plan to plant 1745 trees this season.
- Partnered with three schools to conduct Arbor Week events at Yahara Place and Olive Jones Park and an Earth Day event at Warner Park

General Parks:

- All shelter and athletic facilities are open for the season and reservation are starting to ramp up. Daily maintenance has begun.
- We anticipate full mowing operations will begin by May 1.
- Supported Earth Day Challenge with staff to lead volunteer projects across the City.
- Seasonal staff are starting. Hiring seasonal staff has been exceptionally challenging this year.

Mall Concourse:

- Focused on spring preparation including: clearing winter debris, cold patch damaged sidewalks, mulched landscape bed and spring pansy installations.
- Annual sidewalk washing program has begun.

Planning and Development

Reynolds Park Lighting

- Strand Associates, Inc is assisting Parks with an evaluation of options for adding lighting to the tennis courts/bike polo court located on the well rooftop. This was a request by the Alder and the bike polo group. Staff will hold a public meeting to discuss two lighting options for lighting the sports courts at Reynolds field on May 13th.

Odana School Dog Park

- Adding a new fence where the old soccer field had been will more than double the size of the dog park at Odana School Park. The contract was awarded to Century Fence. Construction will be completed by mid-summer.

Warner Park Boat Launch

- Warner Park Boat Launch parking lot has been rebuilt to modern standards and now includes bio retention basins, permeable concrete panels, landscaping, and an invasive species boat wash station. Construction was completed and the boat launch was available for the 2019 Fishing Season opening weekend (May 4th).

Door Creek Tennis Courts Phase II

- Work by Fahrner Asphalt Sealers, LLC began in early April. This phase will complete the four courts to the south of the existing tennis courts at the park. Work is anticipated to continue through May and will be completed in June.

Breese Stevens Field

- The facility improvements at Breese Stevens Field are nearing completion with the majority of the spectator amenities in place for Forward Madison FC's home opener. Work on the upper hospitality area will be completed by mid-May.

2019 Playgrounds

- Group One contract, replacing five playgrounds, will be awarded to Madison Commercial Landscapes for \$253,476. Construction is scheduled to begin in late May or early June. Group Two went out for bid the week of April 29th. We are on schedule to have 10 new playgrounds by the end of the year.