

Development of Park Event Standards

Background – Long Range Planning

The park system had 164 “special events” that required a special event permit(s) in 2013. In 2014 there were 188. The number of special events in parks has grown by approximately 20% over the past five years.

Setting event fees is a well-accepted practice in other municipal park systems. Parks staff and the Park Commission have expressed an interest in ensuring that fees take appropriate consideration of the numerous variables involved with an event and its impact on the park system.

Considerations have been made in the past to assess fees based on the following event characteristics: estimated attendance, beer sales, food/non-consumable sales, additional vendors, paid admission (non-athletic events), if the event is open to the public, and total use of the park/facility.

An expanded event standards policy might, e.g., set guidelines and conditions for all special events (non-athletic) in parks, provide special conditions to specific parks, and amend the fee structure to ensure equitable cost recovery goals based on the impact to the park system. Additionally, the policy may propose standards that provide clarity on permits required for events, e.g., when is a Temporary Structures fee required) and provide a guide to event organizers regarding existing policies, e.g., no PA permits at select parks.

Analysis

Park Event Permit data from 2013 and 2014 were reviewed. Data from 2014 were analyzed by several variables that included:

- parkland classification,
- event sponsor,
- fees charged,
- projected attendance, and
- other triggers for permits, e.g., amplification, temporary structures and vending.

In 2014, park event permits were issued for 188 unique events which utilized 198 different parks. (This accounts for events that were held in multiple parks.) This does not represent the number of days the events were held in parks. Some events are issued permits for multiple days for the event, itself, or for setup/takedown. Known projected attendance at all permitted events was 263,217.

Table 1

Parkland Classification	General Description	Number of Events N=188	% of Overall Events
Sports Complex	Heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities whose primary purpose is programmed active recreation.	2	1%
Mini Park	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreation needs.	11	5%
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood parks remain the basic unit of the park system. Serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.	46	23%
Community Park	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	139	71%

Parkland Classification as defined by the 2012-2017 Park and Open Space Plan

Events in Community Parks

139 events were held in 17 different Community Parks. Six of most utilized parks (80% of all events) were selected for further analysis:

- Warner – 39 events (28%)
- Olin – 22 events (16%)
- Vilas – 22 events (16%)
- Olbrich – 10 events (7%)
- Brittingham – 9 events (6%)
- Elver – 9 events (6%)

46 events were held in 23 different Neighborhood Parks. Four of most utilized parks accounted for 48% of all events. These are:

- Penn – 10 events (22%)
- Elvehjem – 4 events (9%)
- Rennebohm – 4 events (9%)
- Wingra – 4 events (9%)

11 events were held in 10 different Mini Parks. The most utilized park was Norman Clayton with two (2) events.

Time of Year for Events

As expected, the majority of events occur in the May-August period.

- January – April (16 events/8.5%)
- May – August (110 events/60%)
- September – December (62 events/33%).

N=188

Event Organizers

The events in 2014 were organized by groups that are classified as follows:

- For Profit = 31 events (16%)
- Not-for-Profit = 126 events (67%)
- Neighborhood Association = 16 events (9%)
- Madison Parks = 10 (5%)
- City of Madison = 3 (2%)
- State of Wisconsin = 2 (1%)

Event Fees

In total, event permit fees were charged in the amount of \$126,530

- 56 events had 146 temporary structures which includes tents (of varying sizes), stages and/or inflatables.
- 100 events received permits for amplifications.
- 18 events received beer permits.
- 43 events had permits to sell food and/or merchandise.

Comparative data for Community Park events
(N = 139)

	Warner	Vilas	Olin	Olbrich	Britt	Elver	Total
# Events	39	22	22	10	9	9	111
	35%	20%	20%	9%	8%	8%	
1 st Quarter (Jan-Apr)	3	5	1	0	3	1	13
2 nd Quarter (May-Aug)	24	8	19	8	5	6	70
3 rd Quarter (Sept-Oct)	12	9	2	2	1	2	28
For Profit	9	4	6	1	0	1	25
Not-for-Profit	28	16	13	8	7	6	74
Neighborhood Association	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Madison/State	2	2	3	1	2	1	11
Attendance	34,625	5,612	23,750	8,070	21,275	1,850	95,182
	36%	6%	25%	8%	23%	2%	
Fees	\$20,643	\$9,072	\$19,279	\$1,928	\$2,010	\$1,935	\$54,867
	38%	17%	35%	3%	4%	3%	
Temporary Structures	37	3	23	6	5	1	76
Amplification	28	15	10	4	3	4	65
Beer Sales	1	1	5	0	1	0	8
Food Sales	10	1	6	3	1	0	21
Merchandise Sales	6	0	3	1	1	1	12

Note: Olin had fewer events but collected more in fees than the other large Community Parks primarily due to the Madison Homebrewers – Great Taste of the Midwest event (\$23,417.00); which is **not** included in the fees listed above. The fee is driven higher because of the number of vendors they have at the event.

Additional comparative data for Community Park events=
(N = 139)

	For-Profit	Not-For-Profit	Neighborhood Association	Madison/State	Total
Warner	9	28	0	2	39
Vilas	4	16	0	2	22
Olin	6	13	0	3	22
Olbrich	1	8	0	1	10
Brittingham	0	7	0	2	9
Elver	1	6	1	1	9
Total	21	74	1	11	111
Small (<150)					
Warner	4	0	0	0	4
Vilas	1	3	0	1	5
Olin	0	5	0	2	7
Olbrich	1	1	0	0	2
Brittingham	0	1	0	1	2
Elver	0	4	1	0	5
Total	6	14	1	4	25
Medium (151-400)					
Warner	0	8	0	1	9
Vilas	1	11	0	1	13
Olin	0	3	0	1	4
Olbrich	0	2	0	1	3
Brittingham	0	5	0	0	5
Elver	1	2	0	0	3
Total	2	31	1	4	37
Large (401-1000)					
Warner	2	12	0	1	15
Vilas	2	1	0	0	3
Olin	2	3	0	0	5
Olbrich	0	3	0	0	3
Brittingham	0	1	0	0	1
Elver	0	0	0	1	1
Total	6	20	0	2	28
Greater than 1000					
Warner	3	8	0	0	11
Vilas	0	1	0	0	1
Olin	5	1	0	1	7
Olbrich	0	0	0	1	1
Brittingham	0	0	0	0	0
Elver	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8	10	0	2	20

**Comparative data for Community Park
Small Events (<150)**

	Warner	Vilas	Olin	Olbrich	Britt	Elver	Total
# Events	4	5	7	2	2	5	25
1 st Quarter (Jan-Apr)	0	2	1	0	2	0	5
2 nd Quarter (May-Aug)	3	3	5	2	0	5	18
3 rd Quarter (Sept-Oct)	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
For Profit	4	1	0	1	0	0	6
Not-for-Profit	0	3	5	1	1	4	14
Neighborhood Association	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Madison/State	0	1	2	0	1	0	4
Attendance	425	512	700	220	175	550	2,582
Fees	\$2,088	\$944	\$490	\$301	\$0	\$867	\$4,690
Temporary Structures	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Amplification	4	3	1	0	0	2	10
Beer Sales	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Food Sales	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Merchandise Sales	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

**Comparative data for Community Park
Medium Events (151-400)**

	Warner	Vilas	Olin	Olbrich	Britt	Elver	Total
# Events	9	13	4	3	5	3	37
1 st Quarter (Jan-Apr)	0	2	0	0	1	0	3
2 nd Quarter (May-Aug)	6	4	4	2	3	1	20
3 rd Quarter (Sept-Oct)	3	7	0	1	1	2	14
For Profit	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Not-for-Profit	8	11	3	2	5	2	31
Neighborhood Association	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Madison/State	1	1	1	1	0	0	4
Attendance	2,350	3,300	1,050	750	1,500	800	9,750
Fees	\$3,470	\$2,809	\$901	\$220	\$1,860	\$1,068	\$10,328
Temporary Structures	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Amplification	5	8	1	2	3	2	21
Beer Sales	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Food Sales	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Merchandise Sales	2	0	0	0	1	0	3

**Comparative data for Community Park
Large Events (401-1,000)**

	Warner	Vilas	Olin	Olbrich	Britt	Elver	Total
# Events	15	3	5	3	1	1	28
1 st Quarter (Jan-Apr)	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
2 nd Quarter (May-Aug)	9	1	4	2	1	1	18
3 rd Quarter (Sept-Oct)	5	1	1	1	0	0	8
For Profit	2	2	2	0	0	0	6
Not-for-Profit	12	1	3	3	1	0	20
Neighborhood Association	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Madison/State	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Attendance	9,550	2,400	4,000	2,100	500	500	19,050
Fees	\$17,224	\$5,219	\$4,385	\$1,627	\$150	\$0	\$17,224
Temporary Structures	6	2	2	2	0	1	13
Amplification	11	3	4	2	0	0	20
Beer Sales	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Food Sales	6	1	1	3	0	0	11
Merchandise Sales	1	1	0	1	0	0	3

**Comparative data for Community Park
Events Greater than 1,000**

	Warner	Vilas	Olin	Olbrich	Britt	Elver	Total
# Events	11	1	6	1	1	0	20
1 st Quarter (Jan-Apr)	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
2 nd Quarter (May-Aug)	6	0	5	1	1	0	13
3 rd Quarter (Sept-Oct)	3	1	1	0	0	0	5
For Profit	3	0	5	0	0	0	8
Not-for-Profit	8	1	1	0	0	0	10
Neighborhood Association	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Madison/State	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Attendance	30,800	2,000	19,500	6,000	20,000	0	78,300
Fees	\$46,262	\$100	\$36,919	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$46,262
Temporary Structures	6	0	5	0	0	0	11
Amplification	8	1	5	0	0	0	14
Beer Sales	1	0	4	0	0	0	5
Food Sales	3	0	4	0	0	0	7
Merchandise Sales	3	0	3	0	0	0	6

(Note: Olbrich and Brittingham events were Madison Parks' Ride the Drive)

Comparative data for Neighborhood Park Events

(Total events for all Neighborhood Parks = 46)

	Penn	Elvehjem	Rennebohm	Wingra	Total
# Events	10	4	4	4	22
1 st Quarter (Jan-Apr)	0	0	0	0	0
2 nd Quarter (May-Aug)	8	2	3	4	17
3 rd Quarter (Sept-Oct)	2	2	1	0	5
For Profit	0	0	0	0	0
Not-for-Profit	9	2	2	3	16
Neighborhood Association	0	2	2	1	5
Madison/State	1	0	0	0	1
Attendance	6,550	700	1,300	700	9,250
Small (<150)	4	2	1	0	7
Medium (151-400)	3	2	0	1	6
Large (401-1000)	2	0	3	3	8
Greater than 1000	1	0	0	0	1
Fees	\$2,821	\$200	\$200.00	\$550.00	\$3,770.64
Temporary Structures	5	2	0	2	9
Amplification	8	0	2	3	13
Beer Sales	0	0	0	0	0
Food Sales	2	1	0	0	3
Merchandise Sales	1	0	0	0	1

The majority (77%) of events in neighborhood parks occur during the months of May through August. A few clarifications:

- All but one event in a neighborhood park was organized by a not-for-profit group or neighborhood association.
- Juneteenth in Penn Park was the largest event in a Neighborhood Park with an expected attendance of 5,000-10,000. Average attendance for all other events was 575.
- Juneteenth also had the largest invoice amount for events in Neighborhood Parks at \$2,124.00. All other events were either free (11 events) or averaged \$164 in fees (10 events).
- All but two events in Penn Park received an amplification permit. The neighborhood events in both Rennebohm and Wingra were the only events in those two parks that did not have an amplification permit.
- Known projected attendance at these events is 9,250 which equates to 53% of the annual attendance. Please note that attendance projections are not included for all events.

STAFF COSTS:

In regards to staff costs associated with these events, it is projected that small events (150 or less) and medium size events (151-400) cost approximately \$40 to process each application/permits. The \$40 is comprised of 1-2 hours of support staff time to review and process.

For large sized events (400-1000) it is projected that support staff spends approximately 2-2.5 hours reviewing and processing applications/permits for a cost of \$50 per application.

For events greater than 1000 it is estimated that support staff spends approximately 6 hours of time reviewing and processing applications. It is also estimated that the total time managers will spend on each application is 5 hours, park operations supervisors will spend up to 5 hours both in review and meeting organizers on site, and park rangers will spend up to 5 hours for review and on-site during event.

Actual costs incurred with events, e.g., extra trash pick-up, repair any damages, etc. are direct billed to the event organizer and are not included in this estimate.

Event Size	Number of events	Staff cost per application	Total Cost	Revenue from Fees
Small (<150)	43	\$40	\$1,720	\$5,066
Medium (151-400)	60	\$40	\$2,400	\$11,157
Large (401-1000)	48	\$50	\$2,400	\$25,676
Greater than 1000	37	\$830	\$30,710	\$84,632
Total			\$37,230	\$126,531