

Community Services Report February 2025 – Terrence Thompson

Community Events (Kelly Post)

Street Use permitting

- Common Council adopted updates to MGO 10.056 – Street Use Permit at the January 14, 2025 meeting. These updates took effect on January 25, 2025. The updates include dissolving the Street Use Staff Commission as a BCC, adding language reflective of current practices, clarifying interagency roles and responsibilities in the Street Use permitting process, and requiring consultation with certain agencies for certain types of events (events with traveling components, events with alcohol, and events of a certain size.) Park staff are working through updates to processes and communications with stakeholders. The intended outcome of the ordinance and process updates is to create a more efficient and flexible permitting process for staff and customers.
- We are meeting bi-weekly with all required agencies and those event organizers that require a review meeting.
- Things are transitioning smoothly; we don't anticipate any major issues or delays in permitting Street Use events.

Park Event permitting

- The Community Events team has already seen dozens of Park Event permit applications come in for 2025. We are ready with updated applications and websites. We process these as they come in and based on chronological order.

Carts in Parks

- The Carts in Parks program will continue to connect local food trucks with community park events and offer some locations for daily vending in 2025. We work closely with the Street Vending team in the Economic Development Division to coordinate and communicate with food cart operations. The City of Madison vending season is annually from April 15th to April 14th. All City Licensed Food Carts qualify for the program and can participate at a level that works for their business.

Parks Alive (Debra Alleyne)

Parks Alive Backbone Team Reset

- Because of the success of the Parks Alive Program, it has expanded to include 2 additional locations. Due to this expansion, with the support of the Backbone team, we are reevaluating the needs of the program as it relates to:
 - onsite logistical support,
 - event duration
 - strategic program curation
 - maintaining and expanding community engagement
 - strategic deployment of partner resources

In addition to reviewing our existing program through the lens of the Parks Alive matrix (see attached) that we developed in 2024, we are including working on alignment strategies with existing policy documents we believe are relevant to the Parks Alive program. These include the Dane County Violence Prevention Roadmap and the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan. Now more than ever, we believe that as the program expands, we will ensure alignment with City goals. Upon conclusion of this reset, we plan to share our new approach and method with the community and partners.



Customer Service (Joanne Austin)

Watercraft storage

- In 2024, we leased 441 of the 434 watercraft storage spaces, leaving only 7 vacant. All 30 of the mooring spaces were filled, and we issued one private mooring permit. In February, we will offer current watercraft and mooring customers a chance to renew. Current storage permits are valid through March 15, 2025. If anyone should decide not to renew, we'll contact those on our waitlists.



2025 Athletic Reservations

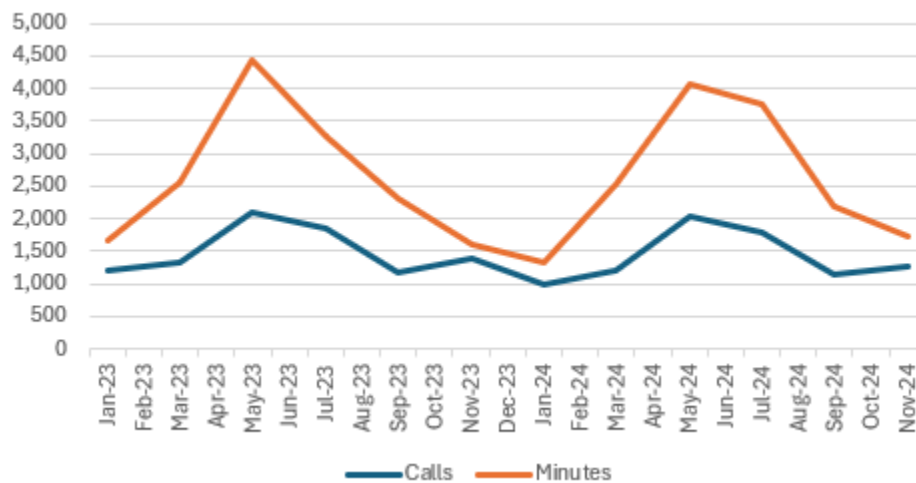
- We're excited to fully implement the Qualifying Discounts Program (QDP) for athletic field and court reservations in 2025, following a long creation and piloting phase to reduce financial barriers for eligible groups. Our large agreement holders, including MAYSA, MUFA, MMSD, and MSCR, have already started submitting their 2025 reservations. Priority groups will begin on the first Monday in February, and public reservations will open on the third Monday in February. To better serve a broader range of users, we are also transitioning to calling all open grassy fields "Multipurpose Fields" this year, making it easier for customers to find available space for various activities. These updates and continued improvements to our reservation system aim to create a more efficient and accessible experience for everyone.



Incoming Calls to Customer Service

- There's never a dull moment in customer service. Our team spent an impressive 494 hours communicating with customers through incoming phone calls in 2023 and even more, 522 hours in 2024! Let's not forget that this team also provides in-person and email correspondence with our customers. As the trend shows, we have an uptick in calls when our shelter reservation season and summer activities begin. A huge shoutout to an amazing team that makes it happen! We look forward to another great year ahead!

Incoming Calls 2023 and 2024



Recreation Services & Aquatics (Tracey Hartley & Shane Martin)

Winter Recreation

- Cold temperatures have settled in, and all general and hockey rinks at Elver and Vilas are now open. The lagoons at Tenney and Vilas are both open. All adopt-a-ice and loaner skate locations are open as well.

So far, Vilas has been open for 30 days, Elver for 29 days, and Tenney Lagoon for 24 days, which is 300% busier than the 2023-2024 winter season. Unfortunately, the skiing season hasn't been as favorable, with trails only open for 10 days. The concessions and rental location at Odana Hills Golf Course, which is dedicated to cross-country skiing, has been open for just 2 days.

We have successfully reached our hiring goal of 50 winter attendants, and all sites are fully staffed this winter season. We look forward to the continued cold weather and hope that Door Creek can have a grand opening this season.

Events

- Events are in full swing! At the First Groove & Glide event, 52 people attended. The two Candlelight events were well attended, with 381 people at Warner and 660 at the Aldo Leopold Nature Center. It was a great turnout, especially considering there was no snow.

The upcoming events include a movie at Tenney Park, more Groove & Glide events, the Winter Prom, and various Learning events, such as "Learn to Ice Fish" and "Learn to Cross Country Ski."

Summer

- The Lifeguard positions are now posted. In late February, we will post openings for an Aquatic Supervisor, 5 Head Guards, and 1 Head Attendant to enhance our team. Currently, we have 24 returning Lifeguards and 12 returning Attendants. Additionally, we have 4 hiring fairs scheduled for the spring with MSCR.

Rangers & Volunteers

Rangers (Steve Dray)

Winter Operations

- Rangers play a significant role in winter operations in our parks. They assist with facilities and maintenance checks, staff wellness and safety checks, permit and park rule enforcement, bringing concessions to change banks, and picking up deposits. Rangers also ensure park facilities are clear and locked at the end of the evenings for security purposes.

Enforcement Contacts

- Rangers have conducted 14 enforcement contacts, resulting in 5 warnings and 9 citations. Additionally, 17 parking tickets have been issued during January.

Volunteers (John Weichelt)

Volunteer Engagement & Hours

- Madison Parks has seen significant volunteer engagement across various programs, contributing to major projects and events. Notable highlights include:
 - 2025 Candlelight Hike at Edna Taylor Conservation Park: Over 30 volunteers prepared the walk with lights and cleaned up at the end.
 - Ongoing Volunteer Programs: The expansion of volunteer-driven programs such as seed collection at Odana Golf Course and the addition of cleanup efforts at parks like Brittingham and Vilas Park continue to strengthen community involvement.

Volunteer Website Development

- Progress on the volunteer management website has been steady, with key features expected to go live by Earth Day 2025. These will include:
 - Profiles for volunteers to track hours and select opportunities by interest.
 - A waiver and background check process to ensure safety and compliance.
 - Automated emails to keep volunteers informed about new opportunities.
 - Tracking tools for certifications (e.g., chainsaw or herbicide application).

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Zach Watson)

- The WPCRC completed 2024 and began 2025 enthusiastically as we look forward to expanding the center and community service opportunities. The WPCRC Expansion Project officially broke ground on October 14, 2024. The expansion has begun to impact the interior of the building, leading to the closure of the fitness center, game room, and current gymnasium in accordance with Vogel's construction schedule. We anticipate that all three spaces will close to the public starting March 1, 2025. Our current construction schedule is accurate through April 2025 and will be updated as necessary based on construction progress, weather conditions, and the expected delivery of supplies and services.

Before the expansion project began to affect the existing building, WPCRC staff played a crucial role in hosting all the 2024 annual events, meeting or exceeding targeted attendance goals while the expansion took shape.

Here are some highlights from 2024:

- The 25th Annual WPCRC Holiday Fest Arts and Crafts Show welcomed over 80 vendors and nearly 1,200 visitors.
- The KNOW Program, in partnership with the Madison Parks Foundation (KNOW Program), hosted 257 days and 1,100 hours of afterschool programming.
- We served 2,016 youth in 2024 (data supported by Rec Trac scans; the number served is duplicated).