

MADISON PARKS – LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

NICERINK IMPACT AT HERITAGE PARK

October 11, 2018

Over the past year, the Long Range Planning Committee (LRP) for Madison Parks has researched and discussed establishing ice rink service area standards (file #44827). LRP completed a study of the existing ice rink program through engagement with Adopt Ice volunteers and Parks staff. They identified challenges and opportunities to maintaining our current rinks and/or the addition of new rinks. One possible solution to the challenges was the use of a NiceRink ice rink system. A NiceRink is a portable ice rink with a liner to hold the water. With the liner, during the freeze/thaw cycle of winter, the water remains encapsulated. By comparison, with a land rink, the water flows into the ground during a thaw cycle, resulting in significant water and labor resources to re-establish a rink. In addition, Water Utility has recently begun requiring Parks to meter all sources of water in parks. NiceRinks can be filled by a portable water tank truck, which eliminates the need to install a water meter. Lastly, research of best practices in other cities identified NiceRinks as having provided positive results.

Below is a table summarizing the pilot program of a NiceRink at Heritage Park in the 2017/18 winter season. We compared the pilot program to the operation of a standard land rink at Heritage Park in the 2011/12 season. The comparison shows that the NiceRink included higher cost of initial materials expense but savings from less water used and a reduction in labor time. The material cost was less expensive than what it would cost to instal a water meter. In addition, the NiceRink received positive comments from staff and skaters.

|                                   | NiceRink<br>Heritage in 2017/18  | Land Rink<br>Based on Heritage in 2011/12   |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Cost of Materials                 | 184' x 85' NiceRink #3 Liner: \$3,340<br>136 Brackets: \$1,300<br>Shipping: \$170<br>Plywood: \$791<br>84 Sandbags: \$380<br><b>TOTAL:\$5,981</b>          |   |
| Water Used at Rink                | Establish rink: 81,700 gallons<br>During season: 7,600 gallons<br><b>TOTAL: 89,300 gallons</b><br><b>COST: \$295</b>                                       | Establish rink: 42,000 gallons<br>During season: 144,000 gallons<br><b>TOTAL: 156,000 gallons</b><br><b>COST: \$516</b>   |
| Labor Hours                       | Establish Rink: 70 labor hours<br>During season: 30 labor hours<br>Take down rink: 35 labor hours<br><b>TOTAL: 135 labor hours</b><br><b>COST: \$3,375</b> | Establish rink: 42 labor hours<br>During season: 114 labor hours<br><b>TOTAL: 156 labor hours</b><br><b>COST: \$3,900</b> |
| Water Meter Investment            |  | <b>\$15,000</b>   |
| Annual Water Bill for Water Meter |  | <b>\$800</b>  |

|                           |   |  |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Comments from Parks Staff | “Was faster to install than expected”<br>“The NiceRink was little to no work”   |  |
| Open/Close                | Heritage was the first rink to open compared to other rinks in 2017/18. It also came back online faster than the land rinks after a thaw. It was open 41 days compared to 26 at Warner and 48 at Olbrich. |  |
| Observations              | “Ice never cracked, was high quality all season.”<br>Volunteers were not always able to clear snow on the entire rink due to large size.  |  |

\*The land rink was approximately three times smaller than the NiceRink. Land Rink numbers are calculated by multiplying the raw data by three to create a reasonable comparison to the NiceRink.

Recommendations:

- Continue to use NiceRinks and expand to other locations.
- Use a smaller rinked size, approximately 100 x 50 at neighborhood parks.
- Only need to fill about 5 or 6 inches for initial water (instead of 8 inches). This would save additional labor and water expenses.
- Staff labor time will likely be reduced as team becomes more familiar with set-up of a NiceRink.
- Consider using berms and natural topography instead of plywood at other sites.
- Budget for replacements over time. NiceRink estimates that get 3-5 seasons for each liner.