

**SUPERINTENDENT'S FEBRUARY 2022 REPORT
COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary**

The Parks are being well used as we move through a relatively normal winter season. Snow totals are lower than average, and temps are pretty well on average. This has led to quality skating conditions across the system. Overall winter rental revenue and permits are down from last year's highs, but still ahead of the pre-pandemic trend line. I think this information, along with corresponding data from the summer months is indicating that the lifestyle changes that were made during the pandemic are, at least to some extent, sticking. We are pleased to see more people enjoying the system and know this interest will keep us busy for the foreseeable future. There has been enough snow at the right intervals to provide sledding and skiing opportunities as well. The labyrinth temporary art exhibit at Olbrich Park has been a very cool different winter experience this year as well. Olbrich Gardens has also seen notable visitor recovery over the last twelve months as well. WPCRC continues to sustain its programming with an emphasis on youth.

The Lake Monona Waterfront project continues to move forward with the Council action expected in February to establish the Ad Hoc Committee. The appointments to the AHC are expected to occur in March, with the RFQ responses coming back to the City in April/May. The timeline for this project is tight, but it is very important to stay on track to deliver a master plan for this area in time to be considered as a part of the John Nolen Drive Reconstruction project.

As noted below, there were multiple permanent hires made to support the system in the last month. Parks anticipates filling the Community Services Manager, Aquatics Programmer, Athletic Field Scheduler, Parks continues its recruitment of multiple vacant positions and it is anticipated there will be multiple positions filled over the next two months. Successful recruitments of new team members is a major priority as the challenges of keeping the system moving forward in a constantly evolving situation has placed a lot of burden on fewer than normal staff due to vacancy rates. It is a tough labor market for employers, but I believe Parks will compete for high quality talent given the significant purpose driven work we are able to do.

Future Commission Items

- Flood Mitigation Plans – The Engineering Stormwater Utility section will be engaging with the BPC over the coming months on more specific area plans as follow up to their presentation at the January meeting.
- Golf Enterprise Update – In addition to the ongoing work around Glenway, the Golf Team is working to continue engagement around the potential for changes at Yahara and the subsequent needs for the entire Golf program.
- Update on WPCRC expansion plans – Funding for design and development work is included in the Parks Division's 2022 Capital Budget request, with construction funding in 2023. Staff anticipates briefing the Commission on this important project and engagement strategies in March.
- Donor Recognition and Partnership Policies – The Long Range Planning Subcommittee is commencing work around donor recognition and partnership policies over the first few meetings of 2022. The hope is to have a draft policy for feedback in the first half of 2022.
- Operating Budget Service Level Briefing – The team is working to prepare a presentation to the Board on service level changes based on final outcomes of the budget process. As currently resourced, there will be reductions in services from historic norms in aquatics and operations that will have an impact. Given the reductions are mostly in hourly staffing the impacts are a challenge to plan for with specificity, but will create challenges for hours of coverage for lifeguards at beaches, mowing and trimming operations, restroom and shelter date availability, as well as impacts on general maintenance support for the park system. The goal is to present information on this in April 2022.

- Land Management Plan Update – The Parks Division team will be working over the coming months to conceptualize opportunities to improve land management standards and the corresponding plan moving forward. The Plan has done a lot of good to move the system forward, but the team feels it is reasonable and appropriate to focus resources on continuous improvement efforts in this area by working with Habitat Stewardship Subcommittee over the coming six to nine months. An anticipated timeframe for the Commission to review a draft update to the Plan is late summer 2022.
- Based on the situation related to the boat left illegally moored at Marshall and other corresponding regulatory issues related to boat launches and mooring, staff are working to consider potential ordinance and policy changes that would improve the outcomes for the public in our management of these amenities. I expect some level of ordinance revision to be needed on this front, with an arrival date to the BPC of potentially the 3rd Quarter of 2022.

Personnel Updates

New Hires & Promotions:

- Kelly Post has been provisionally appointed to Community Events and Street Use Coordinator as of January 10, 2021 as staff work to permanently fill the position.
- William “John” Gibbons was hired as a Park Ranger and started on January 10, 2022.
- Robert Kay was promoted to Leadworker at Mall Concourse Maintenance and started in this position on January 24, 2022.
- Jason Meloy was hired as Maintenance Mechanic-Welder in Parks Facilities Maintenance and started on January 24, 2022.
- James Niemuth was hired as Maintenance Mechanic in Parks Facilities Maintenance and started on January 24, 2022.
- Charlotte Blotz was promoted to Land Stewardship Technician in West Parks and started in her new role on January 24, 2022.

Section reports

Park Operations

Conservation:

- Groomed cross-country ski trails, but the grooming varied by location due to snow conditions. Most sites had limited grooming early in the month due to the lack of snow. However, Elver was groomed regularly all month long.
- Mowed brush at Cherokee Marsh, hauled gravel for trail improvements at Edna Taylor, and burned brush piles at Prairie Ridge.
- Worked with Operation Fresh Start participants to maintain and repair Wood Duck nest boxes that will be installed at Cherokee Marsh, Edna Taylor, and Owen.

Construction:

- Continued to work with the Streets Division to transport a very large amount of donated top soil. Moved approximately 5,000 cubic yards, and the work continues.
- Evaluated playground field data to plan for upcoming work requirements.

Facilities:

- Focused on completing work orders, daily facility inspections, preventive maintenance and snow plowing.
- Completed special COVID-related projects for winter recreation warming shelters.
- Built memorial benches and signs for Madison Parks Foundation donations.

General Parks:

- Continued to maintain ice rinks. This was challenging early in the month due to warm weather and premature use by the public, which resulted in damage to the new ice. Recent colder weather has allowed the ice to heal, and all rinks are now open with very good quality surfaces. Volunteer-maintained skating rinks are also open and have been well-supported.
- Cleared snow as required from bike paths, sidewalks, bus stops, park paths, and parking lots. Snow removal assignments continue to grow.
- Participating in a biodiesel pilot program with Fleet Services. Fleet installed an auxiliary biofuel tank on the West Parks garbage truck allowing the unit to operate on dual fuel.
- Supported several events including Holiday in Lights and Polar Plunge at Olin Park, Groove and Glide events at Westmorland and Rennebohm Parks, the Winterfest event hosted by Madison Police Department at Elver Park, the Learn to Play Hockey event at Tenney Park, and the Candlelit Snowshoe Hike at Warner Park. All of the events required set-up and maintenance support.

Mall Concourse:

- Late fall maintenance including sidewalk sweeping and cold-patching, bus shelter window washing, and tree pruning, continued into January due to lack of snow.
- Installed new lighting displays in winter planters after the BID removed their holiday tree displays.
- Responded to snow events, providing a welcoming and safe downtown area.

Community Services – Christopher Peguero**Customer Service Front Staff (Joanne Austin):**

- Customer service staff are diligently processing annual permits and mailing them out as quickly as possible. The recent snowfall is making for very happy cross-country ski customers.
- The selection process for filling the front desk lead position will be complete by the February BPC meeting and we look forward to having full front staff coverage again.
- Mooring and Canoe/Kayak storage agreements will soon be going out to current storage customers. Each will expire March 31. For any wishing to not return, this will open available spaces for those on our waitlist.

Rangers (Joanne Austin):

- Permanent Rangers are receiving Badger Traxs classroom training and we are excited to move toward a more efficient ticketing process.
- Our Permanent Ranger positions are filled and each are being trained.
- Lead Ranger Dray and Ranger Ringwood are attending an Instructor Development Course (IDC). This is in conjunction with MPD's staff trainings. This will help to make a better connection between Park Rangers and MPD in the future.
- Recruitment for Hourly Rangers is underway. Lead Ranger Dray, Ranger Goke and newly promoted Ranger Ringwood will share in the training of new ranger recruits this spring.

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Terrence Thompson):

- The inaugural WPCRC, Monday Night Women's Basketball league, is off to an excellent start. We have four women's teams participating in the high-energy, action-packed games. The season runs through mid-March and will conclude with a single-elimination tournament.

Recreation Services Coordinator (Tracey Hartley):

- Winter Recreation is busy again this winter. Rental status for the last four years and current numbers thus far for 2021-2022 season.

	Elver	Tenney	Vilas	Total
2021-2022	2055	2388	738	5181
2020-2021	5700	3691	1817	11208
2019-2020	1144	729	326	2199
2018-2019	1320	295	346	1961
2017-2018	1266	5064	1587	7917

- A special thank you to the Madison Parks Foundation for funds to purchase 30 new skate helpers (10 per location-Elver, Tenney, and Vilas) Also MPF helped to purchase additional snowshoes to add to the current fleet of snowshoe rentals at Vilas Park and Elver Park. As Elver does have a new snowshoe trail for this season. Additionally, I put in an order in for more ski equipment, but unfortunately, I have not received any of the orders yet.

Special event update:

Groove & Glide Events

Date: Park: Attendance:
1/14 Westmorland 103
1/21 Rennebohm 77

If you missed the fun, we have three more scheduled.

1/28 Vilas
2/4 Olbrich
2/11 Elver

Candlelit Snowshoe Events:

1/15 Aldo Leopold Nature Center approx. 1,000 people attended. A collaborate event with Monona Park & Rec. Dept. & Aldo Leopold Nature Center & Madison Parks

1/22 Warner Park: 238 people in attendance. A partnership with Friends of Cherokee Marsh and Madison Parks. A shout out to 12 volunteers from the friend group to help do the heavy lift in putting out and picking up all the lights!

Both well received events. Over 400+ tea lights to set out and pick at each event.

Community Events (Kelly Post):

- Carts in Parks 2.0 was approved at the January Facilities, Programs, and Fees Subcommittee! Next, we will be finalizing the details of the program. We hope to begin reaching out to vendors, NRTs, and community organizations very soon to share that this opportunity will be available for the 2022 vending season. We already have many interested groups. We will apply the lessons learned from last summer to create a smooth and successful Carts in Parks 2.0. The goal is also to collect a full season of data to inform our Parks vending policies and ordinances for the future.
- The first Street Use Staff Commission (SUSC) meeting was Wednesday, January 26, 2022. We already had six event applications on that agenda, which is a bit unheard of for the first meeting of the year.
- We also were able to honor and recognize Kelli Lamberty's 25 years of civil service, including chairing the SUSC.
- We are beginning to see event applications, both Street Use and Park, starting to roll in. We anticipate another busy event season with most people preferring outdoor events to indoors.