

**SUPERINTENDENT'S NOVEMBER 2020 REPORT
COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary**

The Fall has been a busier season for wide-spread utilization than in past years. It seems that the pandemic has certainly led to more dispersed and sustained utilization of parks than is "normal." Many staff are busily preparing for winter including our significant role in snow/ice removal for the City. Having made it through the peak season of utilization by relying heavily on the talented staff team, we are preparing for 2021 and thinking through the lessons we have learned from this unique year. The Parks Division is projected to complete the year quite close to the budgeted levy amount, which was no small undertaking given the massive loss in revenue from the pandemic. This required lots of hard choices and doing things with less resources. This mostly worked out due to our dedicated staff, but unfortunately, is unlikely to be a sustainable model for the longer term. The many pressures on the limited resources has left many things unaddressed and I certainly have concerns about the growing backlog of tasks and projects to work on. The list below of future commission items will provide some insight into areas of focus for our staff moving forward to close out 2020.

Future Commission Items

- Parks Event Ordinance – Parks staff have been working with other city agencies, primarily the City Attorney's, to develop a draft Park Events Ordinance that would provide a substantially more clear process and requirements for the existing park events process. The existing process has organically grown into a complex web of regulations and permits, which can create a lack of clarity regarding conditions and approval processes. It is staff's opinion that questions and concerns related to City agency events (e.g. Democracy in Parks) and priority access for returning events (Goodman Pool Dog Paddle) should be addressed as a part of this comprehensive effort. Staff will include information from the City Attorney's Office related to legal considerations as this Ordinance is prepared and presented.
- Potential modifications to the fee modification agreements for MadNorski and CXC at Elver related to winter operations. Both entities have been critical partners in making and managing snow based recreation at Elver. The collaboration has many challenges, both financial and operational, but staff believes operations at Elver can be, at minimum, begun for this winter prior to any adjustments to agreements.
- Staff are working with Big Top regarding the Breese contract and the current lack of ability for Forward Madison to play or train at the Facility. This issue has caused significant concerns for Big Top as it relates to the future of the relationship between the City and Big Top. The primary focus from a staff perspective at Breese is to maintain stability at Breese through this pandemic to allow for future success.
- The Vilas Park Master Plan continues to be developed with significant public engagement on final draft plans ongoing this Fall. The next public meeting on the draft plan is scheduled for 11/16/2020.
- The Transportation Commission has referred a question regarding the temporary closure of Vilas Park Drive to the Board of Park Commissioners. This item was discussed at their 10/28 meeting, and staff was unable to prepare for it to be at the November meeting. This issue remains a challenging issue, with serious ramifications for winter operations at Vilas if unresolved.
- IPM Taskforce – The IPM taskforce work has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff is hopeful that work will continue this fall with a target of reporting out over the winter.
- The Law Park Master Plan process is also continuing and an update to the Commission will occur soon, likely in January.

Section reports

Operations

Conservation:

- Staff continued porcelain berry control work at Owen.
- Planted bare-root stock of species favored by deer in and around deer exclosures for study at Owen, Edna Taylor and Cherokee Marsh.
- Hired contractors for woody species control projects at Knollwood, Owen, Moraine Woods, Stricker's Pond and Turville Point. Solicited quotes for work at Owen and Cherokee Marsh.

Construction:

- Completed a number of construction projects including the Galaxy Park drainage project, removal of the old basketball court at Orchard Ridge Park, installation of the new playground at Woodland Hills, and removal of the old playgrounds at Brentwood and Whitetail Ridge as work was completed on the new playgrounds.

Facilities:

- Performed seasonal closing and winterizing of facilities and shelters at parks, golf courses, and Forest Hill Cemetery.
- Removed all seasonal piers with the exception of the boat launch and Convention Center piers, which will be removed in early November.
- Completed the Hoover Boat House window replacement, Rennebohm shelter painting and Olbrich Park sign repair.

General Parks:

- Mowed temporary Cyclocross tracks at Hill Creek, Olin, Aldo Leopold, Olbrich, and Door Creek Parks to support this outdoor activity.
- Began winter preparation work including aerating turf, fertilizing athletic fields, flail mowing, mulching leaves, and installing shelter sides.
- Collected and spread prairie seeds in collaboration with Engineering in managed meadows.
- Painted social separation stencils created by artist on high-traffic walkways in a number of parks including James Madison, Olin, Vilas, Tenney, Olbrich, Warner, Elver and Garner.
- The Landscape Maintenance Worker crew began planting 250 trees scheduled for installation this fall.

Mall Concourse:

- Events continued to be cancelled, including Freakfest. Halloween preparations continued, including the removal of furniture and landscape materials to create a safer environment.
- Completed fall preparation work including aerating and fertilizing turf, and planting tulip and daffodil bulbs in landscape beds. Leaf cleanup was an increasingly significant focus.
- Sreatery planning continued with the review of specific plans from interested businesses.

Community Services Monthly Highlights—Lisa Laschinger

Customer Services (Joanne Austin):

- Shelter Reservations – Though most reservations were cancelled in 2020, more than 40 reservations that were able to be in compliance with public health orders, have either already occurred or are still scheduled through the end of this year. We have revamped our traditional Lottery day and will begin accepting 2021 shelter reservations online starting Tuesday, November 10.
- Permits (Cross Country Ski, Disc Golf, Dog and Lake Access) – 2021 permits will be available starting November 15. We'll reach out via email to all 2020 customers who will conveniently be able to order online once again.

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Terrence Thompson):

- The WPCRC hosts Teen Nights on Fridays from 3pm-6pm starting October 16, 2020, at the Warner Park Outdoor Shelter (Rainbow Shelter). Teen Night is a part of the Kids Need Opportunities at Warner (KNOW) program partnership with the Madison Parks Foundation and is off to an excellent start. The program will be moving to the Madison Mallards Duck Blind in November and will build up to 3-days per week. Teens engage in gaming, sports and lawn games, leadership development, prizes/giveaways, music, movies, and a meal.

Rangers (Josh Schmitt):

- We continue to see a high number of people out using the parks as a means of maintaining a socially distant healthy lifestyle. Park Rangers had a few opportunities to get some projects completed this fall, including installing a much needed equipment access gate at the Warner Dog Park, which the Ranger team proudly completed in-house.

Aquatics (Josh Schmitt):

- In preparation for next year's swimming season, we worked with a local contractor to replace our accessible pool lift this fall. This new lift will allow an increase in access for people with mobility restrictions. The lift we replaced was original to the pool's construction and the new lift offers several technological advantages.

Recreation Services (Tracey Hartley):

- Winter operations plans are underway, as we work through what to offer, how to safely open and how to encourage the use of outdoor spaces through the winter months. Josh Schmitt has been leading these efforts over the past several weeks. More details will be available in late November.

Community Events (Kelli Lamberty):

- We have reserved parks/dates for 2021 events prior to shelter reservations being open to the public on November 10. We contacted 89 annual Park Event Organizers and received 71 responses. Of those, 61 are hopeful they can hold an event and 10 will not be returning in 2021.
- We are moving forward on park event policies, establishing a Park Event Ordinance and working with IT to have an on-line parks event application for next year's event season. We are also using this time to update the Special events web site.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

- **Garden Hours:** Olbrich is open from noon to 6 pm daily and added the Bolz Conservatory on October 12. Below PHMDC guidelines, only 30 individuals can be in the space at the same time (less than 25% capacity) and must wear masks. Beginning November 1, hours will change for both indoor and outdoor gardens to 10 am – 4 pm.

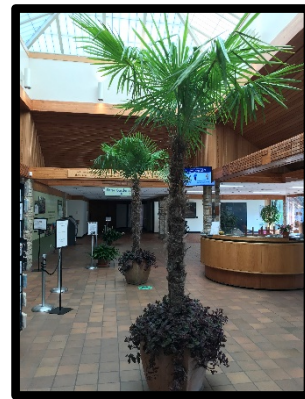
General Attendance:

October 1 – 19, 2020 = 7,493 individuals; average of 394 per day; Weather is a factor in attendance at this time of year. 1,130 individuals visited on Saturday, Oct 10, which was a beautiful warm day. Lowest attendance was Monday, October 19, a chilly, cloudy day.

Bolz Conservatory attendance on the first weekend:

Saturday, 10/17: 180 individuals including 28 members (max of 30 at one time never reached and no lobby lines developed)
Sunday, 10/18: 114 individuals including 45 members (max of 30 at one time never reached and no lobby lines developed)

- Horticulturists – with the assistance of volunteers – removed all of the ornamental tropical plants from the outdoor gardens, repotted them and placed them in the hoop houses for the winter. Two outstanding tall palms – too tall for the hoop house – now grace the lobby. ↓



- Conservatory staff have done an amazing job enhancing the Bolz Conservatory while it was closed due to the pandemic. The mural on the upper level – which has been in place for many years – has been covered temporarily with artwork that supports interpretation. Education, Programming, and Conservatory staffs collaborated to interpret the creepier species in the tropics! ↓

