

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S JUNE 2020 REPORT**

### **COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**

#### **Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary**

Spring is turning to summer, and what a spring it was. COVID-19 has created unprecedented issues for the Parks Division to manage while maintaining our critical services to the public. It was notable that from the very beginning of the pandemic, policymakers and Public Health of Madison and Dane County were clear that Parks were a critically important community asset and would be needed to keep people healthy. Over the last three months we have been through a variety of stages of public health orders, and have continued to evolve to provide the things we can for people to do, while being cautious to promote public health. As the pandemic moved along, it became clear that there would be a significant financial impact for the City (and pretty well everyone). This led to a hiring freeze that slowed our normal seasonal hiring down to a very low level. We are currently staffed at about 70% of the number of staff we would have in early June. This means we are currently unable to open the pool, splash parks, and restrooms. It has also impacted our ability to host field users and shelter reservations for groups that would be in compliance with the public health orders. This has led to a very sizable amount of refunds for the year. At this point, it will be very challenging for Parks to meet its budgetary allocation of taxpayer supported funding without reducing services offered. We are working closely with other agencies and the Mayor's Office to appropriately manage this financial issue and we are hopeful

For golf, rounds are very close to the number YTD from 2019 at this point, and greens fee revenues are up. Unfortunately, carts, memberships, and food and beverage revenues are down significantly, which creates a gap from a year over year comparison. With good weather over the past few weeks, golf is making up some of this ground, but it is far too early to say that it will get to 2019 levels (which were not great in and of themselves).

#### Future Commission Items

- IPM Taskforce – The IPM taskforce work has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff is hopeful that work will continue over the summer with a target of reporting out in the fall.
- Task Force on Municipal Golf in Madison Parks – The Task Force was significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and needed to reschedule the final 3 meetings, and secure an extension from May 1<sup>st</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup>. The public engagement portion of the work has been mostly completed, with a series of public meetings, a survey, and focus groups. Staff anticipates this timeline to be met and the Commission to review the recommendations in August or September.
- Staff is working with many of our contractual partners regarding their agreements with the City. Most of the partners have expressed concerns about the terms of the agreements given the inability to operate normally, or in some cases, at all. Staff expects a significant number of modifications to come to the Commission over the next 1-3 months.
- Parks Equity Team Update – Our internal Equity team has been formed for over a year now and have begun working through a number of focus areas for improvement. We had always intended to brief the Commission on this work as we got it moving, but given the recent tragedies and historic injustices, it is imperative that we engage directly with Commission over the coming months on our equity and inclusion work to align this work.

## Section reports

### **Community Services Monthly Highlights**

#### Warner Park Community Recreation Center (WPCRC):

- In response to COVID-19, WPCRC staff are providing on-going support to the emergency men's shelter, parks maintenance, payroll and golf courses, communication with the public and community stakeholders, program planning, and preparation for a phased reopening of the center when the time comes.

#### Recreation Services:

- The Flower Garden Program is underway. The plant pick up day was much different than in the past as many adjustments were required to adhere to social distancing and gathering restrictions. No Contact pick-up happened at scheduled times at the Goodman Pool parking lot. Volunteers responsible for planting and long-term upkeep of the flower gardens. Parks appreciates the flower beautification in the Parks.

#### Park Rangers

- Park Rangers have been helping to slow the spread of COVID-19 within parks. Rangers have made efforts to ensure that those using the parks are doing so safely, and to address concerns from the public related to social distancing. With the increase in people using the parks, Rangers continue to make a lot of contacts for dogs off-leash. Rangers are checking permits at dog parks and disc golf courses. With the warmer weather, Rangers have also resumed contacting those with alcohol where prohibited.

#### Aquatics

- The Goodman Pool and all splash pads remain closed due to COVID-19. Staff have been busy with planning for the 2020 season as the program must adapt to the release of new information. While final determinations are still in the works and Emergency orders are in place for the pool and splash park, our plan is to open all beaches by June 12. At this time, beaches will be unguarded with no restrooms available and cleaning of beaches will be reduced. We expect that the program will continue to evolve quickly.

#### Park and Street Use Events:

- Unfortunately, we have kept very busy over the past few months working with organizers to cancel, postpone and reschedule their 2020 events. Nearly all June events have cancelled and/or gone virtual, as have a significant number of remaining summer events.
- A significant amount of time is also spent developing, implementing and communicating COVID-19 related policies and requirements on the Special Event web sites, with city and state agencies, organizers and the general public and keeping records of changes.

#### Customer Services:

- Reservations (Shelter and Athletic)- All reservations have been cancelled through June 11. Staff have spent a significant amount of time communicating with organizers and rescheduling events.

- Park Permits (Dog, Lake Access, Disc Golf) – To promote safety for both customers and parks staff, patrons may currently purchase their annual and daily permits online. Proper signage has been posted to alert customers of this process and it is working quite well.

### **Olbrich Botanical Gardens**

- Activity During the Pandemic Shutdown: Outdoor and indoor gardens staff have kept up with the normal influx of spring work without their normal volunteer contingents. Some office and Growing Gifts staff have taken shifts to help in these critical areas.
- Cancellations & Re-Opening: All but three small rentals, all garden clubs, all plant shows, and all Olbrich programs are cancelled for June. A staff team is developing a re-opening plan for review in the hopes of re-opening in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of the Forward Dane plan by mid-June.