

SUPERINTENDENT'S JULY 2020 REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

Summer has arrived and we have continued to work to provide critical services to our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Parks has also worked to respond to the significant protests occurring both downtown and across our park system. This work has included both cleanup and coordination to ensure protest event organizers had a line of communication with staff. In total, the disruptions to normal course of work has been very significant, but the staff have responded well and overall I think we have done very well in extremely challenging circumstances.

In regard to staffing, Parks has been able to secure additional support, which puts us at close to 80% of normal staffing as of July 1st. This has allowed opening of restrooms, catching up on maintenance, and the continued efforts to open the Goodman Pool. The budget process is ongoing, with initial capital requests from Parks submitted in June and the operating budget submission due in July.

For golf, rounds are up 10% YTD from 2019 at this point, and greens fee revenues are up 24%. Unfortunately, carts, memberships, and food and beverage revenues are down significantly, so in total revenue is up only 4.2% YTD from 2019. With generally good weather in June, golf continued to improve year over year, but it is far too early to say how it will finish the year. It will almost certainly show a loss on comprehensive net income basis.

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.
- 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 – The Parks Equity Team has prepared a draft of their Equity Action Plan for the Division over the past year. This plan seeks to establish an actionable framework across four teams and eight goals for improving the Parks Division and the Park system to better meet our community's needs, especially our communities of color. Staff anticipates presenting to the Commission on this plan in August.

Section reports

Community Services Monthly Highlights

Customer Services (Joanne Austin):

- Shelter and Athletic Reservations – A few shelter reservations began the week of June 15. Current reservations need to meet guidelines set forth by PHMDC. Although contact sports and organized team reservations have not started, the opening of courts (tennis and pickleball) and field sport practices have allowed some athletic reservations to

begin. Staff continue to spend a significant amount of time communicating with customers regarding reservations.

- Park Permits (Dog, Lake Access, Disc Golf) – Patrons continue to purchase annual and daily permits online to best ensure safety for both customers and parks staff.

Permit Type	2018		2019		2020 (as of 6/24/20)	
	Annual	Daily	Annual	Daily	Annual	Daily
Disc Golf	1,426	4767	1,470	5284	1,504	900
Dog Park	8,848	570	7,912	590	7,523	109
Lake Access	2,879	4109	3,004	4561	3,760 *	534

* Note: Annual lake access permit totals for 2020 have significantly surpassed previous year purchases, with 3484 having been purchased online.

- Boat Storage – The watercraft storage program continues to be very popular, with nearly 200 on the waitlist. Despite delays due to COVID-19, all 28 mooring spaces have been filled and the 396 canoe/kayak spots are almost at capacity. 75% of 2019 watercraft storage users chose to renew their spaces. Online payments were available for the first time this year – roughly 40% of users used the new system.

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Terrence Thompson):

- In response to COVID-19, WPCRC staff are providing on-going support to the emergency men's shelter, parks maintenance, payroll, Goodman Pool, communication with the public and community stakeholders, possible summer programming and working to develop an inclusion plan for the Goodman Pool.

Rangers (Josh Schmitt):

- Ranger staff are supporting shelter reservations and have assisted with mitigating parking and traffic issues at Vilas Park as the Henry Vilas Zoo has opened and the number of visitors to the park increases. Boat launches have been especially busy.

Aquatics (Josh Schmitt):

- Through a dedicated team effort, final preparations are being made to open the Goodman Pool in accordance with Public Health Madison & Dane County Orders. We are in the final stages of recruitment and are conducting physically distanced training, with significant emphasis on preventative measures put in place for COVID19. Beaches are open for swimming and cleaned by Aquatics staff weekly as staffing resources allow.

Recreation Services (Tracey Hartley):

- All programming is suspended until further notice, but we are working with a number of volunteer groups looking to work in the parks and providing guidance to do so a safe and socially distanced manner. Tracey's programming experience has been extremely helpful in planning for the pool opening, as well as assisting in the recruitment and training process.

Community Events (Kelli Lamberty):

- We have started issuing street use and park event permits for small events that meet PHMDC reopening orders in terms of numbers of people, less than 100, and that have approved physical distancing and hygiene plans. We have also started processing Neighborhood block party, community park events and downtown performance space permits, with appropriate guidelines as conditions of their permit.
- A few groups involved in the protests have started reaching out to plan first amendment activities. With the City Attorney and Mayor's Office, Madison Police, Traffic Engineering and Metro, we are implementing a process to work with these groups and plan for safe and successful events.

With very few exceptions, most of the events that we are all familiar with have cancelled through the end of September. We are reaching out to those we have not heard from to get the status of their plans.

Public Information Officer

- Spring was consumed with communicating COVID-19 related park updates and adjustments to include the creation of signage (golf, trails, disc golf, shelters, restrooms and sport courts, to name a few), overall messaging and message consistency, website and social media updates and working with City IT to create a new Parks Resource webpage for all park updates.
- Parks collaborated with MSCR to create and promote the #MoveItMadison challenge throughout May offering more than 30 activities anyone can do in their own, backyard or neighborhood park. With nearly 300 registered participants for May, it was agreed to offer another on-going activity, *A to Z Scavenger Hunt & Activates*, for June.
- Other work included the creation and promotion of self-guided walk suggestions, messaging for volunteering in parks, content work for the adventure biking trails marketing campaign, and the promotion of goats in parks through a news release, scheduled social media posts and a Facebook live video onsite.

Planning and Development

Single Track Bicycle Network

- Madison Parks continues to plan for the possible development of a citywide system of multi-use, bike optimized, off-road trails. This was one of the recommended strategies from the [2018-2023 Park and Opens Space Plan](#) to improve connectivity by enhancing access and creating a comprehensive system of greenspace connections. Currently, the City is working with IMBA to compile land records and planning files to produce a citywide natural tread trail network. We are vetting this preliminary concept plan with other City agencies. We hope to present the network plan to the public through a series of public informational meetings in the early fall 2020. From there, more detailed planning and design can take place on individual trail segments and locations.

Vilas Park Master Plan

- Master planning efforts continue apace. Parks and the consultant hosted a very successful Zoom public meeting on June 22 with over 150 people attending.

East Side Dog Park Public Survey

- Parks staff will soon be releasing a public survey to gather public input on the two options for East Side Off Leash Dog Parks, O.B. Sherry and Eastmoreland. The survey includes an informative PowerPoint slide show to provide background on the project.

Playground 2020 update

- Contract #1 is getting underway with construction. Contract #2 has been successfully bid and will be getting underway in late July. Bids for Contract #3 will be opened on July 9th.

Park Paving 2020

- New basketball courts are being built as we speak. Flad was recently completed, Greentree, Portland, Sherman Village, Sunset, Walnut Grove, and Yahara Place parks are on the list and will be completed in 2020.

Sport Court

- The '2020 Tennis and Basketball Court Resurfacings' contract to crack fill, seal and/or re-stripe sport courts at six park locations is currently underway with work completed at Quann (NE and SW courts) and Reindahl (all courts) tennis. Work under the contract will also include resurfacing Elver Park tennis, power-washing Norman Clayton tennis and re-stripping Valley Ridge and Windom Way basketball courts.

Goat Grazing

- The goats are done with their work at Greenside and at Acewood. They are now munching at Olin Turnville. Once done there, it will be a few weeks and then they will head back to Greenside for the second prescribed graze, and then complete their rounds at Acewood and Olin Turnville. They have been a very popular addition to our Parks staff and we will be reporting out in fall regarding their impact on the parks they grazed.

Operations

Conservation:

- Implemented the first prescribed grazing session at Acewood Conservation Park. The goats were very popular among park visitors.
- Planted native species in several management units at Cherokee Marsh, Edna Taylor and Owen, including paired plantings inside and outside of deer exclosures.
- The Operation Fresh Start crew returned. They removed barbed wire fence at Edna Taylor, controlled dame's rocket at Cherokee Marsh Mendota Unit, cut invasive and shrubs at Acewood (to complement the grazing), and cleaned water bars at three parks.

Construction:

- Supported efforts to bring the park system back to the new normal. The beaches were cleaned up and sand was added and raked. The team started conducting the playground maintenance and inspection routes.
- Continued the capital work started in 2019 at Sandburg, Bordner and Reservoir parks including installing the new basketball footings, poles and backboards and final grading and seeding. New concrete memorial benches pads were poured at Hawthorne, Olbrich and Tenney parks.

Facilities:

- Performed seasonal startup work of facilities, shelters and the pool. Painted Rennebohm shelter, replaced the bounding boards at Tenney and upgraded the lighting at Olbrich softball parking lot with high efficient LED lights.
- Provided support for the needed Covid-19 and riots. The support included cleaning up broken glass, boarding up the Visitor Center windows and supporting graffiti removal.
- Provided emergency response to WPRC, which is being used as a homeless shelter.

General Parks:

- Focused on planning and phasing back in park amenities while meeting the needs of the new normal. Many changes were made to the services opened and to how they are supported. Priority bathrooms and shelters were re-opened, along with basketball and volleyball courts, beaches, and the skate park.
- Continued to focus on mowing and trimming to maintain quality appearance during this period of rapid growth.
- Hired and trained seasonal support from returning seasonal workers, redeployed employees from various City agencies, and a few new hires.

Mall Concourse:

- Adjusted work processes to address the Covid-19 related changes, with safety emphasized for staff and customers.
- Supported the significant clean-up effort that resulted from the riots. In addition to trash and glass clean up, significant graffiti was removed on city owned property. The visitor center was damaged and closed and flower planters were removed from the service area.