

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S AUGUST 2020 REPORT**

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

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

Summer has been a busy one for Parks. Though attendance at events, shelter reservations, and athletic events is almost zero this year, the overall usage seems to be doing well as people are adjusting how they enjoy the park system during the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, the vast majority of residents are taking care regarding physical/social distancing, masking when going into buildings, and following PHMDC orders regarding gathering sizes. We are seeing some number of non-permitted events occurring that violate the PHMDC orders, and we continue to work to find reasonable ways to handle these issues without taking over enforcement of public health orders (this is due to resource and authority constraints).

Staff have continued working to both maintain the park system and State Street as ongoing protests and events are occurring across the City. This work has included both cleanup and coordination to ensure protest event organizers had a line of communication with staff. In many of these instances there are issues related to First Amendment protected speech and public health regulations and/or park rules. 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 well in extremely challenging circumstances.

In regard to staffing, Parks has been able to secure additional support, which puts us at close to 84% of normal staffing as of August 1<sup>st</sup>. We have been able to maintain the priority one restrooms being open, keep up with mowing, and have the Pool open since mid-July.

For golf, rounds are up 15% YTD from 2019 at this point, and greens fee revenues are up 25%. Unfortunately, carts, memberships, and food and beverage revenues are down significantly, so in total revenue is up only 7.5% YTD from 2019. With generally good weather in July, golf continued to improve year over year, but it is far too early to say how it will finish the year. It is still likely to 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.
- Golf Task Force Report – Will likely formally be before the Commission in September. The report is being shared and initially presented in August.
- Budget Update – Parks staff are working on preparing additional budget information to share with the Commission in October as the process moves forward.

## Section reports

### **Community Services Monthly Highlights**

#### Customer Services:

- Shelter and Athletic Reservations – All July shelter reservations were cancelled and for the safety of everyone the difficult decision was made to cancel all reservations in August as well. Contact sports and organized team reservations are also cancelled through August. Customers are receiving full refunds.
- Park Permits (Dog, Lake Access, Disc Golf) – Likely due to park users spending more time outdoors and practicing safe social distancing, annual permit sales are far exceeding previous year totals. Patrons continue to purchase annual and daily permits online to best ensure safety for both customers and parks staff.

#### Warner Park Community Recreation Center:

- 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 implement an inclusion plan for the Goodman Pool.
- As the Parks Division's Equity Team Leader, Terrence is working with the Parks Management Team to finalize the Equity Team Action Plan and develop department-wide equity trainings. Trainings will operate as a brave space for facilitated discussions surrounding racial equity, COVID-19, police brutality, Black Lives Matter movement, and LGBTQ terminology.

#### Rangers:

- We are seeing heavy usage of park areas. As more park amenities open up Rangers are spending less time enforcing closures and more time making sure people are safe using them. Our Boat Launches and dog parks have been very busy, and staff have reported that it feels great to get back into some routine responses.
- Our Park Rangers have shown great skill in de-escalation and conflict management during through times with excessive stressors within the community. We are proud of the work they are doing.

#### Aquatics:

- The Goodman Pool officially opened on July 15<sup>th</sup> with modified hours and capacity in order to provide a safe opportunity for community recreation. We divided the open swim time into 3 sessions to provide social distancing and increase pool access. The Pool is closed for 30 minutes in between session for sanitization measures. Staff and patrons are required to wear masks when not in the water.
- Despite their own setbacks this season, Goodman's Jewelers continued the tradition they have maintained since the Goodman Pool opened by sponsoring the first 500 swimmers into the facility. Madison Parks is very thankful for their continued support.

## Recreation Services:

- No events were able to occur due to COVID-19. Efforts of self-led volunteering will kick off with Clean Lakes Alliance to support parks with a trash pickup which will be helpful with the higher traffic use in Parks. Some Friends of Parks Groups have also started to work within the guidelines to support their respective park.
- Tracey also continues to assist in supporting the day-to-day operations of the pool and manage redeployed staffing program.

## Community Events:

- In early July, Public Health Madison and Dane County (PHMDC) rolled back the number of people allowed at public gatherings to 25. We spent significant time communicating with organizers and the vast majority of events through the end of September have been cancelled at this point.
- There was one “exception to the rule” in the Gospel 5K run/walk that did take place at Penn Park on Saturday, July 18. Through diligence on the part of the event organizer, Uchenna Jones, and guidance from Park and Public Health Staff, the event was allowed to go forward with a protocol that strictly limited event participants to 25 at any one time. To date, the feedback we’ve received and pictures we’ve seen, indicate it was a safe and successful event.

## Olbrich Botanical Gardens

- Garden Attendance for July: Olbrich is open from noon to 6 pm daily – allowing up to 100 individuals per each 30 minute segment. Following are statistics for the first 26 days in July.
  - Total Attendance = 12,839; Daily average = 494
  - Weekday Attendance (18 weekdays) = 7301; Weekday average = 405
  - Weekend Attendance (4 weekends) = 5538; Weekend day average = 692Feedback from visitors has been largely positive – with some expressing appreciation at the efforts aimed at making sure that physical distancing is possible on the walkways in the outdoor gardens.

The Frautschi Family Learning Center tree and shrub installation is complete. Perennials will be next when the funding is available.

Growing Gifts shop is open by appointment (usually available with minimal wait times) with one household at a time in the shop.

- On July 29, 2020, City Engineering and Project Manager Randy Wiesner were notified by LEED that the Frautschi Family Learning Center received 84 points and LEED Platinum Certification. City Ordinance requires that all new city construction projects achieve a minimum of LEED Silver Certification (60 – 69 points) so kudos to all for outstanding achievement.
- 2020 Pollinator Activities: Olbrich’s Blooming Butterflies was cancelled due to the pandemic, but a month of Pollinator activities is underway.

- A Self-Guided Pollinator Walk in the outdoor gardens through August 16. Both pollinator favored plantings and pollinator habitats such as bee houses are featured.
  - Free Pollinator Activity Kits (a take-home craft) featuring a different pollinator each week are being distributed to families through August 16.
  - Pop-Up Pollinator story times, held on the Great Lawn, were completely filled within a couple days of being announced. Stay tuned should more times be able to be added.
- 2020 Front Garden Sidewalk Tour: The Home Garden Tour Committee has put together a walk-bike tour of front gardens during the month of July, featuring the urban landscapes of the Marquette, Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara, and Eastmorland neighborhoods – all of neighbors of Olbrich Botanical Gardens.

## 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. We plan on public outreach regarding the MadBAT network plan this fall and winter. Meanwhile, with help from operations, we opened a temporary single track trail at Aldo Leopold Park in late July. The trail provides a safe place for the neighborhood children to ride their bikes and it serves as a way to introduce the idea of single track to Madison residents.

### Master Planning Efforts

- Master planning efforts continue apace for Vilas Park and Law Park. Please feel free to attend the upcoming public meetings. Let Ann Freiwald know if you plan to attend so we know if we are reaching quorum.

### 2020 Playgrounds

- Construction started for Group 1 Playground Contracts which includes Eagle Trace Park, Hillington Park and Wingra Park. Construction at Wingra Park begun in early July.
- Group 2 contract was awarded to low-bidder Madison Commercial Landscapes, Inc. is also currently underway. Work to replace the playground at Sheridan Triangle Park by Parks Construction staff begin in mid-July and is nearly complete. The contract also includes playground replacements at 3 other northside parks: Brentwood, Whitetail Ridge and Windom Way.
- Playgrounds group 3, includes Galaxy, Morrison, and Orlando Bell Parks. The contract has been awarded to Madison Commercial Landscapes with an anticipated start date of 8/14.

### Park Expansions

- The City is currently reviewing three new parkland dedications that are coming online soon:
  - Expansion to Midtown Commons Park
  - Expansion to recently dedicated Birchwood Point Park
  - Expansion to Country Grove Park

## Park Operations

### Conservation:

- Relocated the trail at Meadow Ridge to maintain more than the 20' buffer zone around the Burial Mound site.
- Spot mowed several sites to control wild parsnip, sweet clover, crown vetch, bird's-foot trefoil and selected stands of aspen and dogwood.
- The Operation Fresh Start crew worked on re-opening an old trail at Moraine Woods and controlled Himalayan pokeweed at Owen, and Japanese hedge parsley at Turville.
- Volunteers conducted vegetation surveys at Prairie Ridge, and monarch butterfly and native bee surveys at Owen.

### Construction:

- Started the playgrounds inspections in support of PHMDC Forward Dane Emergency Orders change. Also power washed several structures, finished installing the boarder and topsoil/seed work at Brittingham Nature play and hung the cricket practice pitch net at Reindahl Park.
- Continued the capital improvement work at Glenwood removing the old basketball court and restoring to turf. Other CIP work included installing four new concrete kiosks and bench pads at Cherokee North unit. Also started the work to transform Sheridan Triangle from a playground to a nature play area and the re-grading work for Elver Nice Rink.

### Facilities:

- Performed work to open the Goodman pool for the season, which included additional tasks to assure public safety in light of the COVID 19 pandemic.
- Installed replacement glass at Peace Park Visitor Center that was damaged during riots and replaced lights within the park with LED high efficient lighting.
- Worked on CIP projects including painted Rennebohm Shelter, replaced the bounding boards at Tenney and installed new or refurbished signature signs at six parks.

### General Parks:

- Staff continued to report to remote work locations to maintain physical distancing has worked well.
- Installed signage throughout the park system to support 6' physical distancing and mask requirements.
- Maintained 16 of the 36 shelter restrooms that are considered high priority. They require cleaning two times per day.
- Continued to focus on mowing and trimming to maintain quality park appearance.

### Mall Concourse:

- Continued daily protest cleanup in the service area. Significant power graffiti washing was required. Peace Park was challenge to maintain, but crews have done a great job.
- Provided needed support in preparation of the "Streatery" program.