



## Legislation Text

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### Fiscal Note

No fiscal impact.

### Title

Commending, honoring and expressing thanks and appreciation to James P. Morgan, Superintendent of Parks, for his leadership and dedication to the Parks Division and City of Madison from 2000 to 2008, upon his retirement from City service.

### Body

#### Preamble

May 20, 2000 marked the final leg of James P. Morgan's Parks career when he became the fourth Parks Superintendent for the City of Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin. During his tenure with the Parks Division he has made significant contributions to the City of Madison, the Parks Division and the Greater Madison area by fostering the longstanding tradition of private citizen participation to strengthen community ownership of its parks. He has accomplished many major projects, among which were the creation of the Madison Parks Foundation, the building of the first municipal swimming pool named for local philanthropists Irwin and Robert Goodman, the restoration of the Brittingham Boat House and building a Spray Park on Madison's South side.

Jim Morgan has spent his entire career in the parks and recreation profession. He began working for the Milwaukee County Parks system, moved to Lincoln, Nebraska as their Parks Superintendent and returned to Wisconsin to serve as the Parks Superintendent here in Madison. When he arrived in Madison, he hit the ground running and by the end of his first month on the job he had personally visited every single park within the park system.

Jim Morgan's love of water related activities are well represented in his major accomplishments on both a personal and professional level. He teaches water safety for the Red Cross; shepherded the planning and building of Madison's first municipal swimming pool, created a program to mentor underprivileged and minority youth enhancing their swimming skills in the BLAST program, instituted an in house swim lesson program and the construction of a Spray Park.

Jim Morgan's vision and leadership led to a partnership with the University of Wisconsin and its Thai Alumni in siting the Thai Pavilion in Olbrich Botanical Gardens, the first such Sala to be built outside Thailand. He also formalized the agreement between the city and Olbrich Botanical Society to ensure a lasting and beneficial partnership.

His negotiation skills were evident when resolution of the discord caused between vehicular traffic and pedestrian safety along Edgewood Drive, a remnant of the Park and Pleasure Drive was approved by the Common Council. Other issues that were successfully resolved included when and where the Confederate Flag could be flown in Forest Hill Cemetery and the revised mowing levels to create "managed meadows" in

city parks. Under Jim's leadership the two struggling Ice Arenas were sold to a non-profit parents organization. He has also been a strong advocate for preserving public lakeshore access as evidenced when the Madison Community Sailing Organization was not granted permission to use parkland for the construction of a for-profit building.

Other projects that had successful outcomes included the redefining of Halloween on State Street, the renovation of the historic Breese Stevens Stadium, the renovation of Parks Westside maintenance facility at Goodman Park (f/k/a Franklin Field), and the annual Opera in the Park event. Projects that began under Jim's administration are the expansion of Cherokee Marsh, the Elizabeth (a/k/a Lisa) Link Peace Park renovation, and the anticipated Warner Park Stadium Renovation.

During this period, the Mall Concourse Maintenance operation moved from the Civic Center to the Parks Division and a Strategic Plan was implemented, moving the Parks Division into the future. The Park Commission's committees/subcommittees/ad hoc committees were restructured and an Annual Park Tour for Park Commissioners and Common Council members was begun.

In addition, Jim's vision led to the creation of the Madison Parks Foundation, a modern day Park and Pleasure Drive, to renew the legacy established over a century ago. Since it's inception in 2002, the Foundation has built on the tradition of private citizen participation to enhance Madison's natural beauty through its preservation of historic parklands, greenspace and conservation areas.

Jim has consistently responded to community needs and interests as demonstrated by the recreation services provided to Madison's residents that include both active and passive recreational venues. He also established partnership agreements with the Friends of Hoyt Park, Inc., the Friends of Monona Bay and other neighborhood groups that strengthen citizen involvement in our park system.

Jim Morgan has continually demonstrated his ability to effectively lead a work force of 160 permanent employees, 250 seasonal employees, administer \$22.2 million in capital and operating budgets, and oversee 6000+ acres of parkland, including 270+ parks and conservation areas, and maintain an open participative work environment to his staff.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED That this Proclamation graciously acknowledges and appreciates the many contributions of James P. Morgan to the City of Madison.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That James P. Morgan be recognized for being consistently responsible to community input, Council members and special interest organizations with his encouraging and unpretentious style.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That he pursue his upcoming opportunities, individually and with his family, with the same enthusiasm, energy and commitment that he extended to the Parks Division for the City of Madison.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the Mayor and Common Council commend, honor and express sincere thanks to James P. (Jim) Morgan for his service to the city and that they join all city staff in wishing Jim and his wife, Elizabeth, happiness and good fortune in their future endeavors.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED That a certified copy of this Resolution be framed and presented to James P. Morgan, Superintendent of Parks for his dedication to uphold the legacy of the original members of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association and its successor, the Madison Parks Foundation.