



# Monthly Executive Summary May 2009

City of Spokane  
Barry Russell  
Director of Parks and Recreation  
June 5, 2009

### **Department highlights for the month include:**

May has been a very busy month for staff. Summer weather has finally kicked resulting in large numbers of guests coming out to the parks to enjoy the weather, facilities and activities.

The irrigation project at Comstock demonstrates not only the financial challenges of replacing the old existing systems but the impact in doing so in our mature parks.

The colors are starting to emerge across the park system as demonstrated by this month's report cover picture of the Moore Turner Heritage Garden.

With the beginning of the end for two of the major bond projects, Splash Pads and Swimming Pools, happening this month, staff are anxiously looking at the planning for the openings of two of the pools, Shadle and A.M.Cannon at the end of June. The Albi Sports Complex project at the Dwight Merkel Complex has offered up some unexpected challenges yet is moving along accordingly to schedule. The Mobius Science Center also entered its final stages discussions with the direction of the Park Board to staff to develop an agreement to be approved within the next short while. Numerous positive YMCA discussions were held this past month with the City Council, Park Board and County Commissioners and the acquisition of this facility is moving forward.

The hard work of staff at all levels during this month has assured the residents of the City that this summer in the parks will be a fun and enjoyable time.

### **Golf/Administration:**

- Good weather has finally arrived and our courses are doing great. The weather will undoubtedly help us grow through some of the winter challenges much more quickly. The two greens at Esmeralda that had some issues are now reopen and recovering nicely. We opened the newly constructed 10<sup>th</sup> green at Qualchan earlier than anticipated with very good reviews. The newly constructed 15<sup>th</sup> green is scheduled to open the first week in June as originally planned. Downriver continues to receive extremely positive comments. We completed aerification of the Indian Canyon greens which should have a big impact on the playability throughout the season.
- Our golf staff continues to go above and beyond in addressing the challenges before them. We are very fortunate to have second to none crews at all of our golf courses.
- We continue to work with the FEMA representative to address the damage caused at Qualchan by the heavy snowfall in December and January.
- As reported last month our discount and season pass sales continue to be strong.

### **Finance:**

- Placed order for Point of Sale Modules for Aquatics Centers.
- Began addressing DSL/Fiber connectivity for Aquatics Centers.
- YMCA Community Use Request for Proposal advertised.
- Continued gathering cost information for FEMA – Dec/Jan Snow Emergency
- New Time Clock working well and saving payroll processing time.
- Assisted in getting Parking Kiosks up and running.
- Ramped up on supplies needed for summer season.
- Arranged pricing for upcoming events and combo packages.
- Purchase Orders/Accounts Payable Stats – March: \$2,623,918.26 in payments processed; 324 accounts payable documents processed; 25 contracts processed through City Clerk;
- Payroll Stats – April: 39 temp/seasonal hired; 9 temp/seasonal terminated; Payroll – 87 permanent, 467 temp/seasonal; 6 pay changes; 47 Pending Personnel Action Authorizations; 2 OTJ injuries.
- Cash Receipts Stats – April: 94 deposits made; \$76,560.68 on-line registration; \$37,810.36 front desk registration; \$300,688.23 RFP deposits; \$34,691.17 NEYC deposits; \$5,975.00 Park Operations deposits; \$404,983.65 Golf deposits; \$2,397.88 Albi deposits; \$65,745.88 Misc. deposits.
- 11 Budget Transfers

### **Marketing/Communications:**

- Fifteen news releases including: Moore Turner Heritage Gardens Open May 16; Corbin Senior Center Auction & Dinner; Hannah Montana Rock the World – NEYC; Carrousel Centennial Self Guiding Tour; Waterline Construction to Close Assembly St.; RFP Carrousel Events N.R.; Award to fat Tire Trail Riders Club; Beacon Hill Trails Draft Plan Open House; Pools & Splash Pads schedule; Night at the Museum IMAX; Park Bench Café Opens May 22; Riverfront Memorial Hours for Holiday; Camp Sekani Adventure day; First Friday Promotion in Riverfront Park; NEYC Summer Activities.
- We produced Programs #1-3 of the TV show “*Walk in the Park with Barry Russell*”. Program #1 (April) Loeff Carrousel; Greenhouses at Manito; Program #2 (May) Fish Lake Trail; Japanese Garden. Program #3 (June) Beacon Hill – Camp Sekani; Fountain at Riverfront Park. Other planned segments include: Program #4 (July) Urban Forestry; 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Carrousel. Program #5 (August) Whitewater Park; Albi/Merkel update on site. Program #6 (September) Duncan Gardens in Manito; Dog Park.
- The Marketing Committee is working with Magner Sanborn on department co-promotions.
- Website Redesign: The structure of design and programming has been approved. B>HW1 is setting up meetings with each program manager to define what is needed and/or desired content-wise.
- We continue to provide ongoing updated information to the media and individual citizens who call with questions regarding the Bond Projects and the Web Site which has served as a low-cost and effective means of providing information and updates on all of the projects.  
[www.spokanepoolsandplay.com](http://www.spokanepoolsandplay.com)

#### **Park Operations:**

- Bidding was completed for the Comstock irrigation project and Park Board approved contracting with AM Landshaper to complete the work. The project came in somewhat above estimates, probably due to several factors. The old water service was deemed inadequate and unreliable so the irrigation system will start from a new water tap. Water pressure is also lower than needed so booster pumps and a new electrical service will be included. The park also has many old mature trees that will have to be protected from root damage during the extensive trenching and excavation that this project will require. The project will add to the disruption of the park that started with pool construction but represents a good long term investment. The new irrigation will save money in labor and water costs, will do a better job of watering the park, and will interfere less with the public use of the park.
- A State Department of Natural Resources grant has been awarded for doing some forest management work on park land in the Palisades / Rimrock area. A well organized neighborhood volunteer group will account for our in-kind contribution toward the project. The project will do tree thinning and fuel reduction and represents a joint effort between the Park Department Urban Forestry program, the Palisades Neighborhood, Spokane County Conservation District and the Department of Natural Resources.
- Existing splash pads were up and running for Memorial Day weekend. Staff has been working with last year’s contractor on working out some of the bugs. Most of the troubles have involved the backflow prevention devices and the electronic controls for the splash pads. The splash pads have proven to be extremely popular and, unfortunately, some of their erratic operation on start up has been frustrating for the public. There have been a number of components replaced under warranty and we hope to have things operating dependably soon.
- Staff has negotiated a contract for noxious weed abatement. We get many letters every year from the County Weed Control Board concerning weed control on park conservation lands. This contract will allow us to respond in the most effective manner.
- Hoopfest has agreed to build a new basketball hoop in AM Cannon Park this summer. This new court will replace the old basketball hoops that have gotten crowded out by the new pool construction. The new court will be a significant improvement over the old, deteriorating asphalt surface that was set up as more of a playground shoot around than a true basketball court. Hoopfest builds a first class basketball court at no cost to the Park Department and provides ongoing repairs and maintenance.

- Staff worked with the Civil Service Department on testing for a new Urban Forester position. The position will open up in early June and will be filled as soon as possible. It appears likely that, for the time being, this position will report to someone outside of the Parks Department.
- Artfest will be in Coeur d'Alene Park the last weekend in May. The event attracts huge crowds and takes a toll on the park grounds that staff will work to recover from. This is one of many large community and neighborhood events that utilize our parks through the summer months.
- Staff has been working with Avista on a power transformer issue at Liberty Park. The ball diamond lighting utilizes a voltage provided by a transformer that is no longer available. We are trying to avoid new power poles within the park or unexpected expenses for adapting the electrical system to more conventional voltages.

### **Planning/Project Management:**

- Taylor Bressler has been working with two Eagle Scout candidates on their Eagle projects. Levi Colvin installed exercise equipment at Polly Judd Park with helps from his troop and family. The equipment included chinning bars, sit up bench, parallel bars, a torso stretch, instruction signs and an information board. Levi planned well and had the base covered save for a cut irrigation line that crews quickly repaired. The other Eagle Scout candidate will be turning over the rock hard sand volley ball court at Audubon Park. Corbin O'Connor will turn over the existing sand base to loosen weeds so they can be removed. Corbin will rake out the sand and determine how much fresh sand should be spread to an acceptable depth. The courts have not been renovated since they were constructed. Taylor expects they will be well used this season. Both young men have consented to come before the Park Board in July for an introduction and to receive a recognition plaque.
- Equipment has been long ordered for picnic tables and trash holders for the Audubon Neighborhood Association. Benches have also been ordered for the Olmsted Triangles on behalf of the Rockwood Neighborhood Association. The Rockwood Neighborhood will be installing the benches and contractors will install the tables and trash can holders at Audubon. Witter Park Neighborhood received a grant for the purchase and installation of tables and benches. Bench parts have been ordered for installation by a contractor later this summer.
- Letters have been ordered for the signs required for both the pool buildings and for the area located in front of the respective pool buildings. The new location signs will display the Department Logo. Decision on the final layout will be forthcoming.
- Taylor has been working with Avista to order the electrical work projects for Harmon and Corbin Parks. The lamping at Corbin will be difficult due to the existing irrigation lines. Harmon will have more work done outside the Park, bringing in the new power line from several blocks to the north. The Ruins Project at Liberty Park has been expanded to include developments along the Ben Burr Trail. Improvements will include a trail from the trails down into Underhill Park as well as formally extending the trail to the east boundary of Underhill Park. The trail access from the west side parking area will be improved and connected to the trail bed below the electrical station to the east. Long term development would be to take the trail below Benn Burr and connect it to the Ruins area on the north edge of the DOT property below the Ruin outcrop.
- The Coeur d'Alene Neighborhood has started to develop the West Bluff Trails above Latah Creek drainage. The existing landscape area long Coeur d'Alene Street has several access areas to the random trails that head south to 11<sup>th</sup> Street. The intention the project is to consolidate the existing trail into one collector that will give access to the creek and A Street in a series of constructed wide hairpin returns. The ultimate intention is to eliminate cross cutting on the existing slope which are precarious and easily damaged by random foot and bike traffic. This venture will give us management experience from the steep trails that cross all over the slopes at High Drive and at the Qualchan Golf Course slopes above Latah Creek.
- Completed the Public announcement for property development and related advances in the permitting process for the Whitewater Park Spokane River access. There were additional opportunities taken to notify the Public above what was required by the permitting process. The Department issued a press release and the Friends of the Falls placed the announcement on the website. The notification period will expire on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2009.
- Working with the Peaceful Valley Neighborhood regarding the development of a River Walk on Park property adjacent to the River along Water Street. The required permitting papers were

- submitted this week and the consultant will complete the boundary consolidation as required by the permit process. The project will produce building plans for the River Walk as well as consolidating the Charette design process that the neighborhood worked through last year. If the permitting process moves along then construction will happen late this summer.
- Provided supplies and materials for the REI Work Day on the Fish Lake Trail trailheads. Volunteers will carve out a temporary trailhead at Scribner Road, gravel an informal parking area and build an information kiosk just off the Scribner right of way. Parks is going to install and department gate at the trailhead across from the trail portion that heads to the Fish Lake and Columbia Trailhead. The other side of the trail (the paved portion) will have the removable bollards reinstalled and locked. Signage will be placed that will inform trail users that portions of the trail will be under construction this summer and a portion of the trail towards Fish Lake will be off limits to public access. Weed control has been ordered along the paved portion of the trail where plant material was forcing its way under the pavement and breaking up the pavement edges.
  - Plans for installation of the ADA Playground in Mission Park are picking up some speed. The installation will be sometime this summer. Staff has reviewed the plans presented by the sponsor group and has relocated the new play area adjacent to the existing play area in the south center area of Mission Park. There are some technical situations that will need to be addressed to ensure positive drainage and a structural match to the existing play area. The Parks Department will be on line for fencing and the Logan Neighborhood is providing benches and three shade trees.
  - Staff is laying out a half court basketball court along the Centennial Trail at the east parking lot in Mission Park. The Logan Neighborhood has been planning the installation depending on availability of CD funds allocated to other projects within the neighborhood. The court will be well used due to the amount of park users who are drawn to the area because of the tennis courts and the Centennial Trail trailhead located next to the parking lot. It is going to be located deeper into the Park than preferred but the vehicle access is good as is the visibility from the parking lot. Construction would be in mid July.
  - Arranged a meeting with the Department of Ecology to evaluate the development of River access at T.J. Meenach launch area. With casual input from the Department of Ecology Taylor will be able to direct a planning process for the Spokane River Recreational Access Coalition to follow for development of a direct water access boat launch.

#### **Recreation/Entertainment Services:**

- The Moore-Turner Heritage Gardens opened for the season on May 16. There were 85 visitors on Saturday and over 50 on Sunday. The Gardens will be open weekends in May from 10:00 a.m. through 4:30 p.m.; June through August, Wednesday through Sunday, from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (closed Monday and Tuesday); and weekends only in September from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- May 16, Spokane's Esther Reed Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution Presented Lynn Mandyke, project manager for the gardens' restoration; the National Preservation Medal from the National Society, DAR, Washington D.C. Lynn received a historic preservation award earlier in May from the Washington State, DAR. Richard Hartlage (landscape consultant with the Tacoma firm AHBL, Inc.) and Mark Albin and Tye McGee (owners of A.M. Landshaper, Inc. of Spokane), the contractors for the restoration work, received outstanding achievement awards in historic preservation from the Esther Reed Chapter.
- May 22<sup>nd</sup>, Lynn Mandyke hosted a tour of the Moore-Turner Heritage Gardens for NUSA Conference attendees as part of the Cliff-Cannon Neighborhood tour.
- Park Bench Café in Manito Park opened May 22.
- The Lilac Festival Armed forces Torchlight Parade was Saturday, May 16. It was picture perfect weather for the entire day.
- The "Cruzin the Falls" car show was well attended and the Navy Band provided some great additional entertainment.
- Corbin Senior Activity Center held the 7<sup>th</sup> Munch and Mingle Auction titled Rock'n Roll with over 250 people in attendance. The show was great and very entertaining. We collected \$775 in donations. The cost of using Rogers High school was \$770. We did have an anonymous donation

of \$550 so we will be able to cover t-shirt, printing and other miscellaneous expenses related to the show.