



Monthly Executive Summary August 2009

City of Spokane
Barry Russell
Director of Parks and Recreation
September 4, 2009

Department highlights for the month include:

August saw the addition of two more pools to the active list bringing the number to four. As expected both were extremely well received by the neighborhoods and the city in general. Staff will know when the last two at Liberty and Witter will be completed, however public openings this year are highly unlikely. The Albi Sports fields at Dwight Merkel Sports Complex showed tremendous changes during the month. All six turf soccer fields and all five softball fields have been seeded. Grass can already be seen. The construction of the concession and restroom room facilities are nearing completion and the neighborhood park is starting to emerge. The last of the Splash pads has been completed and will be available next year when the complex opens.

Parks and STA staff began the discussion of an easement agreement for the property at Dwight Merkel that will eventually become an STA Bus Turnaround and Park and Ride. Working with City staff, the development of an RFP for the Bosch property was prepared and is before the Park Board for its approval. During the Comstock irrigation project a number of issues arose pertaining to the proper methods of excavation in and around trees. There were instances of improper trenching that have a potential for tree damage, however that potential damage will not be known for a number of years. There were reports that numerous trees were damaged and several had died, however those that were declared dead have all survived and have regained their foliage. What damage they have suffered will also take years to know. There was one tree that had to be removed, however the damaged roots were only the final item that caused the tree to be removed. Staff had identified that tree for removal prior to the damage caused by the project. What was identified was the true need for a single source for coordination for all projects related to the Urban Forest. The City is moving forward with the task of bringing on an Urban Forester. This individual will need to update and review all related ordinances and policies and upgrade the existing procedures in place. Once this position has been filled future projects will be better managed and supervised. The existing staff either from operations or urban forestry is unable to fully manage such projects.

Having stated the deficiencies and problems in completing this project let it be known that the irrigation system is functioning as expected and the park has never looked healthier and the survival of all the trees within the park as well as the turf has been greatly enhanced.

Staff is continuing with the discussions surrounding the WhiteWater Park and the Fish Lake Trail construction project is moving forward very well.

The Highest and Best Use study for the YMCA should begin shortly. Staff is finalizing the contract with local company Lembeck Appraisals and Consulting to undertake the process with a termination date sometime in mid October.

Golf/Administration:

- We hosted the Spokane City Championship this month at Esmeralda, Downriver and Qualchan. Once again it was very well attended and a huge success. We received many compliments regarding the event and especially about the condition of our golf courses. Many thanks go to the maintenance staffs at these three facilities for giving us such great courses and continually doing more with very tight budgets. Without the countless hours of Steve Conner, Mark Gardner and Rex Schultz this event could never be as successful as it is so many thanks go to these Golf Professionals as well.
- We also hosted our fifth annual Child/Adult Scotch ball tournament. This is a great event to promote, not only Junior Golf, but family golf as well. Although we are sad to lose our Junior Coordinator Rick Chase this year, our new Coordinator Garrett Jones did a fantastic job with the Program this year.
- Overall the courses remain in excellent shape and are doing well.

Finance:

- Worked with Purchasing Department on awarding bid for City-wide office supplies. Kershaws was awarded bid and will continue as the City's office supply vendor.
- Worked with Avista and Utilities to set up new accounts for Splash Pads.
- Worked on testing for InfoLink, the new method for attaching documents in the Financial Management System. This will be fully implemented September 4th. Staff attended training on InfoLink.

- Met with staff regarding 2010 budget requests and began preparation of the 2010 Proposed Budget and Three Year Comprehensive Capital Plan. The proposed budget will go before the Park Board Finance Committee at their September 8th meeting.
- Added four new Point of Sale systems and two new membership systems at the Hillyard and Comstock pools. Worked with MIS department (who did a terrific job!) to get the systems up and running by opening day and were successful.
- Purchase Orders/Accounts Payable Stats – July: \$5,228,716.23 in payments processed; 398 warrants issued; 163 purchase orders issued
- Payroll Stats – July: 34 temp/seasonal hired; 38 temp/seasonal terminated; Payroll – 90 permanent, 621 temp/seasonal; 8 pay changes; 34 Pending Personnel Action Authorizations; 1 OTJ injuries.
- Cash Receipts Stats – July: 101 deposits made; \$58,428.02 on-line registration; \$18,671.06 front desk registration; \$587,569.03 RFP deposits; \$56,912.76 NEYC deposits; \$4,525.00 Park Operations deposits; \$557,023.66 Golf deposits; \$1,300.00 Albi deposits; \$71,206.87 Misc. deposits.
- Budget Transfers – 24
- Contracts Processed – 20
- City Utilities \$204,000.00
- NSF Check Processing – 3

Marketing/Communications:

- Eighteen news releases including: RFP Friday Special – Paul Grove Performs; Pools Ribbon-cutting Comstock & Hillyard; New Lifeguard Training Offered; Shadle Splash Pad Is Now Open; Special Park Board Meeting Cancelled; Aquatic Centers Update – Comstock & Hillyard Open August 12; Summer Beckons! Join Us at Riverfront Park; Correcting Wrong Info in Paper – Pools; City Fire Dept Sponsors Free Swims-Hillyard & Cannon; Tree Removal in Comstock Park; Comstock & Hillyard Pools open August 12; FOM Plant Sale Early This Year; City Championship Golf; Community Appreciation Day August 22; P9ow Wow to be held Aug 29-30; City Fire Union Sponsors Free Kids Swim Comstock Aug 24; Friends of Manito August Plant Sale - \$5 Containers; Minnehaha Park is 100 Years Old.
- Staff is working on content for all sections of the new website. Principal photography will be shot this month. Anticipated unveiling of the new site could be as soon as October 1st.
- Completed taping of program #5 Moore-Turner Heritage Gardens of the TV show “*Walk in the Park with Barry Russell*”. Other planned segments include: Program #6 (September) Golf (pre-produced history + live interview in studio; Duncan Gardens video/music bed. Program #7 (October) Therapeutic Recreation; Friends of the Centennial Trail. Program #8 (November) Personal Interest; Ice Palace. Program #9 (December) Holiday Lights; First Night Preview. Program #10 (January) TBD.
- Department Co-promotions/Marketing Strategy Committee along with Magner Sanborn has developed a graphic design for the “catalogue” and is now waiting in Park Board approval of policies on Sponsorships & Partnerships, Naming of Parks and Recreation Areas and Memorials and Plaques to move forward.

Park Operations:

- The Hillyard Skatepark located in Harmon Park will receive the Shrinking Lilac Award from the City Design Review Committee. The Shrinking Lilac is an award bestowed upon a project that, although not submitted for a design award, was felt worthy of recognition by the Committee. The Hillyard Skatepark continues to be a popular facility that, as one neighborhood leader put it: “the SkatePark is probably the best utilized square feet of park property in the entire City”. The Hillyard Skatepark is also the frequent recipient of the Best Place to Skateboard award in the annual reader’s poll conducted by The Inlander.
- The Comstock Park irrigation project is complete including site restoration. The system is functioning very well. The system has been set to water heavily during the month to help establish newly seeded areas over excavations and new landscaping and soil around the pool, and recover existing turf and tree conditions. The park has responded well with things greening up and looking

healthy again. Urban Forestry staff evaluated the potential for any tree damage due to excavation related root problems. There was concern that some of the nearly two miles of trenching required to install irrigation piping had come too close to trees. One tree was removed following the investigation although there were a number of other factors in addition to the root conditions that entered into the decision to remove the tree.

- Park Operations staff has been working on a number of equipment replacements. Most of the purchases have been mowers and park utility vehicles and includes a replacement for an eleven year old, large, wide area mower. Although this mower is an expensive piece of machinery, it is a workhorse for us that is used full time from April through October and we get many years of use from it.
- Staff has been busy spraying for broadleaf weeds in park turf this month. The most common weeds we deal with are clover, plantain, and dandelions. The clover seems to be particularly bad this year and has been much more difficult to eradicate. Although staff is very careful to follow all regulations and recommendations in applying pesticides, we do have a number of citizens who get very concerned over this practice. We do our best to provide signage when this activity is occurring. On the other hand, we probably have more citizens who do not like to see the weeds growing in the grass at our parks.
- The Minnehaha Neighborhood Council sponsored a 100 year birthday celebration for Minnehaha Park. Park staff put in a lot of effort to get the park ready for the event by painting buildings and park furnishings, repairing concrete and asphalt walkways, pruning shrubs, rebuilding horseshoe pits, installing picnic table and barbeque, and renovating some turf areas. Unfortunately, the neighborhood council turned out to be one of the more difficult groups we have worked with and ignored most of the policies and procedures for getting an event permit and the park rules and conditions for conducting the event. Very few of our parks have reached 100 years old yet so it is a notable milestone for Minnehaha Park, however.
- Although most of our new aquatic facilities are now complete and open, park staff continues to be busy with getting some last details finished up. Electricity to other parks of the park had to be restored at Shadle and A M Cannon. We continue to work with the contractor on some irrigation and landscape issues. The patience and expertise from our staff who have taken this on in addition to all their normal duties is greatly appreciated.

Planning/Project Management:

- Taylor is researching with local contractors prices for the new lighting system at Corbin Park as part of a Community Development project. There is some reluctance to undertake projects that require installing pipe or conduit near established trees. The project will be completed this fall.
- Taylor has asked for a real estate appraisal report on the actual value of the Stanek property now being used by the nursery west of Thornton Murphy Park. Once the value is determined Taylor will find out how to transfer the title so the title and easement will be related to the deed and would be transferable to a new owner. If there is any value resulting from the potential agreement the funds must be set aside for Thornton Murphy Park. His suggestion for a large show of faith could include the construction of an oversized backstop as we will need a ball diamond on the west side of the park.
- Construction on the Mission Park basketball half court will start in October. Taylor has found a good price for the Logan Neighborhood. The half court will be located near the Centennial Trail at the parking lot in Mission Park.
- There are three more Scout projects in the works. One Eagle Scout candidate wants to define the bike trails off of High Drive with trail signs, reconstruction and a displayed map. Eagle Scout number two wishes to clean the riverbank across from the City's Upriver Dam and enhance the area with a viewing area, surfaced paths and benches to take advantage of existing view areas. Eagle Scout number three wants to build some benches at or nearby the City overlook on Cliff Drive. The young man is eager but the basalt is thicker than he thinks so we will find a less difficult spot. All scouts wish to have their work finished by spring 2010.
- We are going out to bid on the Latah Overlook Trailhead in the Coeur d'Alene neighborhood this month.

- Ben Burr trail is ready to be bid for improvements at each end of the existing trail. The improvements include ADA accessible ramps and curb drops. Ben Burr trail will be filled where the trail narrows. A formal start for the trail will be the east Underhill Boundary. Liberty Park access from the trail will be regarded and rerouted across the existing slope to provide an ADA access from the existing parking lot on the west end of Liberty Park. The Neighborhood has initiated these projects for the ultimate connecting of the Ben Burr Trail to the Centennial Trail.
- The A.M. Cannon shelter is about halfway completed with the concrete work remaining. The building is sited nicely against the background of pine trees to the east of the site. The color of the structure's roof and concrete surfaces will match the existing restroom and shelter complex to the south. There will be four BBQ stands installed on the parameter for the shelter.
- The Polly Judd Neighborhood is planning to construct a small shelter in the Park to accommodate their pancake feeds that they are fond of providing to park visitors and neighbors who use the park. The organizers have contacted the Park Foundation and Taylor has put them in touch with the Community Development Committee for the Neighborhood. The shelter will be a small one as there already is a lot of Park furniture in the park.
- There will be new tables and benches placed in Witter Park. The Neighborhood collected funds and received a grant from the Park Foundation to purchase and install this new furniture. Benches are here and the tables will be delivered this month.

Recreation/Entertainment Services:

- The 31st annual Royal Fireworks Concert was held on July 26th. One of Riverfront park's "originals" with Allegro Baroque & Beyond as the sponsoring organization.
- The annual "Unity in the Community" event was held for the 3rd time in Riverfront Park on Saturday, August 15th. The organizers, participants, and general public enjoyed a day of cultural diversity and entertainment.
- Northeast Youth Center operated Ultimate Summer Camp with 397 registered.
- Therapeutic Recreation's Funshine Day camp maxed out and had a waiting list of the last 3 weeks.
- Hillyard Senior Activity Center held their Annual Picnic in Franklin Park on August 19th hosting nearly 130 seniors as well as a co-op with the 60+ club and visitors from Cooper George Retirement Center as well. Entertainment was provided by Joan Morris and Director Jerry Unruh. White Elephant Bingo rounded out the event.