



Monthly Executive Summary March 2009

City of Spokane
Barry Russell
Director of Parks and Recreation
April 3, 2009

Department highlights for the month include:

This month begins with shaking heads. The persistence of winter is admirable. It just does not want to leave. The impacts are very visible. The golf courses are opening in individual fashions yet snow abounds. I was just on the phone prior to writing this report and was trying to explain to one of the radio stations that we really were breaking ground on the Pacific Park Splash Pad as we were speaking, all the while looking out my window at 3 to 4 inches of snow. There are the sounds of amusement rides in Riverfront Park and the blossoms in the Duncan Gardens are beginning to bloom. I am still shaking my head.

I would like to thank all those Board members who over these last several months have accompanied staff to the County Commissioner's Chambers for their undying support in our pursuit of Conservation Futures funding for the purchase of the YMCA. March 24, 2009 was a big day for us. My heartiest of thanks to all three Commissioners for their perseverance and approval of the funding. All of it would have come to naught if not for the County Parks and Recreation staff. Thanks Doug and John. Thank you as well as to the Land Review Committee and the County Parks Advisory Board.

Having patted ourselves on the back for a brief moment we still have lots of work to do. We are working with the City's CFO Gavin Cooley to find the right funding mechanism (loan) and the City's Attorney's office to craft a resolution for the City Council to vote on to approve the loan mechanism. Staff are gearing up for the "move" into the building in early May.

This month also signals the beginning of a major planning process for the Park Board. We begin the development of our long awaited master plan. This will be a significant document for the future of the department.

The initial meeting for the North Bank Master Plan has come and gone and I believe has provided for lots of discussion.

I would like to remind one and all that Wednesday, April 29, 2009 that Dr. John Crompton will be delivering a presentation on "Parks and Recreation: The Economic Impact on a Community. This will be held at the INB Performing Arts Center. This is somewhat of a kickoff for the Washington Parks and Recreation Association Conference being held in Spokane from April 29th through May 1st. And last but not least please check out the City Cable 5 schedule as the new program "Walk in the Park" debuts this month. Please be kind with the critiques.

Golf/Administration:

- Three of our four golf courses opened March 26th. Downriver opened on all permanent greens, Qualchan opened on all permanents except the two that were rebuilt last fall. We anticipate being able to play those greens the first part of June. Esmeralda opened on 15 permanent greens. We anticipate being on all permanents sometime the first week in April. We have some damage from the heavy snow and ice however with some warm growing temperatures we anticipate will grow out of the damage rather quickly.
- There are still three holes with significant snow cover at Indian Canyon. With continued sunny and windy weather we are optimistic about opening at least 9 holes toward the end of the first week in April.
- Our Discount and season pass sales continue to be strong.
- Pamela is very excited to report all of the effort toward the YMCA purchase through Conservation Futures funding paid off as the County Commissioners voted to fund the project. There are a number of conditions however she feels confident each one will be addressed to their satisfaction. We owe a very big "thank you" to all the parties that provided leadership, expertise and time to make this a reality.

Finance:

- Met March 2009 year end accounting deadlines.

- Made progress in reconciling year end accounts for final financial statements.
- Completed 2009 Golf Enterprise Fund Financial Statements.
- Purchased new time clock that will make payroll processing more efficient.
- Participated in training of new cashiers for Riverfront and are now offering one-on-one cashier training.
- Purchase Orders are now available online.
- Purchase Orders/Accounts Payable Stats – February: \$1,693,096.93 in payments processed; 181 accounts payable documents processed; 22 contracts processed through City Clerk;
- Payroll Stats – February: 18 temp/seasonal hired; 9 temp/seasonal terminated; Payroll – 86 permanent, 287 temp/seasonal; 2 pay changes; 9 Pending Personnel Action Authorizations; 0 OTJ injuries.
- Cash Receipts Stats – February: 95 deposits made; \$35,813.43 on-line registration; \$16,414.99 front desk registration; \$2,787.00 other front desk; \$107,336.49 RFP deposits; \$14,222.79 NEYC deposits; \$4,425.00 Park Operations deposits; \$2,232.11 Golf deposits; \$575.00 Albi deposits; \$44,315.22 Misc. deposits.
- 17 Budget Transfers

Marketing/Communications:

- Sixteen news releases including: Fifth Movin' & Groovin' Fair – Corbin Senior Center; Parks Improvement Progress Report; Carrousel Centennial Celebration Begins; Seeking Two New Park Board Members; Corbin Art Center Spring Break Camps; Corbin Kids Half Day Camps – Spring Break; Corbin Arts Center Offers Spring Classes; Evergreen Archery Club Holds Regional Event; Hillyard Senior Center Dinner & Auction; Gaiser Conservatory 2009 hours of Operation; Lighting Workshops – Corbin Art Center – Spring; Carrousel Centennial Event March 21st; Spring Break Dinosaur Day Camp; Rides & Tour Train Open for Spring Break; Downriver, Esmeralda & Qualchan Open for the Season; Bids Awarded for Albi Merkel Fields & Splash Pads.
- Conducted initial meeting with new advertising agency, Magner Sanborn, to begin planning for co-promotional opportunities department-wide.
- Magner Sanborn has done a great job of working with the Riverfront Park marketing staff on immediate advertising needs and will be working with the RFP team to develop a year long plan.
- Completed contract with BHW1 (the successful bidder vendor for the Parks and Recreation department web site re-design) and have held two meetings to discuss programming strategy.
- Scheduled and held two public meetings on proposed swim fees. Scheduled additional meeting on proposed swim fees for May 5, 2009, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers.
- Scheduled two public Dog Park Public meetings to be held on April 7 and April 8, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers.
- Continued 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

Park Operations:

- The first round of seasonal employees has been hired and, with the weather improving, maintenance activities in parks are on the increase. Crews have started raking parks and picking up and hauling off the debris. Staff tries to get all parks raked and cleaned up before the grass starts growing significantly and requires mowing. Park use by the public is also on the increase which requires more attention to picking up litter and removing trash. Other employees are involved with some spring cleaning of buildings, painting projects and repair of park facilities.
- Al Vorderbrueggen has been hired as Assistant Division Manager for Park Operations. Al will be a great addition to our staff as we head into our busy park season. All vacant positions in the Park Operations Division have now been filled. The past year involved filling quite a few positions, often through promotions from within that then created a new vacancy.
- Staff has been working on plans for new irrigation systems at Comstock Park and around new swimming pool facilities. Design is nearly complete for automating the irrigation in a large portion

of Comstock Park, which has funding in our 2009 capital improvement budget. We hope to have this project out for bids in the next couple weeks.

- The City has established a task force for making recommendations on sidewalk snow removal. This past winter created some issues with keeping pedestrian ways safe and usable. There are several issues that we face in our parks. Many parks do not even have hard surface sidewalks, Park sidewalks face the same challenges as other properties from street snow plows pushing heavy, icy piles of snow onto the walks that are difficult to remove. The possible establishment of timelines for snow removal is also of significant concern. We do not have the staff and equipment to clear all sidewalks within 24 or 48 hours as is required by some cities. Presently, we do the best we can with the resources available and prioritize those pedestrian routes associated with schools and bus stops.
- Staff has been processing a number of requests for events in parks through the coming park season. Easter Egg hunts are particularly popular at this time of year. There have also been more questions about having beer gardens or other alcoholic beverages served in conjunction with an event, which is now allowed under a policy created two years ago.
- Staff has been working with various organizations on minor improvements to soccer fields and softball diamonds. Some of this is routine maintenance but the unavailability of the Dwight Merkel complex this year has put added pressure on our other athletic facilities.

Planning/Project Management:

- The Harmon Park Master Plan has been reviewed by the Neighborhood Committee and our architects. The intention of the plan was to layout staging areas and utilities to support Neighborhood events as well as provide a diverse and usable park. Features include a path system with a portion of it being lighted. The light poles will also feature power outlets. Additional power will be introduced into the Park at the Skatepark area and extend to the center of the Park just north of the tennis court. The open areas of the park adjacent to the existing shelter will be defined with tree plantings to define rows for event booth placement. A walk system will be laid on the outfield line of the baseball diamond and provide access from the neighborhood located on the northwest portion of the park. This walkway will be connected to other established walks including the walk along Market Street. Plans also have a sturdy iron fence located along the Market Street side of the park. a basketball court will be located on the north side of the park close to the Skatepark. There will be a small picnic area and observation area overlooking the north half of the Skatepark with several BBQ stands. The ultimate use of the old tennis court will be to convert it into a parking lot off of Bismark east of the play equipment.
- The Master Plan will serve for future development using CD funds and grant monies that are available for Neighborhood improvements. The downtown Hillyard shopping area will be redesigned with thematic elements including sidewalks that accommodate chalk art and trash receptacles and benches located on corners and cross islands. The design elements will be introduced to the park when design is available.
- Dog Park Progress: Both animal control groups received a good amount of money to support their activities. Tim Gavin and Taylor Bressler have been strategizing an attack on the financing of the Park and the phases that will be used to get the park started. Tim and Taylor have elected to have a pre-pre-pre-development meeting based in their experience with presenting new projects to the Building Review system. A meeting will occur next week with the interested parties.
- The A.M. Cannon Park shelter is ready for the street bid. Three written quotes will be obtained in order to get the most reasonable price. The Manito Greenhouse and Duncan Retaining Wall will be ready for street bidding next week as well.
- The ADA playground is being planned for construction in Mission Park This spring. Construction is awaiting dry turf and the impending delivery of equipment.

Recreation/Entertainment Services:

- Riverfront Park Summer staff have been hired and are attending training. 60% of the Spring team members are returning for the Summer season.
- KXLY Morning with Mark Peterson's Extreme Team broadcasted live at the Northeast Youth Center all morning on March 9th. There were plenty of kids, gym games, French toast served by

Mark Peterson; an Extreme Team Artist painted Kids Café onto the wall; a beautiful three door commercial freezer was presented; and they featured a variety of recreational programs NEYC offers to the community youth.

- Spokanimal, Mountain Gear, 49 degrees North and the Spokane Parks and Recreation Outdoor Program, in cooperation, raised over \$1,000 for Spokanimal during the Annual Paw and Poles Race at 49 Degrees North. This event was a cross country snowshoe race with man's best friend. A raffle and auction followed the event raising the money. The proceeds benefit the shelter for the purchasing of food and supplies to keep the dogs healthy while they wait to be adopted.
- The 5th Movin' & Groovin' Fair was a great success. Over 250 people attended, as well as 57 vendor booths. Avista gave a free energy saving workshop. Corbin offered free glucose and cholesterol screenings. Two other entities screened for vision, and three massage therapists offered free massages. There was lots of information for mature adults. Most vendors had free raffle, and Corbin held a free money raffle.
- On March 14, Southside Senior Activity Center hosted the first annual Aging in Place – Design your future expo. Keynote speaker, Bob Blancato, from Washington DC, an expert on aging who sat on the White House Council on Aging under President Clinton, spoke about the current stimulus package, the new budget and its impact on aging. Nick Beamer from Aging and Long Term Care of Eastern Washington also gave a presentation. A well attended event with 35 different vendors.
- On March 21st, the first of several Carrousel Centennial Celebrations in Riverfront Park included 2 for 1 admission, historical tours, birthday cake, Tiny the Clown, the playing of the Ruth Band Organ and balloons highlighted the festivities. Thanks to Barry for serving cake!
- Riverfront Park Ice Palace hosted the annual “Skate at the Park” Figure Skating Competition, hosted by the Spokane Figure Skating Club on March 1st. About 80 skaters from the Inland Northwest including Montana and Canada completed in this year's event. The sanctioned competition is a highlight for the end of the Ice Palace season.