

MARION PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: May 20, 2014

TO: Marion Mayor & Council

FROM: Mike Carolan, Director

SUBJECT: April to May 2014 Staff Reports



Park Board Activity

- **Kona Ice:** Approve Memorandum of Agreement with Kona Ice to vend in Thomas Park from May 1st to September 30th daily between Noon and 4 pm; and to vend in as a part of the Swamp Fox Festival in City Square Park from 9 am to Noon, and in Lowe Park from 3 pm to 8 pm respectively. Kona Ice will donate back 25% of their gross sales.
- **Lowe Concessions Beverage Bid:** Acceptance of bid for concessions beverage products and approval to enter into agreement with Pepsico.
- **Purchase Approvals:** The following bids were accepted and purchases were approved:
 - John Deere X758 Garden Tractor, City Tractor (North Liberty), \$11,500.00
 - John Deere 4066r compact Utility tractor, City Tractor (North Liberty), \$26,287.32
 - 9' Aluminum Contractor Body & Spreader Unit, Future Line Truck Equipment (Cedar Rapids), \$18,213.00
 - Mower Utility Trailer, Wright-Way Trailers (Hiawatha), \$5,600.00
 - Graco Line Lazer paint machine, Sherwin Williams (Cedar Rapids), \$3,450.00
 - Pool Water Heater for women's locker room, Hanna Plumbing & Heating (Marion), \$5,200.00
- **Receive and File:** Monthly staff reports, Master Gardeners activity report.

Department Report

- **Amphitheater Update:** The Grand Opening of the Amphitheater was held on May 3rd with about 200 citizens from around the area in attendance. This event gave us a good opportunity to test the facility and parking. A big thank you goes out to the Friends of the Marion Parks for their help parking cars and directing traffic. .
- **Tree Board Activities:** Bid specifications will go out for tree maintenance work in May. An Emerald Ash Borer outreach meeting will be held on May 13th at 6:00 pm at the Marion Library. The Tree Board annual report to the City Council will be presented at the second council meeting in May.

Arbor Day was celebrated on April 25th with a tree planting at City Hall, at which Mayor Bouska read the Arbor Day Proclamation and six trees were planted on the south side of the property.

- **Oak Shade Cemetery:** There were two cemetery spaces sold and one burial during the month of April. All graves from winter burials have been repaired and mowing for the season has started.
- **Citizen Requests:** During April, there were no citizen request regarding snow on sidewalks, nor tall grass and weed complaints.



- **Thomas Park Pavilions:** Work has started on the construction of two pavilions in Thomas Park; this project should be completed around the second week of June.

- **Gill Park Splash Pad:** HBK Engineering continues to work on the site survey and plan development. Splash pad equipment will be shipped at the end of June.

- **John Deere Gator Theft:** A 2005 John Deere Gator valued at \$4,800 was stolen from the storage building at the Starry Baseball Complex in early May. Our insurance covers the listed replacement cost less a \$500 deductible. Staff is working to get a replacement unit as soon as possible.

- **Sculpture Trail Project:** The trail committee has developed a conceptual layout for landscaping and sculpture locations. Bob North was scheduled to put the design plan together but due to other job commitments he will be resigning from the project. The department has asked Martin Gardner Design of Marion to assist with this portion of the project.
- **Master Gardeners:** Activity report from the Master Gardeners is attached. The group hosted a popular hands-on activity at the City Showcase on April 26th.
- **Peg Pierce Complex:** Damage to the ceiling in the concession stand area was discovered this spring. Park staff will make repairs and paint before the season gets underway.
- **Lindale trail:** Backfilling the shoulders of the paved portion of the trail has started, and will continue for the next two months as material becomes available.
- **Facility Maintenance:** A new door and sink were installed at the Depot. A new toilet was installed in the women's rest room at Thomas Park. Windows are being washed at Thomas and Lowe Park facilities.
- **Turf Maintenance:** The harsh winter has taken a toll on several of our managed turf areas. Winter kill can be found in almost every park. The park staff has been working this past month, dethatching, aerating and reseeding these areas. Weekly mowing of our city parks, facilities and green spaces has started.



- **Safe Room Thomas Park:** The Safe room was in operation during one emergency weather situation in April, with a total of 8 citizens occupying the facility.

- **Parking Lot Cleaning:** Parking lots in all parks have been cleaned. The department also assisted with the cleaning of the parking lot at City Hall, the Library and the new police station.
- **Ball Diamond Maintenance:** Park staff is currently grooming 16 ball diamonds daily; this is accomplished with 2 groomers.



- **City Services Show Case:** All city departments were represented in City Square Park on April 25th and showcased the services that they provide. Several departments including Parks brought equipment to the event for everyone to view and explore. Kids could dress like their favorite City employee; the photo shows a future lifeguard and building inspector.

- **Farmers Market:** The market kicked off its season on Saturday May 3rd with ten vendors. With the nice weather one vendor reported that their sales were up compared to last year. Thanks to a donation from the Friends of the Parks new banners were purchased to help draw attention to the market. The market will be open on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., and on Wednesdays from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- **Donations to the Department:** The department received a donation for a memorial bench in honor of Howard and Ruby Burns; this will be placed at Lowe Park along the Sculpture Trail.

A donation was received in memory of John C Fowler. John was a co-founder and the first president of the Marion Boys Baseball league. The east ball diamond will be dedicated and named after John. Memorials will also assist with the future purchase of an electronic scoreboard at Starry Park.

A memorial tree will be planted at Lowe Park in honor of Richard F Noyes, OD. This donation came from the Larson, Busse, Weston, and Dale families.

- **Lowe Park:** With warmer weather comes activity outside at Lowe Park. The flower beds are being planned and planted. The water feature was turned on in time for the Amphitheater celebration and graduations that are hosted in the Arts and Environmental Center. The Community Gardens were tilled and are being planted. There are work days at the greenhouse on Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays led by the Master Gardeners. Walkers, runners, and bicyclers are enjoying the trail.



The senior meal program served its last hot meal on Monday, April 28th. The seniors will continue to have their daily activities at Lowe and may purchase a sack lunch for \$3.50.

- **Program Registration:** Registrations for *NEW* summer programs are underway and numbers are looking good:
 - Little Kickers Kickball for 3 to 4 year olds – 27 registered
 - Backyard Lawn Games Camp for 6 to 10 year olds - 10 registered
 - Youth Tennis with Westfield Tennis Club for 4 to 13 year olds – 66 registered
 - Fish Iowa Program at the Lowe Park pond (June 7th) – 16 registered

- **Full Moon Nature Hike:** This new cooperative program with the Linn County Conservation Department was held April 15th at Lowe Park. The 28 hikers ranged from families with children to seniors.



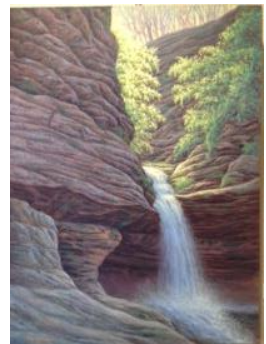
- **Tiny Goal Kickers & Kick Star Soccer:** Four rainouts have already extended this spring program that began April 22nd. With 225 participants there were 14 teams of 5 and 6 year olds, 10 teams of 4 year olds, and 8 teams of 3 year olds.

- **Backyard Lawn Games Camp:** Participants will play some classic lawn games and learn some new ones. Local Rolle Bolle enthusiast Lynn DeDecker and The Greater Cedar Rapids Area Disk Golf Club will each teach their games during the program.

- **Peewee Baseball and Softball:** Practices will begin the week of May 19th and games start in June. There 415 children registered for this popular program.
- **Lowe Ball Diamonds:** The first tournament was on April 19th. Games for the weeks of April 21st and April 28th were canceled due to rain and a large two-day tournament was held April 26th and 27th. Preliminary reports show both concessions and field rental were profitable when comparing costs. We are continuing to compile information to help determine the total cost to run an event.
- **Swim Lesson Signup:** April 26th was our mass registration day at Lowe Park. There were close to 600 lessons assigned, which was a slight increase over the previous year. The process has been finely tuned to move quickly through the long line that forms hours before the doors open; within two hours, the line was gone. Help from the Friends of the Marion Parks was greatly appreciated.
- **Swimming Pool:** Over 60 seasonal pool employees have been put on payroll. Training will be the week of May 19th.

The pool basement repair project is expected to be finished by May 15th and the pool will be filled at that time.

- **Arts Council:** Marion Arts Council hosted the last Coffeehouse Night for the season on April 4th with 75 people in attendance. The performance was moved to the Oaks Room to accommodate the growing crowds. The musicians contacted the Arts Council say that they really enjoyed the experience of playing at Lowe. New spot lights were purchased to help with lighting in the new location and they worked well.



The current exhibit is from Hans Eric Olson and Gary Anderson. The exhibit is called "Midwest Faces and Places". The artist reception for this exhibit took place May 8th. See photos of some of the pieces.

The David Garrison sand painting workshop was held on Saturday, April 5th. They had five attending the workshop. The workshop lasted until 12:30 and feedback from one of participants was quite positive.

- **Other:** Parks and Recreation information continues to be put on the new City website. Beta testing completed and showed a few glitches to be worked out. Plans are to have the new site live by the end of May.

Additional photos of the current gallery display at Lowe Park:



SAFE ROOM & ARTS CENTER USAGE - APRIL

Room	Paid	Free
Safe Room	2	0
Lobby	0	1
Art Room	1	0
Sunburst	2	14
Hickory	6	27
Sunburst & Hickory	0	0
White Oak	3	5
Red Oak	2	2
Red & White Oak	2	9
Entire Facility	0	1
TOTALS*	18	59

Events with alcohol permits: 1

Activity Type	Monthly Usage	Number of Attendees
Building Visitors		64
Gallery Open / Arts Council Activities	5	80**
Congregate Meals	17	Not available
Seniors Bingo	4	62
Senior Dance	9	193
Senior Cards	8	118
Parks / Recreation	5	657***
Meetings / Work / School Event	18	516
Blood Drive	1	44
Hip Hop	3	90
Family Gatherings / Showers	8	540
Rehearsal Dinner	0	0
Wedding & Reception	0	0
Reception	0	0
TOTALS	78	2,364

Some reservations use more than one room.

**Does not reflect School Artist's Reception, and Art Council meetings.

***Includes mass swim lesson sign up day.

ACTIVITY REPORT FROM MASTER GARDENERS

Committee Reports for the May 2014 Steering Committee Meeting – Phil Pfister reporting

Lowe Park Greenhouse:

- We are pleased to welcome Coleen Kint to our team as an additional grower. She will add expertise in several areas and already has proven to be a valuable extra set of hands.
- Work continues on a daily basis as we grow for the Plant Sale, demonstration gardens, Marion parks and planters, and donation. All growing space has been maximized, and some of the plants have been moved to the hoop house and the cold frame for additional growing space.
- The impact from the weather continues to be a challenge this growing season. We suffered losses on a number of new seedlings. After ruling out the obvious issues, Shelby Foley focused on the water temperature, which was 40 degrees. So we started filling large tubs with water and allowed them to warm prior to watering. Our Leads have had to hand water all the seedlings and tender plants. After the first major rain, the temperature warmed to 53. Another item to add to our knowledge base.
- The Marion Parks Department invited the Master Gardeners to join in a new event on Saturday, April 26. The event was a birthday party and showcase of City services. Debbie Main set up the pub's table and she and Fran Potratz staffed the Plant Doctor. The second table was a seed planting activity. Zora Ronan provided a paper pot tool, so the activity involved making paper pots and planting zinnia and sunflower seeds. Sylvia Kelley, Coleen Kint, James Nash, Phil Pfister, Sharon Riley, and Doug Smith assisted with the activity. At least 93 youths and adults took home a planted container.
- Elizabeth Ward and Phil Pfister attended the Marion Blue Zone kickoff at Linn Mar High School on 15 April 2014. In addition to handing out seeds, we answered gardening questions.
- At the Blue Zone kickoff and the City Services events, we have promoted a Lowe Park Greenhouse open house. It will be held on Saturday, 3 May 2014, from 2:00 to 4:00 PM, just before the dedication of the Klopfenstein Amphitheater for the Performing Arts.