



DATE: November 17, 2015

TO: Marion Mayor & Council

Park Board Activity

Due to Veteran's Day holiday meeting to be held November 18; no activity to report.

Department Report

- **Fall Shutdown Activities:** The 35th Street roundabout and the 6th Street linear park area irrigation systems have been shut down and winterized for the season. Crews drained water lines, removed water meters, and blew out the lines with an air compressor to prevent freezing.

Pavilions and park restrooms remain open until October 31 as weather allows. After the 31st the water lines are drained, water meters are removed, restrooms are deep cleaned and all paper products are removed before locking them up for the winter. All garbage cans are cleaned and placed in storage.

At Oak Shade Cemetery the water lines are shut down and blown out with an air compressor.

The community gardens at Lowe Park have been shut down for the season. Renters are asked to clean up and remove everything from their plots at the end of the season. Staff remove left over items, mow down plant material that is still standing, and then till the gardens. As requested by the Master Gardeners one section was left for them to plant cover plants as a test to see which variety works best over the winter months.



The compost area available to the gardeners is dismantled and stored for the winter and all organic material is taken to Public Service to be composted.



Summer mowing routes have come to an end this season. Crews are now working on mulching areas with light leaf coverage with the John Deere 997 mulching kits. Areas with heavy coverage are being addressed with the John Deere 1445 tractor with a material collection system. Leaves are collected and taken to Public Service to be turned into compost.

All bases and equipment has been removed from ball diamonds and soccer fields. Bases are cleaned and painted, and soccer goals have been dismantled. Everything is put in storage for the winter.

- **Oak Shade Cemetery:** There were no burials in October and two spaces sold.

- **Friends of Oak Shade Cemetery:** See attached newsletter.

The Friends of the Cemetery have performed the fall cemetery cleanup with the help of volunteers.

- **City Owned Property @ 525 11th Street:** This property was purchased by the City for future library expansion. The department is responsible for mowing the property and clearing the sidewalks in the winter. Blue Zones also maintains a community garden on site.



The house was secured and winterized. The water lines and hot water heater were drained, and the water meter was removed. The boiler system was drained and a new water line and spigot was run to support the community garden next year. With the

help of the Public Services Department miscellaneous items and garbage from behind the house were cleaned up. All entry points were barricaded or secured with locks, bushes and trees were removed from around the house's foundation to give police clear views of the house.

- **Citizen Requests/Mowing:** During October the department received five contacts about properties with tall grass or weed violations. After proper notification, staff mowed four of the properties which remained in violation. There are four properties considered habitual violators and are being mowed by the department on a weekly basis.

The speed bumps at Thomas and Willowood Parks have been removed, cleaned, painted and stored for the season to make a clear path for snow removal operations.

All bushes in Willowood Park have been trimmed for the season.

- **Starry and Pierce Ball Diamonds:** Lime is being added to Starry and Peg Pierce ball diamonds in an effort to maintain safe, playable infields. A laser level helps to accurately set a grade from the pitching rubber to the edges of the infield to allow water to shed off the fields. The fields dry faster and reduce rain out dates for the youth programs.



- **Low Park Field Tile:** The Engineering Department discovered a sink hole in a grass water way. It was determined that the cause of the sink hole was a damaged field tile. Staff repaired the damaged section and backfilled the area with dirt.
- **Low Park Maintenance:** Volunteer trees that have grown in the oak savanna and prairie grasses were removed. This helps to establish plants by removing a source of competition for vital resources.
- **Staff Development:** Tony Ireland attended a Leadership Institute in Grinnell on November 3 and 4. This workshop is hosted by the Iowa Parks and Recreation Association (IPRA) and 12 individuals who are “new” to the industry from across the state are invited to attend each year. This is the 11th year of the program. Attendees were able to talk with many professionals from all over the state about their career paths as well as attend education sessions and lectures on a variety of topics. This program was free for the 12 participants to attend thanks to the participating sponsor Boland Recreation.

Karlene Hummel and Aaron VanMilligan attended an IPRA Progressive Recreation Facilities Tour. The tour started at the North Liberty recreation center and then traveled to Coralville to see both the recreation center and the new Coralville Center for the Performing Arts. In Iowa City they started out at the Robert A Lee Recreation Center then went to the University of Iowa’s 70 million dollar recreation center. The tour concluded at Iowa City’s Mercer facility. A total of six locations were visited.

- **Baseball/Softball Wrap Up:** Staff met with both Marion Boys Baseball and Marion Girls Softball Boards to recap the 2015 season. Recreation staff and board members from each division are in the process of developing MOUs between the department and leagues.

- **Recreation Programs:** The first Halloween Boo Camp was held the evening of October 23. The evening filled with Halloween themed games, crafts, snacks, and other activities was enjoyed by the participating 26 kids.



The *new* Painted Pumpkins program was held October 13 with 14 kids attending and decorating pumpkins with paint and other craft supplies (no carving). Pumpkins were then put on display at in the Arts and Environment Center and on the department Facebook page. The public voted on their favorite pumpkin in person or by “Liking” the photo on Facebook. The winning pumpkin received over 80 votes and the runner-up received 50 votes.



Our fall Kid Crafters wrapped up on November 12. We had 10 kids participate with classes held in the morning and evening. Each week the kids created a Halloween or Thanksgiving themed craft with the help of their parent/guardian.



The youth basketball program for 2nd to 6th grades has been organized. Practices will begin the week of November 16, with games beginning December 5. A total of 171 players have registered for the program.

- **Program Guide:** Work started last month on the 2016 Parks & Recreation Department brochure. Staff is gathering information for all programs, projects, park information, etc. A first rough draft is scheduled to be completed before Thanksgiving.

- **Arts Council:** Coffee House Nights are back for the winter months. Upcoming Coffeehouse Nights:

December 4 –Sam Knutson (Iowa City folk singer/songwriter)
 February 5 - Bryce Janey and Freddy Jones
 March 4 and April 8 - Lojo Russo



The school art wall for November is displaying works from students at Echo Hill Elementary.



PAVILION RESERVATIONS – OCTOBER

Pavilion	Free	Paid	TOTAL	Attendance
English – Thomas Park	0	7	7	525
Begley #1 – Thomas Park	0	1	1	25
Begley #2 – Thomas Park	0	2	2	110
Hanna Park	0	3	3	155
Depot - City Park	1	3	4	252
Taube Park	0	3	3	55
2015 TOTALS	1	19	20	1,122
2014 TOTALS	1	8	9	435

SAFE ROOM & ARTS CENTER USAGE – OCTOBER

Events with alcohol permits: 7
Some reservations use more than one room.

Room	Paid	Free
Safe Room	3	5
Amphitheater	1	0
Lobby/Gallery	0	1
Art Room	0	5
Sunburst	2	16
Hickory	9	4
White Oak	4	3
Red Oak	2	4
Red & White Oak	3	8
Entire Facility	1	0
Outdoor / Greenhouse	0	0
2015 TOTALS	25	46
2014 TOTALS	25	37

Activity Type	Monthly Usage	Number of Attendees
Building Visitors	Not available	Not available
Gallery Open / Arts Council Activities	4	49
Seniors Bingo	4	77
Senior Dance	8	181
Senior Cards	9	131
Parks / Recreation	7	116
Hip Hop	4	60
Meetings / Work / School / Church	16	566
Blood Drive	1	30
Family Gatherings / Showers	13	1,000
Rehearsal/Wedding/Reception	2	180
2015 TOTALS	68	2,390
2014 TOTALS	60	2,911

Friends of Oak Shade Cemetery – Marion, IA



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Time for a review:

Believe it or not, at the end of October our record book in the Tool Shed shows 555 hours logged by volunteers *so far* in 2015. Fact of the matter is, that number probably *understates* the actual total by more than 100 hours. Still, there are so many more things we need and want to do!

So, as we enter our third year since the Park Board agreed to “take us in” - let's do a little recap of 2015 and put our heads together to draft a work-plan and goals for 2016. As an outline, we can harken back to our activity acronym – Cemetery Gra^ve^s Mark the Final Resting Place of our Heritage.

Clean-up and beautification: Well, we did carry out both Spring and Fall clean-up operations as prescribed by the Oak Shade Rule book. Our commitment to rake and compost the Town Lot and Pioneer Sections in March went well. In May we had the help of about eight students from Marion High School to help locate several dozen grave markers which were partially – and several fully - covered by sod. An even larger group is expected for this year's “One Day in May” project. Thanks to the generous donation of a power-sprayer we were able to clean the limestone pillars at both entrances to Oak Shade. The difference drew a good number of positive remarks by visitors. The main project we didn't get accomplished this year was repair of so many broken headstones! On the other hand, we were able to straighten quite a few that were simply tipped from old age or askew due to mower accidents. Great progress was made in the battle against volunteer trees, evasive weeds and day-lilies run amuck.

Genealogical assistance: Parks Department employee, Pat Carlson has completed the by-hand transfer of all Oak Shade burial record from the old computer system database to a new one. Over the 175 years that those records have been compiled, lots of details have been misplaced, overlooked, lost, or just plain wrong. We are doing a lot to help clean up those records, making it possible to help families trying to piece together their family's “tree”. We are an official FindaGrave contributor now.

Military matters: It was a pleasure to participate in the decoration of over 450 veterans' graves with members of the American Legion and local Boy Scouts for Memorial Day this year.

Financial considerations: We have 675 tax deducted dollars in our own checking account.

Resources and relationships: Our outside contact list of experts is growing, including SAPIC mbrship

Publicity and promotion: We made presentations to four groups in 2015 and conducted a successful Cemetery Walk in conjunction with the Swamp Fox Festival – reaching nearly 200 people overall.

Heritage stuff: And we continue to accumulate material for a book to carry out our mission:

Preserving our historic cemetery and the memory of those interred there.

Activity Report from Master Gardeners

Lowe Park Greenhouse report by Phil Pfister: Shelby Foley has been leading workshops every Tuesday, from 9:00 to noon, throughout October. The workshops have included transplanting plants from the gardens to the greenhouse, and inspection and cleaning plants that are being moved to the greenhouse. They have also included plant propagation by cuttings. All these plants will be used as stock plants for future propagation workshops, transplanting to the demonstration gardens next spring, and the plant sale.

The knob on the front panel of the Step Up Control has been becoming more and more intermittent, to the point where it was becoming almost impossible to make changes to the heating and cooling settings of the greenhouse. The new panel, including an EPROM to interface with the new panel, cost \$316, and has been installed by Linn County Master Gardener Tom Roe. This unit falls under the equipment failure clause of our agreement with the Parks Department who will share in 50% of the costs.

The heat/shade curtain is on order, but we don't yet have a delivery date.

On Friday, September 25 Master Gardener volunteers from the demonstration gardens and the greenhouse participated in Summit Schools' *Cultivating Our Community* activities. Seventeen students took part in the activities, which included a scavenger hunt in the demonstration gardens and a plant a lettuce bowl to grow at home activity in the greenhouse. The Master Gardeners who participated were: Pam Brackey, Pat Ervin, Sandy Fiegen, Shelby Foley, Sylvia Kelly, Mary Mikkola, and Nancy Sutherland

The Marion Swamp Festival was held at Lowe Park on Saturday, September 26. The Master Gardeners hosted two events. The first event was *Seed Saving*, a presentation on seed saving techniques; participants were provided a listing of plants in the demonstration gardens, and containers to collect seeds from the various plants in the gardens. Master Gardeners were on-site to answer questions. Ten people participated in the event. The second event was *Tomato Tasting*. This year the participants had 22 varieties to sample. Seventy-five tasters voted on their favorites, and many more sampled. The top three favorites this year are: Black Cherry, Red Velvet, and Wapsipinicon Peach.

The Marion Community Garden continued to produce well right up to frost. The August and September yields include: beets 5 lbs., carrots 14 lbs., cucumbers 4 lbs., green beans 5 lbs., tomatoes (including cherry tomatoes) 117 lbs., peppers 14 lbs., lettuce 1 1/2 lbs., zucchini 17 lbs., and some basil. Peg Heald and her volunteers did an outstanding job tending and harvesting the garden this year. Sara Mentzer has coordinated with a group from Rockwell Collins who is planning a team building activity, to assist with cleanup of the gardens the morning of Friday, October 30.