

GENERAL DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Staff Development: Forestry and horticulture staff attended the ISU Shade Tree Short Course in Ames, where they spent two days attending sessions on landscape and tree management.

Brenton Ice Rink: Staff went to Des Moines February 15 and met with the Des Moines Park and Recreation Department. This was an opportunity to get a personal tour of their operations and administration facility, a local park, and the Brenton Ice Skating Plaza. The tour provided exposure to staff for the future plaza ice skating ribbon to better plan for the operation, maintenance, and programming of the facility.

PROJECTS

Hanna Park Pavilion Construction: Staff utilized nice weather in February to complete construction of the Hanna Park pavilion. Masonry around the columns, a grill, and other site furnishings will be installed this spring. (photo right)



Grand Avenue Basin Open House: Staff held an open house February 25 for the neighborhood of the basin located on Grand Avenue to discuss the plan for maintenance and implementation of improvements over the next year. The plan highlighted bank improvements, trees, and prairie and turf establishment. Staff will continue to communicate with the neighborhood as new items are implemented.

Central Plaza Construction: To prepare for construction to begin in March, all park amenities, lights, and holiday décor items were removed from City Square Park.



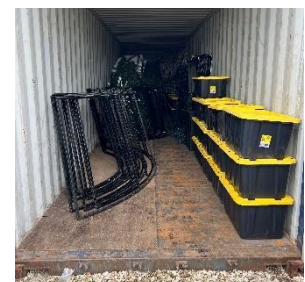
The train signal was removed and taken to Barnes Manufacturing Services to be refurbished. The signal will then find its new home at Draper Park, off 31st Street, and will feature a push button which will operate the lights and other functions of the signal.

Forestry and Operations staff also removed 8 trees in advance of the project beginning. (photo left)

Marion Reforestation Plan: The Urban Reforestation Plan is under development and the design firm expects to have a rough draft for review by early March and the final draft is anticipated to be presented to Tree Board, City Council, and staff in April.

PARKS

Holiday Light Removal: During the month all the holiday lighting in the Uptown areas and roundabouts was removed. Staff worked hard to ensure space in the storage container was utilized effectively, and everything was organized for easier access in the future. (photo right)





Low Community Gardens: With the exceptional weather and low moisture conditions in February, staff were able to start preparing for the rentable community gardens at Lowe Park. The areas were tilled, and individual plots were marked out. This is the earliest staff has been able to perform these tasks. (photo left)

Horticulture: Designs were updated for the 10th Street median update project. The original plans were drafted in 2022, so plant species/varieties and quantities were reviewed and updated, and sourcing and cost options were identified. In addition, a preliminary draft design option for the Grand Avenue Basin project was completed using Adobe Illustrator and GIS imaging. (photo right)



Adopt-A-Flowerbed volunteers from 2023 were contacted to gauge interest in returning for the 2024 season; over half of all volunteers expressed interest so far! The program was reviewed during the off season, and due to the success in 2023, the number of beds that are included for



this upcoming season will be expanded to continue to grow the volunteer base. The application window for the 2024 season is now open (materials available on the City website), with an orientation meeting scheduled for April 10.

With operation staff assistance, all winter planter decorations were removed throughout the city. Greenery will be removed and composted, and all foam forms and reuseable décor will be stored for use next winter. (photo left)

URBAN FORESTRY

Forestry Operations: The division acquired an Alaskan Mill to make slabs, planks, and beams using a chain saw. The unit is small and could be taken on a job site to mill logs up to 18" wide. The boards will be used for future park amenities, projects, or sold. (photo right)



Following heavy snowfall, some tree tubes on new ROW plantings required tidying up due to drifting and blading snow off roadways.

Forestry staff assisted parks operations with removing old utility poles at Taube Park.

Tree Programs: Monarch Research has offered trees for the city right-of-way areas again this spring. Native species will be available to residents to plant adjacent to their properties to enrich the community canopy.

Community Volunteer Project: Trees Forever and the City hosted an invasive species removal event with volunteers at Faulkes Heritage Woods with participants cutting and removing Japanese Barberry. Following 90 minutes of work, they enjoyed a short walk on the woodland property. (photo right)



CEMETERY

OAK SHADE CEMETERY	DEC 2023	JAN 2024	FEB 2024
Spaces sold	8	6	1
Burials	4	6	2

REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

CODE COMPLIANCE	DEC 2023	JAN 2024	FEB 2024
New Complaints	1	70	3
Resolved Complaints	1	65	3
Active Complaints	31	35	37

COMPLAINT TYPE	DEC 2023	JAN 2024	FEB 2024
Tree – Right of Way	0	6	1
Tree – Private Property	0	2	1
Sidewalk Obstruction	1	0	0
Sidewalk Not Cleared (Snow or Ice)	0	62	1
Tall Grass and Weeds	0	0	0
Parks Misc	0	0	0
TOTAL	1	70	3

RECREATION

Marion ICE: Recreation staff assisted with the Marion ICE event at City Square Park on February 17. Recreational yard games were set out, including Crossnet, bags/cornhole, giant Jenga, and Connect 4. An ice sculptor created a piece to recognize the Iowa Hawkeyes and Caitlin Clark. (photo right)



BINGO Night: It was a packed house for BINGO Night with over 100 people in attendance for this all-ages event. Games are played at \$0.25 per card, per round with pay backs of 50% for standard rounds, 75% for bonus games, and 100% for the final blackout round. The remaining spring 2024 BINGO Night dates are March 8 and April 12.



Lil Spikers Volleyball: The Lil Spikers Volleyball Camp was held at the Marion YMCA for children aged 5 to 8. The program is an introduction to bumping, setting, spiking, digging, volleying and more. Children practice skills through a variety of fun, skill building games and drills. The program ran on Mondays and Wednesdays for two weeks with 49 participants. (photo left)

Little Stars Basketball:

After several weeks of delays and rescheduling, Little Stars Basketball finally concluded February 23. The program was held at Echo Hill Elementary gym for children aged 4 with 41 participants. This is an instruction camp with recreation staff leading kids through the basics of dribbling, passing, shooting, and more. (photo right)



ARTS COUNCIL

Coffee House Night: Coffee House Night on Feb 2 featured Roots of Rhythm and was enjoyed by 91 attendees.

The Gallery: The art exhibit in The Gallery features watercolor artist Barbara A. Weets and will be on display until March 28.

Barbara A. Weets
January 27 - March 28



