

GENERAL DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Iowa Urban Tree Council Awards Luncheon:

Forestry staff attended the Iowa Urban Tree Council Awards Luncheon in recognition of being designated for 31 years as a Tree City USA community and Growth Award recipient. The Monarch Research Project (MRP) was also recognized and received the Outstanding Local Partner award. (If you are counting, this is two months in a row of recognition for MRP.)



City Showcase: On April 27, the Tree Board hosted an information table at the City Showcase in conjunction with the Healthy Kids Day at the Marion YMCA.

Community Outreach: At the Be Green at Home event at the Marion Public Library, Horticulturist Weber taught adults ways to be more ecologically friendly when landscaping at home and how to use soil blocking to reduce plastic use and save money when starting seeds. Arborist Cimprich presented on private tree planting and proper installation. This event was free for the public to attend.

Horticulturist Weber was a speaker at Pajama Storytime with the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art and read stories about trees for elementary aged kids.

Main Street Leadership Award: Horticulturist Weber was recently nominated by the Uptown Marion District and honored last Friday with a 2023 Main Street Leadership Award at the Main Street Iowa Awards. In her nomination, Uptown Marion Main Street Director Brooke Prouty shared: "Mary Weber has gone above and beyond as the Marion Parks and Recreation Department's horticulturist, overseeing the installation of over 3,000 annual plants in 2023. Her thoughtful planter and basket designs were stunning throughout the year and included a new creative holiday theme. She engaged and educated community volunteers AND kept everything alive through the year's drought. Her thoughtfulness and care have made a big impact on the beautification of Uptown." Way to go, Mary!! We can't wait to see what you do next.



PROJECTS

Prairie Hill Park: The park parking lot had stalls painted and parking bumpers and signs were installed. Letters went out to adjacent neighbors about prairie installation in the park. Left for the project will be basketball court painting, grill and drinking fountain installation, and landscaping.



Caboose Refurbishment: Councilman Miskimen, Staashelm and Neighbor traveled to the Albia Wabtec facility to review the painting applied to the Caboose. There have been six layers of paint applied, totaling six mil thick (mil is smaller than millimeter). The color scheme is a traditional Milwaukee Road orange and black. Next the Caboose will travel back to the Cedar Rapids Wabtec facility to finish the restoration with windows, protective window treatments, and Milwaukee Road decals and serial numbers.

PARKS

Spring Preemergent Fertilizer Application: Roughly 4,600 pounds of preemergent fertilizer was applied at 17 different locations, including various City facilities, sports fields, and other high-profile areas.

Hanna Park: After grading was completed at Hanna Park, staff worked to drill and hydroseed around the new improvements in the park. (photo right)

Water Startup: All the water throughout the park's system was turned on including bathrooms, pavilions, irrigation, concession stands, and in the cemetery. Splash pads and the pool will happen in May.



Ball Diamonds: Weekend and weekday ball games started mid-month. The weekend grounds staff had an orientation meeting to learn proper practices on the baseball diamonds. Weekly game preparation is taken care of by full-time and seasonal staff who report to Lowe Park.

Mowing Operations: Seasonal mowing staff came on board at the end of April. They began with an orientation day taking them through all the required training and some important safety reminders. Mowing staff will focus on City facilities and high traffic areas as they begin working on their routes.

Cemetery Maintenance: Several items throughout the cemetery were addressed, including spring "tuck-ins" (dirt and seed work after a burial), mowing operations, marker layouts, and debris cleanup.

Antioch Christian Church Serve Day: For the second year in a row, the department hosted volunteers from Antioch Christian Church for a volunteer project in the Uptown District. Around 20 volunteers removed and replaced potting soil in over 45 planters and collected litter on the Grant Wood Trail. This project saves full-time and seasonal staff from spending roughly 2-3 days doing this work.



Adopt-A-Spot- The Adopt-A-Spot program for parks, greenspaces, and other city owned property kicked off for the first time. The program is off to a strong start with 6 out of the 14 locations adopted. Volunteers have collected litter in the locations and have reported vandalism.

Adopt-A-Flowerbed: The 2024 Adopt-A-Flowerbed program has officially started, and volunteers have started weeding and general bed maintenance to prepare for planting annual flowers in late May. Orientation for new members was held April 10. Seven new areas were added this year and only five areas have not been adopted at this time.

Horticulture: April brought better weather and the official start of field work season for horticulture! Park operations staff assisted with spring cutbacks and weeding some of the biggest areas within our care. Seasonal Caleb Bruty started his fourth season in late April and has been working through weeding and pre-emergent applications. All beds have been addressed for mulch, weeding/spraying, and other general spring maintenance needs.

Planning continued in April for the 3rd Annual Migratory Bird & Arbor Day Celebration on Saturday, May 11 from Noon to 3 p.m. Partners, layout, and marketing has all been finalized. This year should be another fun day of learning about birds, trees, and the environment!

URBAN FORESTRY

Reforestation Master Plan: A draft of the Urban Reforestation Master Plan was reviewed by staff and final edits are being addressed. The plan is scheduled to be adopted by Council in June.

Trees in the Community: The Monarch Research Project and City of Marion distributed over 70 native trees to residents for right-of-way plantings in the community to further tree canopy restoration.

Linn County Trails Association and volunteers helped forestry staff plant 130 trees trailside in Marion with grant funding from the Iowa DNR Community Reforestation program.

Prairie Development: Staff are preparing to install seeding for native prairie transition plats in some park greenspaces.

Forestry Operations: Staff began stump grinding from winter tree removals.

CEMETERY

OAK SHADE CEMETERY	FEB 2024	MAR 2024	APR 2024
Spaces sold	1	0	4
Burials	2	1	1

REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

CODE COMPLIANCE	FEB 2024	MAR 2024	APR 2024
New Complaints	3	2	11
Resolved Complaints	3	0	22
Active Complaints	37	24	26

COMPLAINT TYPE	FEB 2024	MAR 2024	APR 2024
Tree – Right of Way	1	1	1
Tree – Private Property	1	1	0
Sidewalk Obstruction	0	0	0
Sidewalk Not Cleared (Snow or Ice)	1	0	0
Tall Grass and Weeds	0	0	10
Parks Misc	0	0	0
TOTAL	3	2	11

RECREATION

BINGO Night: The final BINGO night of the spring season was held on April 12 with 108 people in attendance. This event will take a brief break over the busy summer months and will return in September!

Kick Star Soccer: Kick Star Soccer Camp is a staff lead instructional camp for 3 and 4 year olds. Kick Star introduces players to the basics of organized soccer in a fun, non-competitive environment. A variety of soccer skills are introduced using drills, games, and activities, including kicking, dribbling, passing, tapping, throw-ins, running and agility. The first three meetings include skill building drills. On the final night, staff lead the children through playing a game-like setting. This was held at Butterfield Park on Mondays in April. There were 35 total participants.



Tiny Goal Kickers Soccer: Tiny Goal Kickers Soccer leagues began in April with three age groups. The 4-year-olds play on Tuesday nights with co-ed teams at Butterfield Park. The 5- and 6-year-olds play on Thursday nights with co-ed teams at Butterfield Park. The 7- and 8-year-olds play on Saturday mornings with separate boys' and girls' teams at Taube Park. The first

two meetings are practices run by parent volunteer coaches. The final five meetings are games played in a 3v3 or 4v4 format. There were some weather-related cancellations early in the month, so

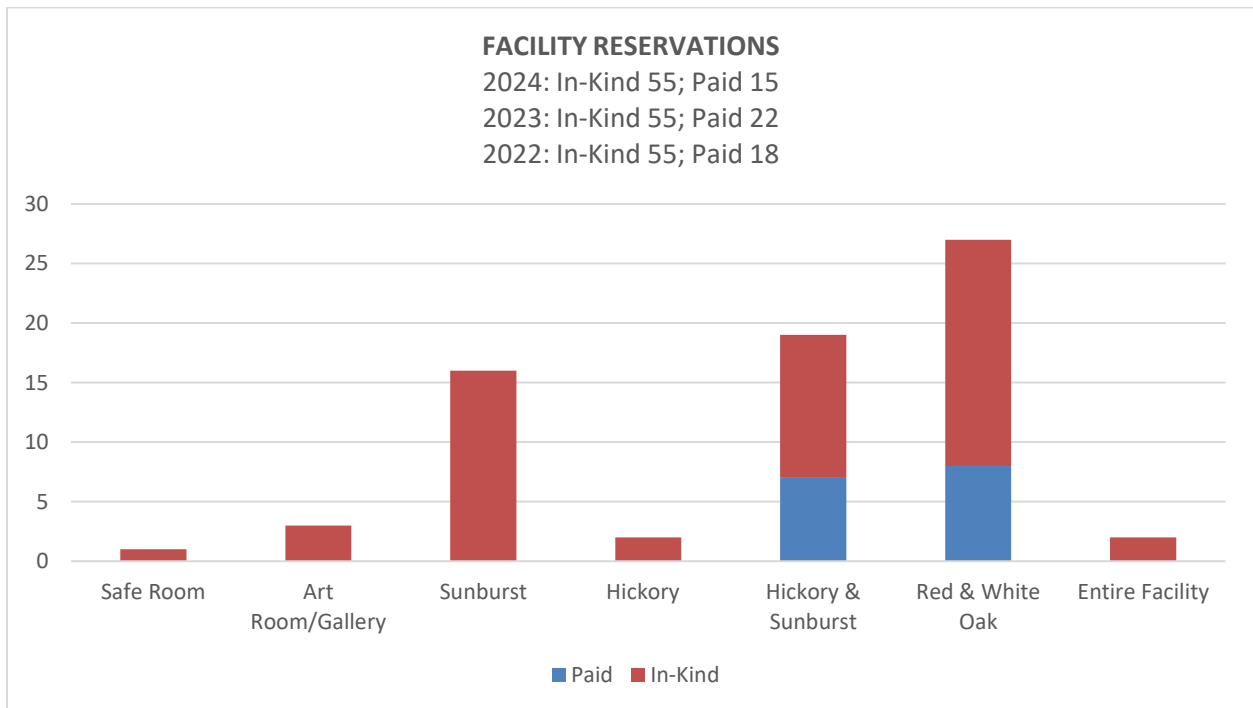


those games have been rescheduled for later in May. All three divisions will complete their seasons in the middle or end of May.

Spring Flag Football: This program for kindergarten to 4th graders was held in Taube Park on Mondays and Wednesdays. This league focuses on teaching the fundamentals of football, including throwing, catching, running, blocking, hand-offs, plays/formations, etc. Teams are kept small to encourage participation for each child. A combination of group practices and games are used to reinforce and teach skills, fundamentals, and basic understanding of the game.

ARTS COUNCIL

Coffee House Night: On April 6, Deep Dish Divas performed at the Coffee House Night with 63 people in attendance. This series will take a break over the summer and return in the fall.



ACTIVITIES USAGE
(Pavilion data not reflected)
2024 - 70
2023 - 77
2022 - 73

