

GENERAL DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Iowa Turf Institute (ITI) Field and Demonstration Day: Adam Beitz, Brent Neighbor, Drew Mollenhauer, James Offerman, and Josh Storla attended the ITI Field and Demo Day at Iowa State University. Educational topics included usage of plant growth regulators, weed control, fertilization, and the chance to demo some of the industry's leading equipment.

Staff Development: Seasonal horticulture staff member Caleb Bruty attended the annual ISU Greenhouse Shortcourse in Ames on September 11.

Greenhouse Tours: Director Staashelm, Deputy Director Neighbor, Horticulturist Weber, and Operations Supervisor Mollenhauer toured greenhouses at Prairie High School and Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids with the Linn County Master Gardeners and RDG Planning & Design. These tours provided staff with ideas to implement into the future facility which will be added near the current Lowe Park greenhouse.



PROJECTS

Urban Reforestation Master Plan: City Council adopted the Urban Reforestation Master Plan on September 19. This plan will provide guidance for staff to prioritize public tree planting and division development over the next 10 years.

Grand Avenue Basin Update: In the fall of 2023, the City took ownership of the detention basin along Grand Avenue, west of 31st Street. Since that time, staff has been working with neighboring residents to address concerns and develop a plan for basin maintenance. Landon's Sitework was hired and will mobilize to the site early October with construction starting the week of October 7. Work includes water pumping, sediment removal around inlet and outlet pipes, installation of sediment catch basins, shoreline grading, stabilization, and seeding. The installation of the sediment catch basins will ease future maintenance and help prevent silt



accumulation. This type of construction project may cause the site to be temporarily unsightly, but necessary for the completion of the project. Work is estimated to take 6 to 8 weeks. Neighboring properties will receive a letter that outlines the scope of work, timeline and what to expect on the site during construction.

Draper Park Update: The project continues to move forward with electrical infrastructure being installed and a concrete pedestrian trail being installed south of the caboose to give the feel of being in a railroad switch yard.

Prairie Hill Park: Community leaders, City staff and Chamber ambassadors joined members of the Marion Parks and Recreation Department for a ribbon-cutting ceremony on September 30, to celebrate the completion of Prairie Hill Park, located near the corner of 29th Avenue and 50th Street. The park offers a 30-stall parking lot, a playground with equipment for all age groups, a

pavilion and a basketball court. It grew out of the 2020 Neighborhood Park Master Plan and came to life over the last few years. Much of the work was completed in-house by members of the City team. Special thanks to the Marion-East Cedar Rapids Rotary Club for donating and planting the trees that enhance the park's landscape.

Uptown Dumpster Enclosure: A crew from Pesak Masonry erected the walls at the north end of the Artway Alley. The next steps are to install the gate posts, pour a concrete floor, install the asphalt approach, and finally install the enclosure gates.

PARKS

Low Amphitheater Irrigation: Flemming Irrigation completed the installation of the in-ground irrigation system for the Lowe Amphitheater. This will be more efficient at maintaining the turf conditions than the previous watering methods. Dirt work and seeding are yet to be completed in the trenched areas.

Fall Broadleaf Herbicide Application: Grounds staff began applying fall broadleaf herbicide to priority one and two areas, which includes City facilities and high traffic parks. (photo right, Josh Storla)



Right-of-Way Mowing: The last round of rural right-of-way mowing, and trail flail mowing was completed. This allows better roadside visibility and prevents the growth of woody vegetation along roads and trails. (photo left)



Public Works Facility Landscaping: Operations, horticulture, and forestry staff teamed up to complete the landscaping at the new Public Works facility. Staff completed site grading, planting over 40 trees and 50 perennials, and river rock installation. Plantings utilized ornamental grasses, evergreens and flowering shrubs to provide year-round interest. Buffalo grass and native prairie seeding will come this November.



Horticulture: Over 275 mums were planted throughout city owned spaces this month! Mums add a pop of fall color to freshen up plantings for the season.

Routine maintenance continued for horticulture staff, including fertilizing and watering annual plantings, pruning annual planters, spraying herbicide at Prairie Hill Park, and weeding throughout the Uptown landscaping beds.

URBAN FORESTRY

Trees Forever's Growing Futures team is actively planting trees on the identified project sites and have completed nearly half of the two hundred to be planted and maintained this fall.

Budget Planning for FY2025-26 has begun. A fee increase for the Urban Forestry Utility fund is



anticipated to be recommended following the reforestation plan to support staffing and increased planting in FY2025-26.

Watering tree plantings has become a weekly priority as dry conditions have set in this month.

Removal of declining Ash trees in natural areas along trails has become a priority as visible symptoms of dieback are evident with Emerald Ash Borer activity.

Forestry staff completed some rough flail mowing to establish burn breaks for prescribed fire this fall/winter and to discourage woody tree development along prairie boundaries.

REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

CODE COMPLIANCE	JUL 2024	AUG 2024	SEP 2024
New Complaints	67	49	23
Resolved Complaints	41	54	25
Active Complaints	67	51	53

COMPLAINT TYPE	JUL 2024	AUG 2024	SEP 2024
Tree – Right of Way	2	0	0
Tree – Private Property	3	0	1
Sidewalk Obstruction	4	2	1
Sidewalk Not Cleared (Snow or Ice)	0	0	0
Tall Grass and Weeds	58	47	21
Parks Misc	0	0	0
TOTAL	67	49	23

CEMETERY

OAK SHADE CEMETERY	JUL 2024	AUG 2024	SEP 2024
Spaces Sold	7	2	18
Burials	6	4	7

RECREATION



BINGO: The always popular Bingo Night has returned with the first fall event on September 13. A new digital bingo machine was used which was donated by Friends of the Park. The event was a hit, with around 60 participants. The blackout winner took home nearly \$50!

Adult Rec Softball: The Adult Rec Softball league wrapped up its final game on September 25 with six teams participating this year. This was a successful partnership program with Prospect Meadows and everyone is looking forward to next year.

NFL Flag Football: The Fall NFL Flag Football league began, with eight teams in the 2nd to 3rd grade division, and six teams in the 4th to 6th grade division, totaling almost 150 players. This is a partnership program with the Marion YMCA. Games are held at Hazel Point Intermediate School's practice fields from September 7 to October 12. (photo right)



Fall 3v3 Soccer: The Fall 3v3 Soccer League runs Thursdays from August 29 to October 3, with divisions for 4-year-olds (coed), 5/6-year-olds (coed), 7/8 girls, and 7/8 boys. The League features 24 teams and over 120 participants, with parents volunteering as coaches and recreation staff assisting and refereeing games. The program is held at Butterfield and Taube Parks. (photo left)



Lil Tykes Basketball Camp: Lil Tykes Basketball camps were held in September for ages 4 to 5 and 6 to 8. The camp ran from September 9 to October 2, with 107 total participants. Children practiced skills like dribbling, passing, shooting, and defense, culminating in scrimmage games on the final day. The camp took place at Thomas Park.



Little Kickers Camp: The Little Kickers Kickball Camp started on September 17 and will run through October 15 for ages 3 to 5. Recreation staff teaches basic skills such as kicking, fielding, and base running, with a game held in the final week.



Apple Orchard Bus Trip (Gays Mills, WI): On September 26, fifty community members traveled to Gays Mills, WI, for an apple-picking trip. The group enjoyed lunch at Breitbach's Country Dining and visited two orchards, Sunrise Orchards and Kickapoo Orchard. The trip began at 9 a.m. and returned to Marion at 7:30 p.m. and was a delightful experience for everyone involved.

Lowe Diamonds: The four main diamonds closed out the season on September 28. Two groups rented in September: Lions Softball for a weekend tournament and a group of baseball teams for a final scrimmage/practice.

ARTS COUNCIL

Art Gallery: A new gallery exhibit featuring Jayson Reid was installed on September 14, and will be on display through October.



Coffeehouse Nights: The Council is gearing up for the return of Coffeehouse Nights. As always, this is a free event with light refreshments available for purchase. Performances include Oct. 4 Roots of Rhythm, Nov. 1 Terry McCauley, and Dec. 6 Lucas Blekeberg.

