

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

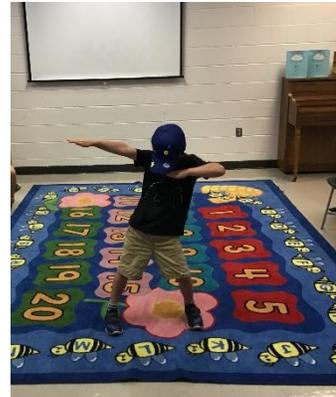
TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: JAMES SPENGLER, DIRECTOR
RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: RECREATION SERVICES MONTHLY UPDATE

Program Wrap-Ups

- May 4 through August 14, Mount Vernon Recreation Center offered an **Emergency Childcare Program**. The program was offered to designated City employees at no cost and structured like the regular Out of School Time program. Staff implemented strict CDC guidelines which included physical distancing, face masks, facility restrictions for visitor's, and temperature screenings. Activities included: Academics, Outdoor/field play, arts and crafts, table games, music, stem activities, 4H Activities Art box and special events. Special thanks to the staff and the 31 children who participated in the program.
- July 6 through August 16, William Ramsey Recreation Center opened **table tennis**. Moving to Saturdays due to the modified summer camp, table tennis participation grew from two to eight participants by mid-August. There is a significant amount of interest for it to continue after building renovations.
- August 4 through September 1, Youth Sports held **Ball Handling with Coach T**. Ten participants aged 7-12 years old learned the fundamentals of ball handling from a former Harlem Ambassador player in a safe and fun environment at the outdoor basketball court at the Lee Center Complex.



- July 6 through August 14, RPCA held its **Modified Summer Camp Program**. Modified camps were offered at six recreation centers and one ACPS location. Programs included Half Day Camp at Chinquapin Park Recreation Center and Friday Fun Day Outdoor Programs at Jefferson-Houston Field and Armistead Boothe Park. The program implemented the safety guidelines set forth by the CDC, enhanced cleaning practices at each location, physical distancing, and limited capacity. A combined total of 307 youth participated in the program and were placed in groups of 10.



- July 29 and August 18, the Community Outreach Section partnered with the Alexandria Police Department, Fire Fighters and Friends to the Rescue, and other local businesses and City agencies to provide summer activity packets, giveaways, books and meals during the **Grab n' Go events**. Grab n' Go events were held at five locations, and over 1000 meals were passed out to City of Alexandria youth and their families. To end the summer and kick off the school year, the Community Outreach Section partnered with the same organizations to provide 2000 backpacks to City of Alexandria youth.



Program Updates

- At Patrick Henry Recreation Center, **open gym** is currently available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6-9 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. All participants must bring their own balls and wear PPE's throughout their visit at the center. Teens have increased their foot traffic into the center since the pandemic. Staff have been creative keeping the teens active with basketball drills, Hot Shot shoot outs and just shoot arounds while maintaining physical distancing.

Upcoming Programs

- Fall classes at Mount Vernon Recreation Center begin on September 20. The center will offer **Science Mania, Fitness with Coach Jason, and the Art Box Overload**. A variety of activities are available to seniors on Saturday morning.
- Beginning September 22, Charles Houston Recreation Center will offer **Boxercise**. This beginner level class is fun and low impact boxercise class that will help muscle toning, weight loss, and strength and conditioning while building and enhancing your self-esteem. Taught by Washington, DC our Hall of Famer, Anthony Suggs.

- Beginning September 23, Youth Sports will host **Girls Softball Clinics**. Participants ages 8-12 years old learn the game of softball while maintaining physical distancing. The players will be taught hitting, fielding, and throwing on Wednesday evenings this Fall.
- On October 3, Leonard Armstrong Recreation Center will host **Family Cosmic Skate Night**. Families can use skates from the center or bring their own skates to enjoy an exciting evening of family friendly activities. Guidelines for physical distancing and face mask covering will be enforced. \$5 per person and \$15 for a family of 4.
- On October 10, Leonard Armstrong Recreation Center will host their **Fall Halloween Fest**. The event is open to youth registered in the centers modified Fall OSTP and will be held in two sessions for ensure physical distancing. Participants will enjoy food, vendors, games, music, and costume contests.
- On October 17 through November 21, Youth Sports will offer **Preseason Basketball Fundamentals**. Players will learn basketball skills in a safe environment while practicing physical distancing.

Special Features

- **Williams Ramsey Recreation Center** has undergone the following **renovations**. A new roof was installed, which will bring energy savings through improved insulation and address the challenges with strong rainstorms and leaks inside the building. The inside also received a make-over by way of new ceiling tiles in all the rooms and improved lighting, which also bring increased safety and savings. With motion and sound activated lights, lights will turn off when a room is not in use for 5 minutes, meaning less energy is used to light an empty space.
- Four staff members of RPCA's Sports Section have served as **field & park ambassadors** since March. The ambassadors continue to monitor the use of fields, parks and amenities, to ensure the community is complying with COVID guidelines. They also report any vandalism or needs for trash removal. Special thanks to the following staff members: **Tim Bryant, Reggie Newsome, Marcus Jones and Javonta Campbell.**

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: OSCAR MENDOZA, DIVISION CHIEF - PARK OPERATIONS, RPCA

THROUGH: JAMES SPENGLER, DIRECTOR, RPCA

SUBJECT: PARK OPERATIONS MONTHLY UPDATE

1. PARK AND FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

Park Maintenance

- Staff posted informative signage around the Ben Brenman pond explaining how a stormwater retention pond works and signage about not feeding the wildlife.



Ben Brenman Park.

2. URBAN FORESTRY & HORTICULTURE

Urban Forestry

- In process of establishing new contracts for Holiday light and Tree installation and tree planting.
- Preparing for fall implementation of phased, proactive removal and replacement of Callery Pear (Bradford, Cleveland Select etc.) due to weak structure and invasive characteristics.
- Identified first case of crape myrtle bark scale, *cantilococcus lagerstroemiae*, in City limits.
- Staff measured and scored the City co-champion Red Maple at the Acidic Seepage Swamp and Alexandria Heritage Trail at Chinquapin Park; the new City Champion Bender's Oak at Beth El Hebrew Congregation's Chapel in the Woods; and City champion Hawkins' Oak adjoining Beth El Hebrew Congregation.



N. Fairfax Street native pollinator planter at Montgomery Park.



N. Fairfax Street native pollinator planter at Montgomery Park.

3. NATURAL LANDS MANAGEMENT

Like other City depts. and staff, Natural Lands Management has been practicing physical distancing and other safety measures during the coronavirus crisis to ensure the safety of residents, teammates, and the communities we serve. Still, we continued to safely accomplish many of our core, essential duties and meet targeted goals.

a. Invasive Plant Management and Ecological Restoration

- Staff removed Oriental Bittersweet, Porcelain-berry, Fleece Flower (*Persicaria filiformis*), and other non-native invasive plants from Dora Kelley Nature Park, Chinquapin Park, Forest Park, Fort Williams Park, and Timberbranch Parkway.
- Staff supervised our contractor, Invasive Plant Control (IPC), in treating Porcelain-berry, Pagoda Tree, Golden Rain Tree, Callery Pear, White Mulberry, and many others at Fort Ward Park; Japanese Stiltgrass and Porcelain-berry at Forest Park; and Japanese Stiltgrass and Kudzu at Dora Kelley Nature Park.

b. Cooperative Initiatives

- City Natural Resource Manager sponsored Marta Cabellos, Juniata College Wildlife Conservation Plexus Fellowship Mentee, in a summer project to survey Dora Kelley Nature Park for Large Whorled Pogonia orchids. Marta found and mapped a total of 104 of this Alexandria “critically imperiled” plant.

4. JEROME “BUDDIE” FORD NATURE CENTER

- The Nature Center finally re-opened its doors to the public on September 9, after a 6-month long closure. The center was initially closed on March 19th due to COVID-19 but remained closed due to a malfunctioning HVAC unit (which is controlled by ACPS). Despite the closure, staff reported daily to care for the animals and greenhouse.



Horsemint in bloom at the First Street native pollinator planter at Montgomery Park.



New City champion Bender’s Oak at Beth El Hebrew Congregation’s Chapel in the Woods.



City co-champion Red Maple at edge of Acidic Seepage Swamp at Chinquapin Park.



Eastern box turtle enjoying a healthy salad.

- This summer in lieu of offering our own camp programming the Nature Center Staff visited day camp programs being hosted by Recreation Services. We conducted two visits at each of the five recreation centers, providing a total of 19 programs serving 182 people.

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: JACK BROWAND, DIVISION CHIEF
PARK PLANNING, CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT & WATERFRONT

SUBJECT: PARK PLANNING DIVISION MONTHLY UPDATE

Park Planning Staff Reassignments

Dana Wedeles was appointed as Special Assistant to the City Manager on June 1, 2020. This appointment is the fourth in an innovative City Manager's Management Fellowship Program established by City Manager Mark Jinks in 2015 to provide development opportunities for early career, mid-level City staff. The Special Assistant, who is appointed for a one-year term, aids the City Manager's Office in developing and implementing a wide variety of City priorities, initiatives and projects. In response to this appointment, Judy Lo has been appointed the Acting Principal Planner/Open Space. Judy's unique background and commitment to customer service will ensure her success in this assignment and provide the support to ensure the continuity of project management and staff supervision within the Division. Judy's new role will continue through May 31, 2021.

Powhatan Park Improvements Scheduled

Construction of pedestrian improvements will take place at Powhatan Park (1010 Douglas St.) between September 14 and October 23. This project will provide the community a better pedestrian experience along Route One. These improvements will include constructing a wider sidewalk and placing a decorative metal fence between the sidewalk and Route One. A landscape buffer will also be installed within this area. Work will occur in phases, starting with demolition of the existing sidewalk and installation of a new sidewalk, followed by installation of fencing and landscaping. Improvements are consistent with the [Powhatan Park Improvement Plan](#).

Waterfront Park Landscape Renovation Completed

The Waterfront Park landscape renovation improved the existing park to better integrate the older park area with the 2018 renovated/expanded park area. The improvements will support year-round programming opportunities, including improved access for the city mobile stage. All existing timber edging within the park was removed and replaced with new timbers. Pathways were also re-aligned to better connect to the 2018 renovated/expanded park area. New flagstone footpaths were installed to provide access to shade during warmer months and to control foot traffic. Existing shrubs and perennials were selectively removed, and new native perennials and shrubs were installed in the planting beds. The open lawn and trees remained.



Woodbine Tot Lot--Whitakers Wish Community Matching Fund Project Dedicated

On July 23, a ribbon cutting was held to reveal the completion of Whitaker's Wish. In 2019, RPCA partnered with Make-A-Wish Mid-Atlantic to renovate the Woodbine Tot Lot. Whitaker, a 4-year-old cancer survivor who lives in the neighborhood and loves going to the Woodbine Tot Lot had one wish—a new playground for his friends and community. MAW fundraised for the improvements and was a recipient of a Community Matching Fund grant. Designed with Whitaker, the playground has new climbing equipment, a fire truck themed play structure, more swings and new mulch surfacing. Make-A-Wish Mid-Atlantic President Lesli Creedon, Mayor Wilson, Fire Chief Smedley, and Sheriff Lawhorne were among the attendees to cut the ribbon with Whitaker and his family.

