



CITY OF ASTORIA

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE: DECEMBER 26, 2017**

**TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: ANGELA COSBY, PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR**

**SUBJECT: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT STATUS REPORT**

The following are summaries of Parks and Recreation Department projects and activities in the Fall of 2017.

### **PARKS MAINTENANCE**

#### **Grounds:**

The Parks Maintenance Division's grounds work in parks is at its nadir for the year, vegetation is semi-dormant and use of sites has lessened, as a result of more frequent inclement weather. Focus has shifted to preparing for the upcoming spring and summer mowing season by reorganizing the Maintenance Shop to maximize efficiency, creating procedural documents to assist with on-boarding, training, and consistency of outcomes, and inventorying and updating necessary tools and equipment.

## **Facilities:**

For Parks Facilities, the Aquatic Center's new UV sanitation systems on the Spa and Kiddie pools has resulted in a dramatic reduction of unscheduled closures due to chemical imbalances. Instead of being closed twice per week for over three hours, both pools are now open 100% of operating hours. Parks Facilities is in the midst of remodeling and repurposing areas of the Astoria Recreation Center to create new office space for increased staff and providing a new area for the Teen Zone, as well as a designated safe staging point for the building, in the event of an active shooter situation.

In addition to these activities, the Maintenance Division is continuing to work toward Individual Park Maintenance Plans to better schedule and coordinate activities throughout the year and to better exemplify the basic needs the division has in order to provide an "A" level of service across all properties.



## **Removal of Hazardous Trees:**

Per the recommendations of the Parks Master Plan, a full inventory and assessment of Parks trees was completed in spring 2017. Based on the data from the inventory, staff has solicited bids to remove and replace trees rated most likely to fail and cause harm to people or property, Priority 1. The work will entail removing 16 trees from six park locations. Once the Priority 1 trees are addressed, planning and coordination will take action on Priority 2 and 3 rated trees.

## **Park Adoptions and Service Projects:**

In the past year, several groups have volunteered their money, time, and services to help provide services to multiple parks throughout our system. Memorandums of Agreement for park adoptions have been drafted and are either active, or in the process of being enacted, for McClure Park, People's Park, Alderbrook Park, Old Post Office Park, and Tide Rock Park. Clatsop Community College continues to be a pivotal community ally for assistance; the Historic Preservation Program is in the second year of renovating the exterior siding and windows of Alderbrook Hall, poised to begin work in the spring for their portion of the Doughboy Monument Restoration Grant project, and is evaluating the US Customs House replica to determine potential future workshop and teaching opportunities.



### **Cemetery Grounds Maintenance**



Ocean View Cemetery's grounds have benefited from the wet fall and winter weather, extensive leaks in the water system have prevented regular water availability on site. The cemetery is historically quite busy during the fall/winter, averaging 2-3 cremation burials a week, and 1-2 full burials. Grounds maintenance continues to be difficult to carry out regularly, due to the large size of the property, complexity of the layout of graves and headstones, and the volume of backlogged maintenance work that has accumulated without the presence of dedicated, full-time staff.

### **AQUATIC CENTER UPDATE**

#### **Program Attendance:**

The facility ran two sessions of swim lessons this fall. A total of 93 children registered for the 2 five week sessions. Additionally, Naselle school district brought 59 third and fourth grade students to the facility for school swim lessons in October and November.

Through our software program, RecTrac, 12,868 visits were recorded at the Aquatic Center September 1 through the first week of December. During this time period, 1,130 monthly passes were sold or renewed.

Staff also conducted two lifeguard training courses, one in October with four participants successfully passing the course. A second lifeguard training course in December which passes 6 participants.

### **Facility Use:**

- North Coast Swim Club hosted a weekend swim meet November 18 & 19. The facility was closed November 18 and reopened the afternoon of November 19.
- Swim team season began November 13. The Astoria swim team has 35 athletes participating this year and hosted the Nygaard swim meet December 9<sup>th</sup> with approximately 100 swimmers competing.
- Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District closed its pool for maintenance and remodeling October 20- December 10. SEPRD contracted with the Astoria Parks Department to allow its pass holders to use the Astoria Aquatic Center.
- This year, the Seaside pool was closed for the first 4 weeks of the swim season. Seaside High School's swim team used our facility two afternoons each week while their pool was undergoing maintenance.

### **Facility Staffing**

In September, the full time position of Aquatic Recreation Coordinator was filled by part-time staff, Jeff Hamilton. The increase in full-time staffing has assisted in consistency of staffing, scheduling and facility maintenance.

In October, the Aquatic Center's part-time head cashier, Gad Perez, was promoted to a new full-time position as the Department's Administrative Assistant. While Gad no longer works at the Aquatic Center, she continues to assist with front desk operations remotely in her new role.

### **Maintenance Closure:**

The facility was closed for annual maintenance September 5-17.

Projects completed included:

- Draining and refilling all pools
- Install UV sanitary systems on the Hot Tub and Kiddie Pool
- Energy efficiency upgrades to the HVAC system
- Deep cleaning of the entire facility
- Sealing gutters in the Rec Pool
- Repainting the exterior of the building

The UV sanitation system has made marked improvements in decreasing combined chlorines in the kiddie pool and hot tub. Prior to installation of this system, we were draining and refilling these bodies of water twice a week. Staff drained and refilled both pools one month after the installation of these filtration systems not because the

combined chlorine levels were high, but because state law requires hot tubs to be drained and refilled monthly.

## **RECREATION**

### **After School Program:**

- The After School Program is growing, averaging between 30-35 students per day.
- Large turnover in staffing has led to a new more dynamic staff with great ideas and energy.
- We've been working on crafts and projects that reflect the change in seasons and Holidays.
- We are working towards adding more S.T.E.M. and agricultural projects as we move from Winter to Spring.

### **Athletics:**

#### **Flag Football:** 18 players

- We had enough players to have two Astoria teams who partnered with two teams from Warrenton Kids, Inc. It was a fun season of games, culminating with the players playing games at CMH Field.
- We initially had great difficulty finding coaches to work with the teams. We advertised the need for a coach on social media and were fortunate to have had a wonderful community member (Mike Murdock) who volunteered to coach both teams of players, took it upon himself to find a sponsor, and funded the purchase of sweatshirts for the players.

#### **Youth Basketball:** 169 players

- Registration began in October for 5th and 6th grade basketball, with practices and games starting in November.
- There were 30, 5th and 6th grade teams playing, with 40 + volunteer coaches working with the players.
- The 1st and 2nd grade boy teams began in November as well, with a total of 67 boys in the program; an increase of 23 boys from last year.
- Registration is open for 3rd and 4th grade boys and girls, ending December 22. Practices start the beginning of January with games starting the end of January.
- Registration is also open for 1st and 2nd grade girls, ending December 22. The program starts mid-January for this program.
- With the hiring of our new Recreation Coordinator, we were behind in finding sponsors. We reached out to the community via social media, and within 2 days we found enough sponsors for not only our 5th/6th grade teams, but also the 3rd/4th grade season. We also have a good start on sponsors for our upcoming softball season.

**Men's Basketball:**

- Due to the lack of officials willing to work the league, we did not offer a men's league this season. We will work to re-boot the program next winter.
- We offered a Men's Open Gym Drop-In for \$5 a night, but did not have participation to continue to run the program.

**Volleyball:**

- Drop-In continues through the Fall/Winter at the Astoria Middle School. An average of 15 - 20 people come regularly to the open gym.
- There was also a women's 6 vs. 6 league which ran September through November. This program ran once a week. We had 6 teams in the league this season.
- There is a coed 6 vs. 6 league scheduled to run in March with registration opening in January.

**Fitness Classes:**

- A new Yoga instructor was hired after our original instructor quit unexpectedly. Our new instructor brought more participants to our early morning classes.
- We added a new fitness program "After School Special" at the request of some Astoria School District staff expressed interest in classes following the end of the school day. It is a month long program meeting twice a week which changes every month. It's a great opportunity for participants to try out classes and instructors that we offer at the ARC.
- Class numbers have been improving steadily and look to take a jump with the start of the new year.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD****Lil' Sprouts Academy:**

- Lil' Sprouts has full classrooms with waitlists for each room. Above you can see the current number of kids in each classroom and how many families are on the waitlist for that room.

<b>Classroom</b>	<b>Class Size</b>	<b>Waitlist</b>
Sweet Peas (Infants 6 weeks- 18 months)	8	22
Tulips (18 months- 2/2.5 years)	11	19
Daisies (2/2.5 years- 3 year & potty trained)	12	7
Sunflowers (3 years- 4 years)	15	2
Daffodils (4 years- 6 years)	22	14

- Since September we have hired 6 new staff members, 5 for Lil' Sprouts and 1 for Port of Play. We are still looking for one more toddler teacher. We do have some challenges with turnover and retention due to pay rates, and only offering part time positions.
- Astoria Fire Department came and visited our rooms for Fire Safety Week.
- Our Winter Concert was once again a huge success for our Sunflower and Daffodil classrooms. The classes sang traditional Christmas favorites, as well as songs about other holidays.
- Our preschoolers have spent the last month learning about nutrition, health, and being active. For our younger children, they have been learning the alphabet and doing various crafts and activities that correspond with a Letter of the Week.

### **Port of Play:**

- Since September, Port of Play has been used by 517 children and has brought in \$3,242.
- Since September 1st, we have had 22 birthday parties booked at our facility.
- Parent's Night Out has seen huge growth this year, which required us to add more staff members for the event. On average, we have between 13-18 kids every Saturday. We had 23 at our last Parent's Night.
- We now have 2 staff members for Port of Play, it did take quite a while to find another clerk for Port of Play. Parent's Night Out is covered by staff members from Lil' Sprouts and occasionally one of our Port of Play staff.
- Our new bounce house finally came and has been a huge hit.
- We rearranged Port of Play in order to help with safety and flow with the bicycles, bounce house, and play areas for the smaller children.



### **MARKETING/COMMUNICATIONS**

The marketing plan was completed and approved in mid-September. We have been working closely with staff to communicate what the plans are and how it will effect their facility and programming, as well as needs they have identified to be able to support their programming. We have begun, in earnest, to implement the plan.



## **Marketing Specials:**

We are continuing to promote our facilities, events, and programming on social media almost exclusively. The Return on Investment has been evident from an increase in donations, traffic to our webpage, and increase of followers to our social media pages.

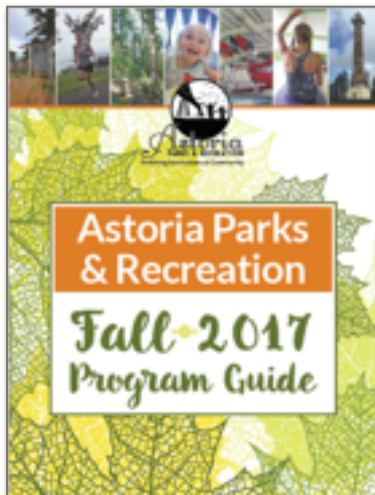
On November 24th, we marketed our first special - Cyber Monday. We offered customers the chance to purchase a Land & Water Pass on our website and receive one month free. We also tried to incentivize customers by raffling off an Astoria Parks gift basket that included: a #LOVEASTORIAPARKS t-shirt, New Years Fun Run entry, swim goggles, and swim cap. Unfortunately, the user experience on RecTrac was problematic but the marketing efforts on social media and the traffic it drove to our website was fantastic. We received over 3,000 website visitors and we reached over 2,000 people on Facebook and Instagram on the few days we ran the marketing campaign.

Our next marketing campaign will be our “Give the Gift of Fitness” special where new sign-ups will get upgraded to Land & Water for a month. Also, current members who refer a friend will be upgraded as well. This time we will be advertising our specials on radio via Ohana Media Group, in print with the Daily A’s Coast Weekend, as well as our social media marketing. Along with the marketing of our passes, we will be marketing Port of Play and the Aquatic Center to tourists. This will be achieved through special social media geo-targeting and possibly Groupon.

## **Event Promotion:**

### ***Instant Gratification***

One of the bigger events that we marketed was the 3rd Annual Instant Gratification Run held on October 8th. Our logo this year was a snail. Marketing Contractor Janice O’Malley Galizio helped design the t-shirts, flyers, press release, and was responsible for social media advertisement. We had a reach of 4,400 with 678 event views on





Facebook. Enough money was raised to bring back our Fun Runs and our Valentine's Day Ball.

### ***Gobbler Gallop***

We had over 65 participants partake in our Gobbler Gallop and managed to collect an estimated 200 pounds of canned food for Clatsop Community Action! Ella Zilli took first place along with Mike Allen and Josh Fry. We gave out Pumpkin Pies from Costco as prizes for runners who came in first place. It was a great turn out and a great event.

### **Program Guides:**

We wanted to make sure that we were portraying an image of fun, enrichment, and community - something that spoke to our mission at the Department. We believe that we have finally returned to this by some new additions in the guide. For example: we included more pictures of patrons and photos of our parks that were tagged on our Instagram account, we included a letter from our Parks Director, additionally we included a map of Astoria for tourists to use to find our parks, and the layout was better organized and easier to read. We were also able to translate our Winter/Spring 2018 program guide into Spanish and include an easily viewable guide onto our website that visitors can access via their mobile devices.

### **Social Media:**

**Facebook** - For the Astoria Parks page is over the 3,000 likes mark which is a great accomplishment. We've increased our page followers by 300 in eight months' time. Several of our other Facebook accounts: Recreation Center, Run on the River, and Port of Play have garnered either close to 100 or over 100 likes. The Aquatic Center continues to grow with over 200 likes since April.

**Instagram** - this social media platform by far has the most growth potential. Since April we've seen over 300 followers.

**Twitter** - continues to grow steadily despite this not being a tool that is heavily utilized by our patrons. we've grown to 374 followers; an increase of over 80 since April.

### **Communications:**

The website is continuously being updated with relevant information. Since September, we've received 58,421 visitors to the website. Our top three page hits are the Aquatic Center, Events, and Parks Board Agenda and Minutes. The most searched for Parks are Ocean View Cemetery, Youngs River Falls, Cathedral Tree Trail, and Shively Park.

We've increased our Newsletter updates to once a week with average open rates of about 25.5% with an industry average of 12.5%, according to Constant Contact.

## **SPECIAL PROJECTS**

### **Doughboy Monument:**

Earlier this year, the City received a Veterans and War Memorials grant from State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to upgrade the west restroom and perform other upgrades and exterior painting of the Doughboy Monument in preparation for the 100th Anniversary of the end of World War I on November 11, 2018. Prior to the start of that work, a vehicle crashed into the east side of the Monument with extensive damage to the structure. Advanced Structural Forensics Corp. (AFS) conducted a damage assessment of the Monument in October which identified the structural damage to the east side including possible damage to the statue anchorage. In the next month, the bronze statue will be removed and stored to allow AFS to determine the extent of damage to the base joint holding the statue in place and a suitable new anchorage to reattach the statue. Staff is currently in the process of contracting with AFS to prepare structural repair drawings of the work that needs to be done on the Monument as a result of the vehicle damage. Once we have those drawings, we will be seeking a contractor to do the repair work. Staff is working with the City's insurance carrier CIS concerning the insurance claim. Staff was able to begin the grant related work on the west portion of the Monument including plumbing and electrical, and in February, Clatsop Community College Historic Preservation students will begin the plaster work on the west side interior. Some of the grant related work such as the exterior painting cannot be completed until the structural damage has been repaired.

### **Potential Sale of City Park Land:**

The City Council has directed Staff to research the feasibility of selling several City Parks for potential development and removal from City maintenance responsibility. The sites Council selected included Birch Ballfield, US Customhouse Reconstruction, Tidal Rock, and the First US Post Office site. Staff has been looking at each parcel concerning any deed and/or grant restrictions; City, State, and Federal laws concerning publicly owned historic properties; feasibility of development on the sites; and other issues that would affect potential sale or development of the parcels. The results of that research are almost complete and will be presented to the Council in the next couple of months with recommendations on how to proceed on each of the properties.

### New Garbage Cans and Trial Run Recycling Cans:

The City has entered into a contract with Steel and Timber Construction to design and build 48 garbage cans capable of containing Recology's garbage carts. Steel and Timber has been procured corrugated sheet metal from a dilapidated barn in the Jewell area, reclaimed timbers from the now-demolished Yost Building (adjacent to CMH Cancer Center), and has begun fabrication on receptacles. In addition to the 48 garbage receptacles needed to replace current Parks cans, 4 pilot recycling containers will also be produced to determine if it is feasible to include that service through Recology. The pilot recycling receptacles will be located at Lindstrom Park, Tapiola Park, Astor Park, and on the Riverwalk, at 6<sup>th</sup> St. Production of the 52 units is anticipated to take several months, as units are delivered Parks Maintenance will install throughout the Parks system. Recology is working with their operations division to determine when pick-up services will begin, we are hoping for implementation in early Spring.

