

To: Chuck Stifter, Director of Parks and Recreation

From: Ben Jaszewski, Superintendent of Parks and Planning

Date: March 11, 2022

Subject: Parks and Planning Newsworthy

Each year staff begins preparation for the spring and summer seasons by attending annual conferences and training seminars. This year staff participated in a "Spring Training" event offered by the Minnesota Parks Sports Turf Managers Association. Topics included natural turf maintenance, artificial turf care, fertilizing programs, weed control, and pesticide management. In the following weeks, staff will order supplies and get fields ready for the upcoming athletic seasons. During this time, snow clearing equipment will be transformed into mowing, sweeping, and earthmoving equipment. The maintenance staff is in the process of making repairs and updating the interiors of warming houses and restrooms. Tasks include painting, bench refurbishing, restroom exhaust vent replacement, and electrical repairs. In preparation for the spring and summer, staff has begun securing goose control permits and will be ready to mitigate goose-related issues around Town Green and Arbor Lakes earlier this season.

- **Outdoor Ice Rinks and Skate Loop**

Outdoor ice rinks officially closed for the season on March 2, 2022, concluding another short but successful winter ice season. To wrap up, staff have been removing nets and gates before the rinks turn into ponds during the spring thaw. Colder outdoor temperatures provided a slight extension for the ice-skating loop at Central Park. However, the weather forecast is projecting warmer temperatures and sunshine beginning the week of March 14, which will likely end the season abruptly. To prepare for spring, staff will perform seasonal maintenance on the loop and refrigeration units, remove the rubber mats, and turn over the interior of the Phenow Pavilion for upcoming rentals and classes.

- **Sports Dome**

The Sports Dome is tentatively scheduled to be fully dismantled during the week of April 25, 2022, but is dependent on favorable weather conditions. This task generally requires 40 to 50 people to accomplish over an 8 to 10-hour day. In 2020 and 2021, the group we typically hire for labor could not provide services due to the COVID19 pandemic. Staff is expecting that labor force to be unavailable again in the Spring of 2022 but will continue to work with them to schedule the fall installation. For the 2022 spring removal, staff will be working with other contractors and the City's internal labor force to complete the process efficiently. The

contractor providing dismantle supervision services will begin their work on April 20 removing netting, lights, and cables. Once the dome's interior is cleared of all fixtures, the dome can be deflated and prepared for storage. The entire process can take 4 to 6 days. Barring any unforeseen complications, the dome field should be available for use on Saturday, April 30.

- **Tristan Bay Bridge**

During the week of March 14, maintenance staff will replace the decking on the Tristan Bay Bridge located just south of County Road 30 off of 92nd Pl N. Earlier in March, staff received the lumber from the supplier and began cutting the boards to size. The bridge will be closed during the workday from March 14 through March 18. Staff expects the bridge to open each evening until the following morning when work resumes. Signage has been placed at the various trail entrances connected to the Rice Lake Trails. If all goes well, staff may be able to complete this process in just two to three days.

- **Seasonal Staffing**

Recruitment for part-time and seasonal staffing continues to be a struggle moving into 2022. Over the past few months, staff has met with the Human Resources Department to develop plans to increase recruitment for these critical positions. So far, age restrictions have been modified from 18 years of age to 17 for employment in park maintenance, and pay rates have been adjusted to make seasonal positions more appealing. Additionally, park maintenance relies heavily on returning seasonal staff and word of mouth for recruitment. As of March 11, 2022, the park maintenance division expects approximately six seasonal staff to return from last year, leaving twelve seasonal positions open. Staff will continue working with Human Resources to develop ideas for promoting the parks department and increasing seasonal applications.