

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 13, 2023
TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS
**FROM: LAURA DURHAM, DEPUTY DIRECTOR,
RECREATION SERVICES DIVISION**
SUBJECT: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION DIVISION UPDATE ITEM IV

Program Wrap-ups:

- The Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center ending the year with amazing accomplishments and JOY!!! Our NJL cheerleading team brought home two first place trophies!!! Our Youth Achieving Greatness and TR Achieving Greatness Rocked out at our “**Not-So-Silent Night Holiday Rock Out**” Concert. Each group performed a holiday song and dance performance. The NJL Staff also grace the stage with a Christmas Hip Hop performance.



- RPCA hosted the **Alexandria Holiday Invitational Cheerleading Competition** on Sunday, December 11 at 2 p.m. The competition featured Alexandria teams from Charles Houston, Mt. Vernon, Nannie J. Lee, Patrick Henry, William Ramsay Recreation Centers and visiting teams from Ft. Hunt and Black Diamondz. The event was well attended and hosted by celebrity radio personality EZ Street.



- The Sports Section partnered with Alexandria City High School Athletic Department to host a **clinic for youth basketball coaches** on Saturday, December 10 at Leonard “Chick” Armstrong Recreation Center. Coaches and players representing the Varsity Boys basketball team demonstrated drills and fundamentals youth coaches could utilize throughout the season with their teams.
- The **Annual Toy Distribution** was back in action again this year at Samuel Tucker Elementary School. On Saturday, December 17, Recreation Services through the Safe Place and Outreach Coordinator, partnered with Fire Fighters and Friends to host this essential community event. Along with ACPS, Inspire Lit, Omega Psi Nu Alexandria Chapter, Duke Street in Motion and other local business, non-profits and volunteers ushered families into Samuel Tucker, to receive toys and holiday gifts for City residents ages infant to 18 years old. Over 200 city residents attended the event and over 600 toys and 100 coats were distributed. Some of the older youth and teens received gift cards, and everyone received 2 – 3 books through Inspire Lit.



- The William Ramsay Recreation Center partnered with “The Heart of Asia” student group from ACHS and NoVa RAFT/Fresh Start Refugee to host **Yalda Night** on December 21st. This is a holiday celebrated in many countries including Afghanistan to celebrate the renewal and rebirth of the sun on the Winter Solstice. This student led event had presentations about the night, poems read by attendees, and a lot of traditional Afghan food. Fun was had by all.



- On December 10, Mt. Vernon Recreation Center held its **Holiday Celebration with Santa**. Participants had the opportunity to meet, have a meal, and take a photo with Santa. Participants also enjoyed creating holiday crafts, a sing-along.



- On December 16, Mt. Vernon Recreation Center held its annual **OSTP Holiday Program**. Over 120 participants performed a play based on holiday tradition, Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. Over 100 parents and community members attended the program.
- On December 12, Patrick Henry Recreation Center held its **Teen Pancakes & Hot Chocolate Day**. 12 participants learned how to make pancakes while enjoying hot chocolate.



- The ballet programs at Charles Houston and Patrick Henry Recreation Centers wrapped up their Fall session with the **Winter Dance Recital** held on Sunday December 18th. 70 dancers, ranging from ages 3-10, performed pieces they had been working on all session long under the instruction of Megan Lively and Elisa Creech.



- Charles Houston Recreation Center partnered with the Continental Society Inc. during the holiday season to provide a **Christmas wreath making activity** for our OSTP program. Each child was provided a wreath and an assortment of ornaments to decorate with.



- During the month of December, Leonard “Chick” Armstrong Recreation Center offered several **senior programs and activities**. Seniors enjoyed a trip to Bowl America, self-directed Walking Class, Coffee Social Hour, Zumba, Line Dancing, Crafts, Technology Help, and Senior Club meetings. A few Line Dance members continue to teach classes every Friday at St Martin's Senior Center in Alexandria. Our seniors also had the opportunity to attend three Holiday parties by SAC Annual Holiday Celebration, AKA Annual Holiday Party, and LARC Holiday Social.



- The **Shadow Boxercise Class** at Leonard “Chick” Armstrong Recreation Center met max enrollment this session and there is currently a 3-person waitlist. Participants learned basic self-defense and got in shape. Some of the adults registered were new to this beginner-level class and plan to register for the next session (winter). The class focused on muscle toning, weight loss support, and strengthening and conditioning their bodies.
- Leonard “Chick” Armstrong Recreation Center held its annual **Holiday Party** for the children in OSTP. Every child had the opportunity to enjoy themselves by participating in various activities ranging from gym activities, a sit-in magician show, arts & craft, and sing-along to the beat of holiday carols. The program finally ended with Santa making his grand entrance. Every child in the Out of School Time Program left with a holiday smile and a bag of goodies.



- On November 18, the Patrick Henry Recreation Center hosted its **Nerf the Turf program**. This program is for ages 7-12. The Nerf the Turf is more than a battle with foam darts, kids develop teamwork, problem-solving, and sportsmanship skills. Bring gear and equipment, and we will supply the ammo.



- On November 10, Patrick Henry Recreation Center held its **Teen Social Group**. The program was led by Michael Everett and Kesha Bridges. This is a social skills intervention for motivated teens in middle school and high school who are interested in socializing about teen programs, ways to impact safety around the community and implement teen events/activities through recreational facility. During our Social group, teenagers get the opportunity to also practice their social skills. The Teen Social Group takes place every 2nd Thursday of the month at Patrick Henry Recreation Center from 6:30-7:30pm



Program Updates:

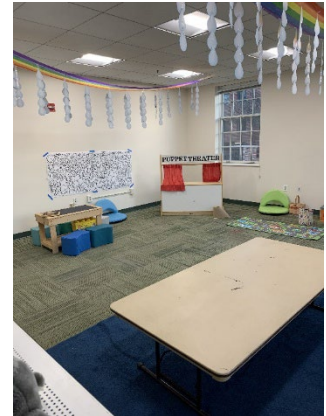
- **Youth basketball league** games started on Saturday, January 7 at various gymnasiums throughout the city. The 2023 league currently has 1,073 registered participants. Each team (113 teams) will play eight regular seasons and City championship games are scheduled for Saturday, March 11 at Alexandria City High School.
- Chiquapin Recreation Center & Aquatic Facility offered three **Winter break camps** with 45 participants ages ranging from 5-10.
- The **playgroups** at William Ramsay Recreation Center have started back up. Families can attend either a weekday or weekend playgroup. Playgroups are led by recreation staff, trained in the playgroup curriculum by the Center for Alexandria's Children. Playgroups are on Thursdays and Saturdays from 10:30am-12:00pm. Registration is required.

Upcoming Events:

- After two years, RPCA is happy to bring back the City Cup! The Alexandria City Employees Cup Series was developed to improve City employees' well-being by making healthy choices and living an active lifestyle while competing against each other in a friendly atmosphere. Each agency would be offered the opportunity to compete in two different coed leagues (basketball and softball) this season. The agency that has the highest total of points at the end of the season will be declared City Cup Champions and will be able to display the award for a period of one year. The basketball league will kick off on January 19 at Jefferson-Houston.

Special Features:

- On January 3, the Durant Center opened a **Creative Play Space** to the public. Utilizing an open room in the facility, the Creative Play Space is open Monday through Friday from 9:30am-12:30pm for ages 18 months to 5 years with their guardian. This space offers free admission and focuses on art and creative and engaging play.



Staff Updates:

- On December 3, Recreation Services in collaboration with ACPS provided Professional Development for LINK Club and OSTP afterschool Staff. The training highlighted Developmental Assets best practices and resources to assist staff with managing behaviors, building positive relationships and positive interactions. The 3-hour training was facilitated by presenters from the Search Institute and DCHS. Over 50 staff attended the training from LINK Club locations and RPCA OSTP afterschool locations.



- On January 6 & 7, OSTP staff participated in Winter Staff Training and Professional Development. Training was offered on both Friday and Saturday to provide staff the flexibility to attend on a day of their choosing. OSTP staff participated in STEM Challenges, Team Bonding activities and program planning brainstorm sessions. Staff also participated in “The Three Moves” (managing emotions and feelings) an extension of the Our Community Listens training. Recreation Services’, Senior Management team gave a presentation on the new FY23 – FY25 RPCA Strategic Plan. OSTP staff provided feedback on how the new plan aligns with the work they currently do and what they want to do in the future. Over 80 staff attended the OSTP Winter Staff training. Training evaluations are being reviewed to plan for the upcoming OSTP Summer Staff Training.



- Fee Classes and Camps/Durant is pleased to announce the hiring of **Tarryn Lee** (previously of the Jerome “Buddie” Ford Nature Center) in the position of our Program Coordinator. Tarryn brings with her not only her great knowledge of programming for various ages but also experience working with our department. We are excited to have Tarryn as part of our team!



- Charles Houston Recreation Center is pleased to announce the hiring of **Ayannah Arrington** as our new Recreation Coordinator. Ayannah brings with her more than 20 years of recreation experience and we are thrilled to have her join our team.



City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 13, 2023

TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

THROUGH: JACK BROWAND, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, PARK SERVICES

FROM: OSCAR MENDOZA, DIVISION CHIEF, PARK SERVICES
MAUREEN STURGILL, ACTING DIVISION CHIEF, PARK SERVICES

SUBJECT: PARK SERVICES - PARK MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT MONTHLY UPDATE

1. PARK AND FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

a. Park Maintenance

- Contractors have started with the lay of the new dog park.
- G-Max field testing at Witter and Brenman.

b. Park Facilities Maintenance

- We completed winterization on all irrigation systems, drinking fountains, and several public restrooms.
- We replaced a damaged water valve at Chinquapin Park.

2. URBAN FORESTRY & HORTICULTURE

a. Urban Forestry

- During the month of November, Urban Forestry staff coordinated the installation of both holiday trees as well as the repair and illumination of all holiday lights on street trees throughout Old Town Alexandria.
- In addition, Urban Forestry staff have been preparing for the tree planting season by finalizing planting plans and ensuring all residents requests are received, where the location is suitable for planting, are included. Currently, Urban Forestry is preparing for the planting of more than 1,100 trees between December 2022 & June 2023. Urban Forestry staff have also been inspecting existing tree wells and identifying locations for new wells to be installed as part of its ongoing tree well modification program.



Simpson dog park renovation.



G-Max field testing at Brenman.

b. Horticulture

- Community Gardens: All the gardeners at both Chinquapin Organic Gardens and Holmes Run Community Gardens have received their renewal forms and many will be returning for the 2023 season. Renewal forms and payments received have been processed for the 2023 season. Gardeners have until December 15 to make payments on Garden Plot rentals. Staff will assist with plot turnover and rototilling at Holmes Run Community Gardens in preparation for the new season and supplied stakes and boards for Chinquapin Gardens for the group to do some garden plot work. Staff attended November monthly meeting of the Chinquapin Community Garden group.
- Contracted landscape and mowing services: Mowing services ended in October except for the Waterfront Parks which ended in November. The contractor provided site leaf removal services throughout the month of November as well as some 311 service requests.

3. NATURAL LANDS MANAGEMENT

a. Invasive Plant Management and Ecological Restoration

- Staff removed Porcelain-berry and other non-native invasive plants from Dora Kelley Nature Park and Timberbranch Parkway.
- Staff supervised our contractor, Invasive Plant Control (IPC), in the large-scale removal of successional woody vegetation at the Fort Ward Park meadow.

b. Cooperative Initiatives

- City Natural Resource Manager met onsite at Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) with the Dean's representative, Marybeth Sanders-Wilson, to discuss best management practices, resource protection, and a nature trail on VTS grounds.
Staff assisted the Virginia Big Tree Program in remeasuring State and City of Alexandria notable and champion trees listed on the Virginia Big Tree Register

c. Environmental Review

- Staff provided natural resource inventories and assessments to Park Planning for the Kust Conservation Easement adjacent to Monticello Park.

d. Park Encroachment and Code Enforcement



G-Max field testing at Witter.



Valve replacement at Chinquapin.



Valve replacement at Chinquapin.



Valve replacement at Chinquapin.

- Staff investigated and responded to dumped yard waste issues at Timberbranch Parkway, Stevenson Park, and stream banks of Taylor Run

4. JEROME “BUDDIE” FORD NATURE CENTER

a. Programs/Updates:

- The Nature Center had 213 visitors in November and provided 30 impromptu programs. Throughout the month we conducted 21 interpretive programs for 249 patrons.

School Programs:

- Four 3rd grade classes from Douglas MacArthur Elementary visited the Nature Center to conclude their unit on animal adaptations. The classes met some of the animals from our collection and hiked through Dora Kelly Nature Park to learn about how native animals adapt to seasonal changes.

Outreach Programs:

- Ferdinand T. Day hosted two Family STEM Night events to encourage participation in STEM among their students. We participated with a native animal display and reached about ¼ of the entire school population with 133 students.
- We visited the senior center twice this month, providing residents the opportunity to meet our resident corn snake and our Uromastyx! We discussed Virginia wildlife we find in Alexandria and learned some cool facts about reptiles.

Onsite Programs:

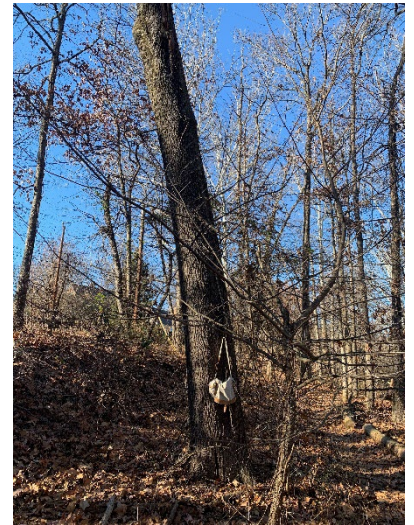
- During our day camp, Geology Rocks, we learned about the different way’s rocks are classified and got to handle real specimens. We also spent some time learning about volcanoes and were able to simulate our own volcanic eruptions!
- 4th grade Girl Scouts from Douglas MacArthur visited the nature center for an animal habitats program. They learned about habitats around the world and how humans impact them and can protect them. We also discussed native habitats and the girls earned their habitat badge.
- During this session of Little Adventurers, we dove into the world of birds and searched for them on our bird walk! We also learned about one of our native birds, the turkey, and created a leaf turkey collage.

b. Volunteers Hours:

- In November our garden and animal care volunteers contributed 110 hours.



*State Co-Champion Liquidambar
Styraciflua.*



*State Co-Champion Quercus
marilandica at Timberbranch
Parkway.*



*Our little adventures group making
turkeys with leaves.*

c. Noteworthy:

- The Nature Center ran a recruitment process for seasonal Environmental Educators in November. Two part-time seasonal employees will start in their new roles in December 2022.

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 19, 2023

TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

THROUGH: JACK BROWAND, DEPUTY DIRECTOR *JB*
PARK SERVICES

FROM: BETHANY ZNIDERSIC, DIVISION CHIEF *BZ*
PARK SERVICES - PARK PLANNING & CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

ITEM: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION DIVISION UPDATE
PARK SERVICES - PARK PLANNING & CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

Project Updates

- None this month

Capital Improvement Project Updates

- January Park Planning & Capital Development, Park Services (*Attached*)

Small Area Plan & ACPS Modernization Coordination

- Alexandria West
- Landmark Mall
- Eisenhower East
- North Potomac Yard
- Arlandria-Chirilagua
- Potomac River Generating Station
- High School Project Minnie Howard Campus
- Douglas MacArthur Elementary School
- Patrick Henry K-8 & Recreation Center Restart (FY 2024)

Sites Currently Closed or Partially Closed to Public Use for Capital Projects

Closed

- Holmes Run Trail (four locations)
- Four Mile Run Park Bridge

Partially Closed

- Charles Barrett Recreation Center Playground (equipment replacement)
- Fort Ward Park Picnic Shelter (ADA Access Path)
- Hooffs Run Park Playground (safety surface repairs at swings)
- Landover Park Playground (equipment replacement)
- Mason Avenue Mini-Park Playground

- Mulligan Park Playground

Park & Recreation Commission -Park Planning Report



January 19, 2023

Project	Project Description	Monthly Update	Status	Planning District	Target Completion Date	Assigned To	
1	Citywide Tree Planting	This project will provide for annual tree planting and care for trees on public land.	The tree planting program is underway and will continue through May 31. RPCA is partnering with TES on the planting of additional trees in the Old Town North SAP and other plantings around the City with additional funding provided by TES.	Implementation	Citywide	06/15/21	Jack Browand
2	NOVA Cameron Run Regional Park Sport Court	Purchase of a portable sport court to support programming during pool off season, includes storage container (FY21 carryover)	The court, fencing, goals, and barriers will be installed in early January. Staff anticipates the court opening will occur in mid-January.	Implementation	Citywide	09/30/22	Daniel Unkle
3	Windmill Hill Park Playground Design	Project consists of full replacement of existing playground. Designated as Windmill Hill Park Phase II	Staff continue to develop the task order scope of work for design services. Staff anticipates community engagement will commence in 2023.	Initiation	District 1	12/01/23	Judy Lo
4	Simpson Dog Park Renovation	This project will address erosion and drainage issues in the Simpson Park dog park per the 2014 Citywide Parks Improvements Plan.	Construction is underway. The contractor is currently working on rough grading in the park. The dog park is closed through the end	Implementation	District 2	05/01/23	Bethany Znidersic
5	Mount Jefferson Park Improvements	This project includes the City responsibilities per the Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) conditions.	The developer anticipates completing the underground stormwater connections and intersection improvements on East Raymond Avenue by the end of January, weather permitting. The as-built and bond release process will take several weeks. Re-opening of the park will be coordinated with the developer contingent on satisfaction of punchlist items.	Implementation	District 2	06/30/22	Judy Lo
6	MacArthur School Recreation Programming Space Construction	New recreation office and program space at Douglas MacArthur School	MacArthur construction continues to be on schedule with substantial completion scheduled in July 2023. RPCA staff have coordinated IT needs and selected office furniture.	Implementation	District 3	12/30/22	Jack Browand
7	Hensley Park Renovation	This project will renovate Hensley Park based on the Citywide Parks Improvement Plan concept (2014).	The plans were submitted for final signatures. A constructability review is in progress and the Invitation To Bid Documents are in	Planning	District 3	12/01/23	Bethany Znidersic
8	High School Project	This project is a complete rebuild of the Alexandria City High School Minnie Howard school and athletic complex. The project includes the addition of an aquatics center for high school sanctioned aquatics sports and separate training pool. Outdoor athletic amenities include lighted rectangular field, tennis courts and basketball court; walking loop; and stadium seating.		Implementation	District 3	09/01/24	Jack Browand
9	Fort Ward Playground Relocation	Relocate playground to an accessible location as recommended in the Fort Ward Management Plan	Staff continue to evaluate the two preferred sites for the playground relocation. A community meeting will be held in early 2023. More information is available on the project webpage: https://www.alexandriava.gov/parks/fort-ward-park-and-museum-area-management-plan	Design	District 3		Judy Lo