



Presented January 7, 2012

Town Council Report: December, 2012 Parks and Recreation Activity Highlights:

Zionsville Parks Golf Course (ZGC)

- While the Clerk-Treasurers Office prepares the final figures for the various departments as well as the Zionsville Parks Golf Course, we are able to estimate an approximate range where the ZGC figures look to be ending up and we so reported last month. As expressed then, those are only estimates which have now been able to undergo some refinements. We may have been too conservative in our estimate of the yearly gross operating profit. Our current estimations appear to be driving this number a bit higher to at least \$300,000, if not a few thousand over. If this still holds true when the final Clerk-Treasurers Report comes out, one could expect that even with the large capital cost of replacing the aged cart fleet; the amount the course will be in the red for 2012 should be in the rough range of \$5,000 and \$10,000. Keep in mind, the cart fleet is planned for a replacement only every 10-12 years and that this year's cart purchase utilized no tax dollars. Instead the carts were purchased with the funds purposefully saved (after yearly costs) from several years of the course's revenue. Had this capital purchase not have been planned for this year, we probably would have cleared around \$80,000 to \$85,000.

Park 5-Year Master Plan Process

- Currently some nearly 30 pages of a draft plan exist and are under review above the Park Staff level. The Park Board Advisory Committees are to meet in January to prepare potential action item details to "hang upon the skeleton framework of goals the Park Board has tentatively prepared. The Park Board will work with these in Feb and set a time tables to each. Draft submission to the DNR (which need not be complete in every particular) will be sent the middle of this month. Any comments they may have will be folded in to the Board level adjustments and combined with the mapping work (being prepared by the Town Engineers and others) for the final submission in mid-April.

Other Highlighted Matters

- Unlike last year, 2012's early return to wintery conditions, coinciding as it did with the school break; certainly has caused the sledding hill at Mulberry Fields to get a lot of use. In fact, within the first 24 hours after the Winter Storm Euclid's blizzard conditions, the entire northern 1/5th of the hills surface was worn down to the bare grass in most of its expanse. This is the steepest part of the hill and now the sheer numbers of users are shifting southward to gentler grades, wearing away the snow cover as they go. Certainly a very popular location, but apparently only as long as it snows heavily, often, and with temperatures far enough below freezing that the sun and friction causes minimal melting.
- And the snow also generates seasonal duties for the park maintenance staff. While many park departments across the state perform either no, or very minimal snow removal along trails and pathways, a few of our near neighbors do and many Zionsville residents expect at least some of the same level of service. We not only work on getting much of the snow off park parking areas and locations such as the Rail Trail, we also assist the street department with plowing as we can,

primarily on the on the roadside pathways. We have a multi-stage priority system for the various areas/pieces that activates when we have 3-4 inches of snow accumulation.

- Not only has the Urban Forestry Grant been moving forward by assisting the Street Department with the Street Tree Inventory; but the other, park-related, components of the grant are underway. The native tree reforestation component has installed 20, site-appropriate, trees in one of our more passive parks. Also the non-native vegetation control project along the south Rail-Trail has received quotes from three well-known and respected companies that perform Federal, State, and municipal projects of this sort. While any of the three firms should be able to adequately perform the work this winter, the low quote we've identified should save the Park Department about \$10,000 from the average of the three. Plus, of course, we will after the fact, receive some of the grant money back as a reimbursement to partially recoup some of the on the project funds.
- Back in Dec 2011, the Zionsville Park Board had determined to discontinue the practice of recycling Christmas trees at Starkey Park, starting in the 2012-2013 season. When started, Starkey was one of a few locations available. However as the years have gone by, several other tree recycling locations have come on-line. According to the Boone County Solid Waste Management District's information, Worman Enterprises and GreenCycle will take families' Christmas trees and recycle them for free. Worman's is very close to Starkey Park and depending on where a citizen would have been driving from to reach Starkey Park, either Worman's or GreenCycle may be closer. In addition, Ray's trash service has said they will pick up a curbside tree for all Zionsville families who are served by them. Boone County Resource Recovery will also take trees (for a \$2/tree charge on indoor drop-offs). The Park Board basically felt that since in this economy, this program's costs are mounting; and now that there are several private businesses using this as economic development opportunities... the Park Department should instead focus on their core mission of the provision of park and recreation sites and services. This was communicated last December and January with newspaper releases, electronic mentions, and a sign posted all season long at Starkey about the 2012 discontinuation. These information distribution methods will be utilized again this year as well. (**Note:** this last section was in last month's report but is reprinted here as the Council may be getting a question or two. Overall response expressed to the department has been accepting).