



Presented December 3, 2012

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

Zionsville Parks Golf Course (ZGC)

- The Zionsville Parks Golf course finished up its 2012 season on the Sunday after Thanksgiving (Nov. 25th). Our ZGC gross operating profit for November 2012 was ~ \$6062. This amount falls right in the expected area, as 2011's gross operating profit figures for this same month last year was ~\$6,323 and 2010's for the same period was at ~\$6,185. This decline is partially a reflection of shorter days and weather causing decreased play. Also contributing is the fact that by this time of year, a significant portion of our play consists of diehard golfers who play enough yearly golf to warrant purchasing a season pass; so, effectively already having paid a yearly fee to play sometime nearer the beginning of the year.
- While the Clerk Treasurer's Office will be preparing the final end of the year reports for all department's finances, and certainly we could have a bit of revenue yet to come in in the form of season passes for 2013; it appears like our total gross operating profits for 2012 are going to be close to the range of \$295,000 +/- . This is higher than any previous year under Town ownership and our dedicated staff out there deserves the bulk of the credit. For the three years of operation from 2009-2011, our gross annual operating profit has ranged between about ~\$235,000 (2011's weather impacted year) to 2009's ~\$273,318 (with 2010 falling in between at ~\$245,000).
- Of course the funds needed to properly run, maintain, and staff a golfing program and the course itself, can eat up in the neighborhood of \$200,000/year of this gross operating profit. And for 2012, the overall balance in the dedicated ZGC Fund (from which the course has always been self-supporting in its daily operation since the first year of Town Ownership Park Department management) will actually, for the first time, decrease somewhat. However, this is due to the unusual circumstance that in 2012 fell the planned major capital expense of replacing the course's aged cart fleet, inherited with the course purchase. This was a planned and budgeted-for major expense (totaling upwards of \$95,000 for 30 carts), which we plan not to need to repeat for 10-12 years. Without that, this year's numbers would have surely showed a significant addition to the fund as the course continues to save for the next needed renovation, that involving the aging irrigation system.

Park 5-Year Master Plan Process

- As of the Dec 3rd Town Council meeting, their delegated Park Board representatives should have finished the second of two planned retreats; moving forward with the State mandated process of charting the Department's course over the next 5-Years. The first of these two retreats was comprised of nearly 4 hrs of discussing the Park Board's and staff's previous research and review into all the gathered public input sources. The goal of this was to distill this huge mass of data and comments down into a few major categories. The second retreat's efforts revolve around then taking these areas of focus and developing key projects and processes towards achieving progress in those areas. The tasks will then be spread out over an achievable timeline.

Other Highlighted Matters

- As the Council knows (and supports, particularly regarding your direct funding for portions of the Starkey trail signage process), the Park Board has targeted Starkey Park (one of Zionsville's oldest and certainly largest parks) for a bit of "refreshing" over the last few years. Invasive, non-native plants have been removed across over 15 acres of the park and such efforts continue; the aforementioned new trail wayfinding/safety signage system was conceived, designed fabricated, and installed; redundant, trails have been closed allowing them to return to allow for a more cohesive trail system with appropriate safety signage; and other trails rerouted when absolutely needed; stair-treads have been reset in gravel and some replaced and their existing railing system reworked; 5 acres of new prairie/wildflower habitat have been introduced under the remnants of IPL's clearing work along their high tension power-lines (at virtually now cost to the taxpayer through a significant grant); etc.
- And by the time of the Town Council meeting, the next efforts in this continuing cause, the cooperative Park Department/Eagle Scout project to renovate the westernmost boardwalk on Trail SP1 at Starkey Park should be completed. During this year, we had actually already been researching an evaluating several different potential solutions and had settled on one approach when a Life Scout then approached us inquiring about potential projects we might have. Because of the unusual level of carpentry skills available in this particular volunteer group, Park Staff pitched the idea of renovating one or both of the boardwalks along that trail. They chose to assist with the easier of the two. We are utilizing a kit approach to make it easier for them and to ensure a more consistent construction build and were able to repurpose some recycled plastic lumber to use as the decking-tread at no additional cost to the taxpayers. This should reduce the level of long term maintenance needed (or at least extend over a longer life). This partnership on the renovation efforts should save the taxpayers between \$1500-\$2500 in installation costs. Plus our team is pursuing additional funding support as well. We hope to reproduce this on the larger, easternmost boardwalk on Trail-SP1 as well but that may be dependent on finding just the correct properly-skilled group of volunteers.
- 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 one would be driving from to reach Starkey Park, 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.