

TOWN OF RED HOOK RECREATION COMMISSION

7340 South Broadway, Red Hook, NY 12571

Phone: 845-758-4625 Fax: 845-758-5313

RECREATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Monday, 10 August 2020

Submitted by John D. Kuhn, Park and Programs Director

Recreation Park Maintenance

As explained in the July Director's Report, during this time of construction and COVID-19, the park staff has completed many major projects at both Rec Park East and Rec Park West in addition to the routine maintenance of the ball fields, the tennis courts, the pickleball courts, the skate park, and all equipment. This past month the following projects were completed:

Rec Park East

1. Five picnic tables were rebuilt with new pressure-treated tops, seats and all new bolts. The galvanized steel frames are 30+ years old, but they were still in good shape. The dearth of available pressure-treated lumber because mills were shut down delayed this work. Tom Peters monitored availability of PT 2x10's at Williams Lumber in the mornings until he was successful. Whatever became available would be gone by noon.
2. All 42 picnic tables at the Rec Park have been scraped, sanded and repainted with two coats of barn red acrylic latex. Removing all the staples and tacks from the underside of the tables from coverings was a tedious task.
3. The wooden guard rail by the basketball court was scraped and covered with solid redwood stain.
4. All water meters and shutoff locations were located and marked with blue paint. The construction at the park resulted in several of these being covered with dirt – sometimes as much as half a foot.
5. Both fire hydrants in the park were cleaned and painted with Safety Red as required.
6. Repairs to the stone dust track are on-going.
7. The South Parking Lot was cleaned and striped by park staff. Because the parking lot was used as the staging area for the Challenger Field, the handicapped parking space markings, the general parking spaces, the speed bumps, and the no parking area markings were obliterated. Instead of rolling on the paint as was done last time, spray paint and a wheeled marking machine was used. This had to be done before the park reopens.
8. The first coat of green and blue filler has been applied to the pickleball court cracks and around the newly installed ground sleeves for the net center straps. The area in most need of repair is the patch done on the first court where it collapsed after Hurricane Irene. This area has been a persistent problem ever since, and I suspect that in the coming years more repairs will be needed.
9. Every day for the past month park staff has watered the seeded areas surrounding the Challenger Field. Two sprinklers are set up and moved throughout the day to the needed areas. The grass has grown in remarkably well and the inclines are now able to withstand the erosion from the recent heavy downpours.
10. The dry conditions have caused weeds to flourish because the grass that usually chokes them out has been comprised. We have made a concerted effort to physically dig out the weeds on the fields simply because there is no other easy solution. Pesticides are not used at the park.
11. The wooden sections of the bike rack by the basketball court were replaced with pressure-treated 8x8's. The steel sections were sanded and repainted. This was

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- a top-of-the-line bicycler rack forty years ago. To replace it with a comparable rack would be ridiculously expensive. The rack is now located by the playground by the Pavilion.
12. Howie Callies has serviced all the chainsaws and trimmers replacing filters and replacing parts as required. This prolongs the life of the saws that are used on a regular basis.
 13. The dead and damaged limbs on the maple trees by the Snack Bar were removed according to the guidelines outlined by the tree committee. Limbs were cut off to the growth plates so that the tree will not suffer further damage.
 14. Park Staff has waged the yearly battle of bees in the playground. Sizable nests built under the playground equipment were removed. No ground hornet nests were found in the playground this year after the problems of last year.
 15. Repairs to the tennis court nets and a resetting of proper net heights are done regularly. The gouge in the service area of the northwest court was repaired with blue filler.
 16. The pressure treated baseboards on both sides of the fence separating the pickleball courts from the skate park were painted black to match the fence. We discovered that skate boards were hitting the fence bending the chain link. The addition of the boards appears to have solved this problem.
 17. Howie Callies routinely inspects every piece of equipment to insure that they are all properly serviced, greased, adjusted, etc. He recently located and repaired a diesel fuel leak on the JD670 after noticing a spot on the garage floor. It is this attention to detail that prevents costly repairs. Howie's knowledge and attention to detail concerning equipment maintenance makes him a most valuable member of the park staff. He catches and repairs problems before they become major issues.
 18. Park Staff installed the playground benches on Friday, 7 August. I met with Shana Weiler and Jen Cavanaugh to determine the locations of the benches earlier in the week. Fastracs provided an excavator with an auger to dig the 36" holes, the benches were brought down from the storage barn along with 24 80 lb. bags of concrete. The benches were set at a height of 18" as recommended and are level in all directions. This project was a major concern, and I am most relieved that it is now done.
 19. We bolted new PT 4x4's to the North Rules Sign (the original posts were cut off during the fence installation because it was in the way) and reinstalled at an angle by the northwest corner of the Pavilion. The thinking here is that the sign should not block the sight lines into the playground. The three sign posts are set in three bags of concrete because the wind from the north is often quite strong and buffets the large sign.
 20. The Girl Scout Library Box was relocated to the west side of the north entrance.
 21. The Mutt Mitt Dispenser was relocated next to the Library Box.
 22. A post to hold the ordered Sanitizer Station was placed to the left of the entrance to the playground.
 23. During this time when the ball fields are not in use, they are still mowed and groomed on schedule. If the fields are not groomed every week, weeds and grass grows into the beam clay infields. The roots of the weeds are surprisingly long. Grooming the infields and base paths regularly prevents them from growing in as many fields in our area have done during this time. Dry conditions favor weeds with deeper and more extensive root systems that can outcompete the grass. It is a constant battle to keep them out of the infields.

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24. The walking track along the western border has been repaired with stone dust where it was damaged by construction equipment. Other sections of the walking track have also been repaired as needed. This is an ongoing process.
25. The playground has been kept free of limbs and debris despite it being closed.
26. The wetlands walk has been maintained with limbs trimmed, the path mowed, and the north entrance cleared of debris. Central Hudson did come to remove the dead tree threatening the north entrance. They piled the tree wood on the edge of the town property and on the Baright property. As time permits in the fall, this unsightly pile will be removed.

Rec Park West

1. Park Staff is now mowing the areas around the ballfield on Rec Park West. The areas require a method for mowing the banks safely. If all goes according to plan, we hope to use the JD977 and JD777 in addition to the JD1445 in many of the areas.
2. The problems with the drive shaft on our bush hog appear to be solved. Howie Callies had the connector on the shaft replaced thinking that it did not provide enough pressure on the power take-off shaft to stay connected. His diagnosis was apparently correct because the shaft has not come off since the repair.
3. The Aspinwall Access to the Rec Park West is now mostly grass that can be mowed. The walkway has been improved and tied in to the new Winnakee Land Trust property. People will be able to walk into the park from Aspinwall Road and connect directly to the new trails planned by Winnakee.
4. The six bluebird boxes housed at least one pair of bluebirds. The other boxes were taken over by other birds. All have been cleaned and ready for new occupants.
5. Park Staff has experimented with different mowers to see what will work best on the slopes around the new ball field. The areas directly around the field can be done with Zero Turn mowers if done slowly and carefully. Other areas can be done with the JD1445 Front Mower. We may have to bring up the JD455 from St. Margaret's Home to mow the steepest slopes.
6. The stone dust trail from the parking area to the Winnakee property has stood up well in the recent rains. Periodic grooming and repairs will certainly be necessary in the future, but it should not require any more maintenance than the walking track in Rec Park East.
7. Tom Peters has kept the Mountain View Trail mowed and maintained since spring. Many hikers and dog walkers use this trail every day. Because Fastracs connected the Aspinwall Access to the trail head along the western border of Rec Park West, people can now complete the loop without having to go around the wetlands. This is a major improvement. Very large drainage pipes were installed to make this possible, and during the recent rains they worked perfectly.

Tennis Courts

When the Recreation Park officially reopens, the South Parking Lot gates will be opened and the tennis court lights turned on and regulated by the timer to shut off at 10:00 p.m. The tennis courts see increased use in the fall evenings as temperatures are more comfortable.

Parking by the South Entrance Gate

People insist on parking on the grass area east of the south gate. This has turned the area into a muddy mess. This past week we repaired the area with topsoil and seeded it. To prevent further parking, we placed the three telephone poles alongside the roadway. Once the grass grows in, these will be removed.

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Dead and Dangerous Trees

Two cherry trees, a locust tree, and an elm tree grew in between the pines along the south side of the park. These trees are now huge and very dead. The largest cherry tree is hollow and could fall across the entry road. I contacted Craig Kurkela who has the tree contract for the town to recommend a course of action. He is only permitted to do emergency work during the pandemic, so he may only be able to remove the trees that pose an imminent threat. When he is able to work, his crew will fell the trees, chip the brush and leave the wood for Park Staff to process as in the past.

These trees have not yet been removed. I left a message with Craig Kurkela to get an idea when the trees can be done. Now that the pool is open the removal of these trees is a more complicated task.

Park Staff/Park Police

I have instructed the park staff to avoid confrontations with those who enter the park despite the plethora of signage indicating that the park is closed. Beyond stating that park is closed, no other action is taken by park staff. Getting into arguments with community members about park use is not advisable and should be left to police agencies trained to do it.

Dugouts for Rec Park West and Rec Park East

Doug Strawinski has masonry price quotes from area masonry contractors to do the block work for the Rec Park East dugouts. The Rec Park West dugouts will be constructed in 2021.

Soil Piles in Rec Park West

The Highway Department loaded and delivered 100 yards of topsoil from the pile in Rec Park West to St. Margaret's Home. Over 300 yards of quality topsoil remain that could be used at the Red Church Cemetery to fill in the hundreds of sunken graves. The Highway Department will most likely be unable to load and deliver the topsoil, so I am getting quotes from local contractors.

Soil Pile in Rec Park East

The huge pile of fill in the bus parking lot is somewhat overwhelming. This soil should be moved to the south part of Rec Park West. Having some topsoil on site for the constant repairs needed on ball fields and other parts of the park would be a big help. Not having to buy it would be a major savings.

I have solicited local contractors for a price to move the fill and to construct a berm along the east side of the bus parking area. I am waiting to receive quotes.

Storage of Synthetic Field Groomer

We do not have room in the maintenance building or the storage barn to put the groomer. The manufacturer recommends interior storage of the groomer.

Simply throwing a tarp over it when not in use is probably a bad idea since it would be vulnerable to vandalism.

I recommend the purchase or construction of a shed with a 9' door to be located as close to the sliding gate on the new field. The groomer cannot be dragged to the field from any distance without risking damaging it. This is pressing issue since the groomer is now on site.

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Bay Horse Barns and Gazebos is providing some options and prices for a shed big enough to accommodate the 8'x 8' groomer. This is a serious piece of equipment that must be maintained and stored responsibly.

Soft Ice Cream Machine in the Snack Bar

This is a water cooled machine that requires water running through it whenever the compressor is operating. The Dutchess County Board of Health is concerned that the amount of water put into our septic system at the park would cause it to fail. Determining how much water would be needed for the ice cream machine is not clear. Until the B of H is satisfied that our septic system would not be compromised, they will not allow the ice cream machine to be hooked up. At this time I do not see a viable way to hook up the machine.

Basketball Court Electrical Panel

I will get an estimate to replace the electrical panel on the west side of the basketball court. The current panel is over 40 years old and cannot be kept free of bees. Despite two padlocks the front cover can be displaced by those who want to get at the timers when the lights go out at 10:00 p.m. This has happened several times. The cost would be covered with the existing 2020 park budget. I do not believe it will be overly costly, and since we have a new court, new fencing and new LED lights, it makes sense to complete the whole upgrade now rather than later. The power to the Maintenance Building comes from the panel by the basketball court.

Given the budget concerns caused by the pandemic, this electrical panel replacement can certainly wait for better times.

Library Grant for Internet Access at the Recreation Park East

The Red Hook Library has applied for a grant to provide internet access at key locations within the town. One of these locations could be the Rec Park East. We have met with the library folks to discuss how this might be accomplished. A meeting with Spectrum will be held this coming Wednesday to define the parameters and costs for a one Gig installation at the Snack Bar. The Recreation Commission may be asked to pay for the installation of a cable or to dig the trench for the cable.

The Red Hook Rotary is involved in

Wi-Fi for Security Cameras

Denis Collet has been working with Frontier and Spectrum to find the best way to provide the necessary equipment to support security cameras at the Recreation Park. The infrastructure at the park in the 21st. century needs to have enough security to prevent vandalism.

The possibility of cooperation with the Red Hook Library for internet access at the Snack Bar could result in our ability to use that system for a security system. Public Internet access involves some complicated questions about band width, blocking of certain websites, etc. that will all have to be discussed and determined.

LED Lights in the South Parking Lot

When the current lights fail again, I want to get a price for LED replacements. Repairs require a bucket truck that is costly. At least once a year we have to have a repair done on the parking lot lights. LED lights would last 20 years.

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Again, this is an improvement that can wait since the current lights are working.

Ball Fields

Even though the ball fields are not being used, they are mowed and maintained to keep them in good condition. Not grooming the infields allows grass and weeds to establish deep roots in the Beam Clay that is difficult to remove.

Pavilion Ceiling

The plywood pavilion ceiling continues to delaminate. Large strips of plywood layers come down periodically. Since the park is closed and the pavilion not used every day, this might be a good time to address the problem.

Snack Bar Restrooms

When the electrical service in the Snack Bar Storage Room was replaced, the breaker for the hot water heater was turned on. Since the hot water heater was drained for the winter, I am sure that the elements have been burned out. They will have to be replaced before the Snack Bar can reopen. Also, the new automatic faucets planned for the restrooms have mixers for hot and cold water. I will check with the plumber from Ashley Mechanical when the restroom work resumes. At present the rough-in plumbing is complete with the tile work, fixtures, stall partitions, and outside doors yet to be done.

The date for completion of the restrooms is set for 21 August.

Red Hook Library Story Walk

I met with Amy Smith, Head of Programs & Youth Services for the Red Hook Library, to determine the best location to site a story walk at Rec Park East.

The paths along the Saw Kill are awkward, but the Wetlands Walk is the perfect location for such a project. The library has the laminated boards and posts ready to go whenever the park officially opens.

This story walk will be a nice addition to the park. Please see the attached information sheet about story walks.

Playground Disinfection

Battery powered anti-virus foggers are used to disinfect playgrounds in some places. The cost of the equipment is around \$400.00. The cost of the disinfectant and exactly what it contains will require some research.

Garage

Bay Horse Gazebos & Barns provided a quote for 12x24' garage with no windows, two overhead doors and one solid side entry door. The price quote is attached to this report. This would be used to store the Challenger Field Groomer, the sand infill, the plastic infill, and other field related materials/equipment.

Gate Locks

When the park reopens, new locks for the sliding gates will be needed. These gates require long extensions on the padlocks. Extra keys will be made for the RHCSO, Little League, Kate Cavotti, Flag Football and others as required. It is best not to have many gate keys floating around.

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Basketball Court

The basketball court is finished. All that remains is to install the pole padding and put up the nets on the four baskets. This will be done on the day before the park officially reopens. Will the basketball court have special restrictions because of COVID-19? We will have to know this before opening it for use.

Two local guys climbed the new 10' fence, climbed the basketball pole to install a net, and were playing on the court. They left without issue when I told them it was closed to play.

The black marks from bicycle tires put on the court before the fencing was installed were successfully removed/covered by Copeland Crafco Coating when they lined the court.

Baseball Infield Rebuild

This past Saturday, 8 August, we began the rebuild of the baseball infield. This involves setting the proper elevations with a laser and filling in the low areas (some as much as three inches) and removing the built up area around the pitcher's mound.

We have the high quality topsoil removed from the Middle Field to use for this project. I see it as a unique opportunity to do a badly needed repair to the infield without having to purchase expensive topsoil.

It will most likely take all of August to complete the dirt work necessary to establish the proper elevations. The borrowed laser is only available on weekends.

Grass seed, starter fertilizer and tacky straw will be put down in September when it is the best time to grow new grass.

A new home plate and new pitcher's plate will be installed.

The field will be ready for play in the spring of 2021.

The beam clay areas of the ball field will continue to be groomed and maintained while the grass infield is under construction.

Dead Tree by Challenger Field

A 90' dead tree is located on the east side of the Challenger Field. If it falls, it will take out the new fence and the new mesh screening. I believe that this tree should be removed before it falls. The second part of this tree would most likely fall toward the stream, but any tree that can fall anywhere in a park is dangerous. The area around the Saw Kill contains several ash and elm trees in various states of decline that will require attention in the near future.

Parties at Recreation Park East

In the early morning hours over the past month, persons unknown had beer parties at the Rec Park. They left over 40 beer cans on the Challenger Field and two deposits of vomit on the turf field. Fortunately no damage has been done to the park other than inconvenience.