

Parks and Recreation Department

Terry Zeller, Superintendent

Two major capital improvements, plus groundbreaking on a third, highlighted 2015 as a year of major change with the results being highly elevated public facilities for all our residents. Central Park's \$5 million renovation was re-dedicated to the City on July 3rd with over a thousand in attendance. Battell Park's street frontage was redesigned and its Rock Garden got a much needed restoration. The Battell Community Center was closed for a major renovation to both its interior and a new entrance to the North.

Amidst this multitude of changes, the Parks and Recreation Department continues to offer a wide range of programs, facilities, and special events to our residents, with over 318 acres of green space for the community to enjoy. We pride ourselves on the level of customer service we



Central Park Ribbon Cutting

provide to each and every patron whether from a call, visit or participation in a program.

The Administration Office continued to offer high levels of services, increasing the overall rental receipts for the year through simplified fees and a more streamlined process. Through better communication and budget analysis, the Administration was able to remain cost efficient even in the midst of large increases in insurance and utility costs, and ended the year within its operational budget through thoughtful fund transfers. This has been and

will continue to be the main focus of the Park Administration; to do more with what we have and be prudent with a shrinking budget and an uncertain financial future.

Despite the temporary closure of the Battell Community Center, park programs continued mostly uninterrupted due to hard work on the part of our administration staff in finding alternate locations for classes and events. We are looking forward to the re-opening of the Battell Center in May of 2016, and expect a series of new and improved program offerings to go with our greatly improved building.

Recreation and Special Events Division

Due to the Division having two management staffs, many programs and events were more coordinated and better attended this year. Youth Tackle Football grew once again, Senior Softball remained strong, and our Summer Day Camp was filled to capacity. We had a return of our Park Outreach Camps at seven local parks, and are looking to continue to expand this historic program. Our Festivals continued to be amazingly popular in 2015, with total of 16 special events hosted or directly put on by our department. Our Summer Concert Series has continued to be well-attended and a welcome addition to the list of great things to do in Mishawaka.

Athletics

The Mishawaka Football League, funded and coordinated by the Mishawaka Parks Department, teaches beginning players the basic fundamentals of football as well as the importance of sportsmanship and teamwork. The league is open to children in grades 3 through 6. New for the 2015 season, registration was opened to all surrounding communities. 36 boys and girls ages 6 through 15 participated in the NFL Punt, Pass and Kick competition on September 5th at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. January 2015 featured a youth baseball winter workout camp. Our Challenger British Soccer Camp, and our always well-attended Senior Softball League continued in 2015.

Recreation

The George Wilson tubing hill may be the most appreciated winter activity. Tubing is a great winter activity at a low cost for civic groups, school field trips, and church groups. Warm temperatures, rain and a lack of snow during the season cut down on the number of days the park was open for tubing during 2015. George Wilson Park also hosts an 18-hole disc golf course.

Disc Golf continues to grow...with 5 tournaments held in the park in 2015.

The 2015 season started early with warm April weather welcoming many local disc golfers to get out and throw. Disc golf continues to grow with new local clubs and groups looking to promote the sport. Five tournaments were held in the park in 2015.

Special Events

With everything from our Daddy-Daughter Dance, to the Summer Concert Series in two parks, to our annual Summerfest, events were strong and improved over last year. There is always something for everyone with Movie Nights in the Parks, our Harvest Dance, Fall Fest and Winter Fest. This year was our inaugural Mishawaka Heritage Fest in our newest space, Central Park. With great weather, food and entertainment, it was a big success and will be back in 2016.

Aquatics/Ice Rink Division

2015 saw our numbers hold steady for open swim, teams, and lap swim. Learn To Swim continued its growth and additional instructors were brought in to handle the increase. We had our third annual swim invitational at Merrifield Pool, hosting eight teams from around the Midwest with over 300 in attendance. The Ice Rink was down for two weeks but was able to host Practice on the Pond and our first New Year's Eve Party. Fifteen youth skate aids were purchased and are in constant demand; new skates were purchased as well. Revenues rose slightly from previous years, and service to the community increased.



Merrifield Pool

Battell Center

The Battell Center was closed for the fall, and most of our classes and programs were moved to other venues, both public and private. We are looking forward to a much improved facility in the late spring of 2016. With a complete remodel including HVAC, windows, gymnasium, fitness room and auditorium improvements, the building will open ready for another century of service to the residents of Mishawaka.



Battell Center

Golf Course Operations and Maintenance

We were voted #2 favorite Golf Course by the South Bend Tribune readers, and we generated over 24,000 rounds in 2015 matching our 2014 total despite bad summer weather. Our Pro continued to expand youth programs, as well as lessons and classes while keeping our revenue consistent year over year. We rolled out an online tee time website, and continued to offer our golfers value. Strong use has shown the course is a vital part of Mishawaka's recreational lifestyle, generating over \$442,000 in 2015. Our maintenance continues to be second to none in the community, and despite the removal many dead ash trees, our course quality was not compromised.



Eberhardt GC

Landscape Division

Our division has a new Manager, and we are focusing efforts on expanding the operations to provide more beautiful parks for our residents. Many areas of the parks were improved with perennials and shrubs, and hundreds of tulip bulbs were planted throughout the parks. New classes on horticulture and the beginnings of a community garden are on the horizon for the Landscape Division in the upcoming year. Even though our crews worked for over a month helping to move out of the Battell Center, they stayed ahead of schedule for winter closeout due to dedicated staff.

Capital Improvement Projects

Central Park was completed in July, re-opening with 5 shelters, a new restroom, an interactive fountain and the largest playground of its type in the Midwest. Battell Park also was renovated along Mishawaka Avenue and got a much needed restoration of its WPA rock garden. The Battell Center will expand its ability to host performances, civic groups, recreation programs and art groups starting around the middle of 2016.

Park Board

The City's Park and Recreation Board continued its dedication and devotion to the City patrons as well as our agency. The Board's passion and drive to meet the needs and desires of the community is proven through the continued growth of recreational programs offered each year. Through their guidance, recreation and special events will continue to evolve for people of all ages now and well into the future. Members of the Mishawaka Park Board for 2015 were:

Reg Wagle	President
John Coppens, Jr.	Vice President
Carolyn Teeter	Secretary
Ellen West	Member
Tony Violi	Member
Michael Faulkner	Member