

## Parks and Recreation Division Report

March 2024

### PROGRAMMING

#### **Youth and Family Programs**

In February, Homeschool Gym saw all sessions full to capacity at the Washington Center Gym. Parks and Recreation also hosted Glow-in-the-Dark Pickleball on Thursday, February 15. This program was a hit and will definitely be offered again in the future!

Youth Archery Club had 12 youth participate in four consecutive weeks of archery, building skills and having fun together!



#### **Full Moon Hike**

On Saturday, February 24, 17 people from Duluth set out on an hour-long hike along Waabizheshikana. It was a beautiful night that everyone enjoyed, especially seeing the full moon rising over the St. Louis River from the fishing dock near Indian Point Campground. All the participants had a great time and are interested in coming out for another hike with Parks and Recreation.

#### **Science Hike with Duluth Foot Trails Alliance**

On Thursday, February 22, seven participants and three hike leaders headed out on a hike from Fairmont Park. The goal of this hike was to discuss and observe winter ecology signs in the Kingsbury Creek corridor. While winter was nowhere to be found, we spotted many different tracks in the mud, saw an almost-full moon rising over the big lake and learned of some new trails that people can enjoy during the “mud” season when many of the natural surface trails are closed. This series has been a great partnership with Duluth Foot Trails Alliance, providing education along with a chance to get outside! Two of the hikers on this particular evening were brand new to town, and enjoyed learning from locals about our great city!

#### **55+ Day Trip – Chanhassen Dinner Theater**

On February 21, 39 people attended the day trip to the Chanhassen Dinner Theater to see “Jersey Boys”. These 55+ day trips are very popular, and many are looking forward to upcoming day trips this spring and summer.

## Lunch, Learn, and Share

Lunch, Learn, and Share is a monthly program that Parks and Recreation hosts for folks ages 55+ in partnership with Duluth Aging Support. It is an educational program, with a new topic every month. This free program offers a lunch to participants and caregivers and is held at Harrison Community Center. February's event featured local historical author Bill Durbin. March's topic will be "Grow Where You Are", with Eric Mistry from Superior Seed Company.



## Develop Skills to Skate

This was a unique winter season in Duluth. Parks and Recreation programmed to offer Develop Skills to Skate, a class in partnership with Duluth Figure Skating Club, at the Bayfront ice rink over six Mondays during the months of January and February. Participation was great, as 23 kids ages 5-14 signed up. Unfortunately, due to weather and ice conditions, we were only able to have class on two of those Mondays. Despite this, Develop Skills to Skate continues to be a very well-attended and beneficial program, and we look forward to offering it again next winter.

## OPERATIONS

PERMIT TYPE	Jan	Feb
Park & Building Rentals	65	65
Commercial Operator Permits	1	1
Busker Permits	0	0
Alcohol Consumption Permits	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>71</b>

## Community Center Updates

Over the last few months, there have been updates to a few Community Centers. Evergreen and Morgan Park Community Centers had an AV system installed which will be used by citizen rentals, City staff for community meetings, and other recreation programming. Morgan Park, Evergreen, and Portman Community Centers have had tables and chairs replaced. Lafayette Community Center kitchen was updated with painting, a new stove, new counters, and an epoxy floor.



## **Brighton Beach**

Tree removals within Kitchi Gammi Park (Brighton Beach) will begin in early March. The removal of trees within Brighton Beach is necessary for the construction of the road through Brighton Beach later this year. Removing the trees in the winter months, rather than completing removals in the spring, will reduce the potential disruption to birds and bats by avoiding nesting and migrating times. Please use caution when using the park and the trail during the tree removal period. There will be tree removal very close to the trail in some locations to construct connections from parking areas to the trail and rest of the park.

In addition to removal of trees within the road construction limits, there will be removal of invasive tree species within the park. Scotch pine, also known as Scots pine, is not native to Duluth and it outcompetes beneficial native species. Removal of these invasive trees will help to protect the native species planted during the park improvement project, and the existing native plants within the park.

## **Duluth Golf – Spring Meeting Date**

The Spring Meeting for Duluth Golf will be held on Wednesday, April 24 at 5 pm at Enger Park Clubhouse. The agenda is in development and will include updates on Enger operations in 2024 concurrent with ongoing irrigation system installation.

## **Lester Park Recreation Working Group**

On Friday, March 1, Mayor Reinert announced the formation of the Lester Park Recreation Working Group. The Lester Park Recreation Working Group is a group of community members who is forming at the request of Mayor Reinert to evaluate and inform the administration on year-round recreation opportunities in Lester Park. The Lester Park Recreation Working Group's charge is threefold:

- to discuss and evaluate opportunities for recreation of all kinds for all seasons
- to evaluate nonprofit and alternative management models, similar to those used at Chester Bowl, Hartley Nature Center, and Lake Superior Zoo
- to find a path to some operational golf at Lester Park for the summer of 2024.

Residents can self-nominate to participate in the working group by filling out the self-nomination form available at: <https://duluthmn.gov/mayor/lester-park-recreation-working-group/>.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **Hartley Pond & Tischer Creek Feasibility Study**

The Feasibility Study conducted by the MN Department of Natural Resources with collaboration from the City of Duluth has been completed. A summary of the assessed alternatives is provided on the project webpage, and is available here: <https://duluthmn.gov/media/ksshj5ew/fs-draft-meeting-030124.pdf>

There will be presentations provided at the May and June meetings for both the Natural Resources Commission (May 1 and June 5) and Parks and Recreation Commission (May 8 and June 12). The presentations will discuss the results of the Feasibility Study and identify next steps.