



# STATE *of the* DISTRICT

OCTOBER 29, 2020

The Glen Ellyn Park District, like almost everyone, continues to adjust and adapt to the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic. The Park District recognizes our responsibility to continue to provide vital services for the community including fitness, athletic, and recreational outlets. The District has done so in a safe, compliant, and responsible manner. As a public agency, one of the Park District's priorities is to be transparent and forthcoming. As such, following is an update on the current state of the Glen Ellyn Park District.

## SERVING OUR COMMUNITY:

Over the past several months, the Park District has provided recreational services and opportunities within the State of Illinois guidelines. In Phases I and II, the parks, trails, open space, community gardens, and dog park were heavily used. As allowed, other amenities such as Ackerman Sports & Fitness Center, miniature golf, the splash park, tennis courts, athletic fields, and playgrounds opened. Programming including camps, classes, group fitness, and athletics started back up. Today, almost all programs and facilities are operating while following recommendations from public health agencies and with some limitations. Interest and participation are increasing, and community members are very appreciative.

Early on, the Park District recognized the importance of supporting others in need during these unprecedented times. We have partnered with Glen Ellyn Food Pantry to stage several drive-thru food drives which collected over 1,200 bags of groceries, collaborated with Versiti – Blood Center of Illinois to provide blood drives servicing over 300 blood donors, and collected much needed

products for DuPagePads. The District has also loaned picnic tables to several local restaurants for outdoor seating and provided green space for private fitness businesses to enable those entities to conduct classes outdoors. Conscious of the loss of summer job opportunities for high school and college students due to the closing of Sunset Pool and reduction of camps/programs, the District created a Summer Service Corps. Several local young adults, initially employed at the pool, worked on a crew that performed duties including playground improvements, trails repairs, ball field restoration, and trash pickup. Additionally, a remote learning program, Learn & Play, was offered to serve those students unable to be home and in need of monitored location.

## FINANCIAL UPDATE:

The Glen Ellyn Park District represents approximately 4% of the total tax levy. The operating budget is approximately \$12 million dollars of which ~45% is funded by property tax revenue. The remaining ~55% is generated from program user fees, grants, fundraising, and rentals. Unlike many businesses, governmental agencies and non-profits, the Park District is not eligible for stimulus funds or the Cares Act.

Since the outset of the pandemic in May, the Park District has refunded or credited nearly \$1.4 million due to cancellations and suspensions. While the state has transitioned into Phase IV of the



Restore Illinois Plan, capacity restrictions and social distancing requirements continue to impact the District's ability to provide its normal programming, diminishing its ability to generate revenue comparable to past years. To offset the financial impact of the pandemic, the District reduced full-time staff by 16% to 27 employees, furloughed over 100 part-time staff in the spring and is bringing those employees back as programming and operations expand, and deferred or canceled \$1+ million in capital improvement projects.

While a challenging period for all, the Park District remains financially stable which can largely be attributed to long-term planning, financial discipline, and best practices by the current and previous Boards of Commissioners along with the Park District's Citizens' Finance Committee. Most importantly, the District continues to provide recreation programming and activities while maintaining and improving its many assets.

### **ACKERMAN PARK IMPROVEMENTS:**

Phase IV concluded in August and included installation of new backstops, field fencing, seat walls, planters, tables, player benches, and permeable pavers in the hub plaza. Improvements were also made to grading and drainage, the infield mix to make the fields more playable, and the concession building was renovated. Earlier improvements included an irrigation system, over 1 mile of walking/running trails, a synthetic turf field, bioswales, and outdoor fitness area. The efforts to improve the park were started in 2014 when a master plan of the property was developed and approved. Over the past six years, most of the recommendations have since been implemented, all within the yearly operational budget of the District.

### **MARYKNOLL PARK IMPROVEMENTS:**

The District was awarded a grant through the ComEd Green Region Program to assist with a natural area improvement project at Maryknoll Park. A garden at the entry has been enhanced and expanded with pollinator container plants and select areas of turf in the park will be converted to a pollinator prairie.

### **DEMONSTRATION GARDENS:**

DuPage Foundation's Glen Ellyn Fund awarded its first round of funding to a new "Sustainable Garden Initiative." The project, proposed by the

Village of Glen Ellyn Environmental Commission, created two permanent demonstration gardens to inspire and inform visitors to Lake Ellyn and Village Green Parks, and builds upon Glen Ellyn's annual "Sustainable Yard Tour."

### **LAKE ELLYN SELF-GUIDED TREE TOUR:**

Interactive tree tags were installed on legacy trees throughout the park, allowing visitors to learn detailed information about each tree. The Lake Ellyn Self-Guided Tree Tour was generously funded thanks to an anonymous donation.

### **OTHER DISTRICT IMPROVEMENTS:**

While deferring/cancelling some capital projects, the District did also move forward with other planned projects. These included:

- Replacement of the original indoor turf material at Ackerman SFC which was at the end of its useful life. The installation was completed while the facility was closed due to the pandemic.
- Renovation of the parking lot at Maryknoll Park. The District received very competitive pricing, incurring a savings of nearly \$50,000. This project was advanced to earlier in the season while many of the Maryknoll Park facilities were closed.
- Installation of a 35' high flagpole near the entrance of Ackerman SFC. This was donated and installed by Adam Bodzioch as part of his Eagle Scout project.
- Adding additional floating restorers (islands) to Lake Ellyn. These serve to filter the lake water while also providing increased habitat for birds above and fish below.

### **SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM:**

Many District families experiencing financial hardship have taken advantage of the scholarship program in 2020. Due to the pandemic, the District has made the difficult decision to postpone Fall Fete, our largest scholarship program fundraiser. We look forward to continuing this program and hope you will consider donating online if able at [gepark.org/register](http://gepark.org/register).

**The Glen Ellyn Park District appreciates your ongoing support and participation during these challenging times. We hope that our services and resources can continue to provide healthy and recreational opportunities for our community members.**