



PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MONTHLY UPDATE REPORT JANUARY 2025

Director's Corner

Advisory Board Update

We would like to welcome Holly Herbst to the Advisory Board as the Representative of the Vandalia-Butler School District. Holly is currently serving as the Board of Education President. We look forward to Holly's input concerning all things Parks and Recreation.

Art Park and Robinette Park Update

Winter conditions have halted work at the Art Park Amphitheater and the Robinette Park Playground installation.

Victory Park Update

Recreation Superintendent Alicia McCracken is working to finalize the design and color scheme for the recently approved playground for Victory Park. We are receiving a \$50,000 Community Development Block Grant for this project. We are hopeful for a summer installation.

2025 PARK BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

The 2025 in-person Park Board Meeting schedule is as follows:

- Wednesday, February 19, 6:30 PM - Senior Center
- Wednesday, May 21, 6:30 PM - Cassel Hills Swimming Pool
- Wednesday, August 20, 6:30 PM - Sports Complex
- Wednesday, November 19, 6:30 PM - Recreation Center

If you have any discussion topics for the February 19 meeting, please let Steve know!

Advisory Board Members

- Lenny Maenza, Chairperson
- Tara Landis, Vice Chairperson
- Rick Scherer, Secretary
- Lydia Baker
- Larry Taylor
- Holly Herbst
- Corey Follick, City Council Representative
- Bob Costello (Emeritus Status)

PARKS

- Facility Maintenance Staff have been working on clearing snow and checking for ice in parking lots and walkways as needed. All our snow removal equipment was in use during the recent snow. We are very fortunate to have the equipment that makes snow removal so efficient. We have approximately 23 locations where we move snow.

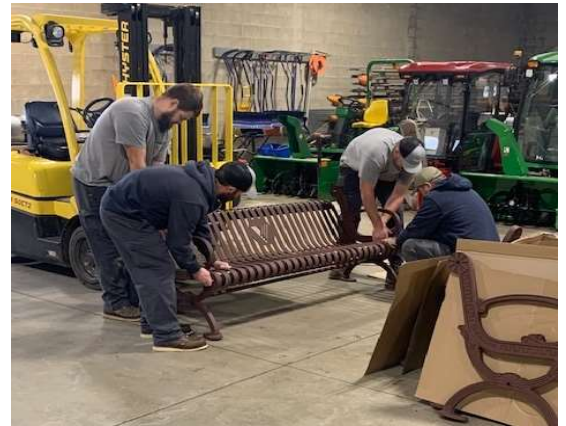


All trucks and equipment ready for the snow.

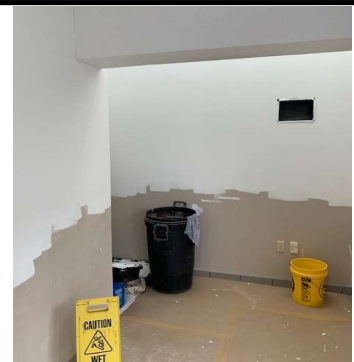


- Continued construction of, or refurbishment of, the wood trash can boxes in the Garage as time permits. Also started assembling new park benches, as we will be removing some of our 25+ year old benches from selected locations. We will refurbish removals if possible.

Assembly of a new bench pictured.



- Staff have been removing wallpaper, repairing wall surfaces, painting, and will be placing wall protective paneling on the lower third of the wall in the Tax Lobby at the Municipal Building. The wallcoverings etc. were original to the remodel in 2000.



- The Department of Engineering is overseeing the installation of a new fire alarm system at the Justice Center. The system being replaced was original to the building, which was opened for use in 1999.
- Handling many help tickets associated with building maintenance issues, including the walk-in refrigerator at Cassel Hills Clubhouse, plumbing at various sites, the ice machine at the Senior Center, and various issues associated with the very cold weather.

TREE CITY USA / URBAN FOREST

- We have some dead trees at Robinette Park that we are in the process of removing. All were located near the paved walkway and were a potential safety hazard.
- Tree work is taking place at Poplar Hill Cemetery. Several of the large trees are being inspected for dead wood and that wood is being removed. This work is completed to aid in keeping these trees as safe as possible, as dead wood can potentially fall on visitors and workers, as well as less clean up time needed after windstorms, and aiding in protecting gravestones from the potential of a dead limb falling onto those.
- Seger Park Pear Tree Removal. Staff are working in conjunction with the Lions Club in removing and replacing the pear trees in the south portion of the park. As pear trees age they are inherently prone to breakage, and they are also very densely leaved, and the leaves tend to hang on well into the months where ice storms occur. The canopy catches a lot of wind, and the leaves hold a lot of ice. Due to these factors, for the past 15 years, Staff have thinned the tree canopy, thus creating less wind resistance and aiding in preventing wind damage. In the last two years, and especially this fall, we have had large limb breakage in these trees, with one overhanging the sidewalk and roadway. Pear wood is dense and very heavy, these limbs could cause injury and damage to property. For this reason, the removal and replacement of these trees is underway. With replacement tree planting planned for this Spring. Many lessons were learned in the tree / landscape industry with the long-term history of the ornamental pear and their propensity to cause problems in the urban landscape.
- Sherry completed the Tree City application based on our 2024 year-end report and we have again received Tree City USA status through the Arbor Day Foundation.

RECREATION CENTER

FACTS

- December 2024 VRC Visits - 15,635 vs December 2023 VRC Visits - 14,330
- December Birthday Parties - 23 Total - 5 Resident / Member; 18 Non-Resident
- Group Fitness Class Counts - 2024-16,404 vs. 2023-14,993. An increase of 1,411 participants! Kudos to our Group Fitness Instructors for their dedication and hard work!
- 171 Insurance Based Members visited the VRC 10 or more times in December.
 - Incentive Winners, sponsored by Edward Jones - Thomas Nighswander-12 visits and David Pauley-16 visits
- The VRC hallways, fitness and track area, and Special Events Room are all getting a fresh coat of paint.
- Recreation Staff are working on selecting a playground unit for Ricky's outdoor area and getting pricing for the resurface of the Ricky's outdoor area and Climbing Wall. They will both be getting turf! This is a 2025 capital project for the VRC.
- Facility Manager Aaron Messenger is working on getting quotes for security camera upgrades at the VRC.
- Facility Manager Aaron Messenger is working with Elements IV Interiors to get some mock up designs for new furniture in the VRC lobby, Special Events Room, and Conference Room. Most of this furniture is original to the building!
- We are adding another volleyball net for the Thursday Night Drop-In Volleyball program. We average 25-30 players, so another net was much needed!

RECREATION

- Recreation Superintendent Alicia McCracken is working with Frank Beeson and the Vandalia-Butler Foundation to offer a pickleball tournament fundraiser in the fall.
- Recreation Superintendent Alicia McCracken and Facility Manager Aaron Messenger are working with Staff to implement facility reservations online.
- The Victory Park Play Structure color choices are being made. We are also working on getting some benches for the playground area at Victory Park.
- Kona Ice has agreed to run concessions at Youth Baseball/Softball/Soccer, along with Cassel Hills Pool this year.
- The Fire Department will be offering a CPR class for Part-Time Staff on Saturday, January 25. 20 employees will be attending.
- Recreation Staff are working on logistics and details for the July 3rd Star Spangled Celebration.
- Custodial Supervisor Jack Marshall and Recreation Superintendent Alicia McCracken prepared and submitted a Safety Intervention Grant application with the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation. The Parks and Recreation Department received notification that their grant was approved for \$19,659.77, which will be used to purchase two new floor scrubbers for the Vandalia Recreation Center.

ATHLETICS

- 3rd-6th grade Youth Basketball continues. Saturday, January 11 was canceled due to a snow storm. The first games with Tipp City were on January 18, and all went well!
- Our first Kindergarten/1st Grade Instructional Program, led by the Butler High School Boys Basketball teams, was on Saturday, January 18.



- Youth Baseball/Softball registrations are beginning to pick up.
- Recreation Coordinator Maecie Burkhardt met with Tipp City and Troy to discuss potentially partnering for youth baseball/softball.
- Recreation Staff is working on brainstorming ideas for Baseball/Softball Opening Day!
- Recreation Coordinator Maecie Burkhardt and Recreation Superintendent Alicia McCracken reached out to Butler High School Women's Volleyball Coach Lindsay Suess to see if we could bring back Girls Youth Volleyball. Coach Suess loved that idea, and we look to bring the program back in Feb/Mar of 2026!

FITNESS

- February FREE Class Spotlight is ZUMBA w/ Robert on Tuesdays at 5:30pm.
- February Free Climb Day is Tuesday, February 11.
- February Inclusive Fitness Days – Friday, February 14 and 28, from 10:30am-11:15am.
- The annual Maintain Campaign, sponsored by Hock's Pharmacy, had a total of 103 participants, and 66 maintained or lost weight during the holiday season.

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

- Recreation Coordinator Sara Moyer is working hard to solidify details for Summer CampREC, including field trips, guest speakers, registration, and Staff.
- Recreation Coordinator Sara Moyer is working with Skyhawks, a company that will provide weekly athletic camps to our Community. She is also working with Lora Burris to offer a cheerleading/tumbling class this summer, and Olohana from Olohana's Polynesian Dance to set up a free Hula Workshop for the Community at Art Park.
- Recreation Coordinator Sara Moyer attended the first session of Advanced Leadership: Five Strategic Practices presented by Dan Noel and Cindy Schisler, who both have many years of experience with organizational leadership. There are four more sessions of this training over the next several months, each session focusing on a different leadership practice. This is a great continuing education opportunity for Sara!

Completed Events

- **Kids Night Out** was held on Friday, January 10, hosted by our Recreation Leaders. 16 kids participated in this program. During their night out with us, participants were able to experience a night full of fun while they participated in rock climbing, gym games, crafts, swimming, and more!
- **Homeschool Takeover** was held on Friday, January 17, from 11:30 am-2:00 pm at the VRC. 195 participants attended this program. Attendees enjoyed the climbing wall, swimming, gym activities, and Luther's Jungle.
- **Princess Pajama Party w/ Paulette's Princess Party** was held on Saturday, January 18. 56 participants registered for this program. During their evening with us, participants had the opportunity to sing, dance, and meet some of their favorite princesses, along with fairy-dust face masks, bedtime stories, friendship bracelets, dance lessons, and sweet treats!



Upcoming Events

- Kids Night Out will be held on Friday, February 7 from 5:30 PM - 9:00 PM at the VRC.
- February Family Fun Night will be held on Friday, February 21 from 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM at the VRC.

SENIOR CENTER

- We ended 2024 with 799 active members, with 211 of those being new members this year.
- The February Newsletter is now available, and can be found on the website.
- VanTran - 153 one-way rides in December.
- Recreation Coordinator Toni Williams secured Lunch and Learn sponsorships totaling \$40,776 in 2024. She continues to do an amazing job securing sponsorships and donations for programs and activities at the Senior Center.