

Independence Park Commission



Parks Improvement Sales Tax Program Report January 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023



Mission and Membership

The Independence Park Commission was established by Ordinance in 1999. The Commission's primary mission is to act in an advisory capacity to the City Council relating to public education, use, and knowledge regarding Parks and Recreation activities. The Commission also serves as the official Parks and Recreation Sales Tax Oversight Committee.

The Park Commission is comprised of seven voting members appointed by the City Council. Current members include Jana Evans, Paula Martin, Cody Steger, and Dennis Tharp with three vacancies.

Sales Tax Review

Independence voters renewed the current Parks Improvement Sales Tax (PRST) in perpetuity in August of 2010. It is dedicated to fund on-going park maintenance, certain facility operations, recreation programming and various parks and recreation related capital projects. Through June 30, 2023, the tax generated \$4,966,640, or 102%, of the PRST revenue for fiscal year 2022-23.

Park Projects, Revitalization & Operations

Park Services staff has been working with Street Maintenance staff to repave streets and repair curbs at Woodlawn Cemetery. Parks, Recreation and Tourism purchases materials, and Municipal Services provides the labor. Work is approximately 50% complete. Ahead of Memorial Day weekend, crews mowed and string-trimmed around each of the 16,000 headstones.



During the third and fourth quarters of Fiscal Year 2022-23, maintenance staff opened restrooms in the parks, repaired all the soccer goals, performed annual backflow inspections, and completed 13 mowing cycles. New cornhole games were added to several parks, and permanent speed bumps were installed at several locations through Santa Fe Park. Crews installed new chemical controllers at both splash pads and a concrete pad was poured on the concourse at Adventure Oasis water park. Staff handled the set-up and take-down for the City's annual Juneteenth celebration at the Independence Uptown Market.



PRT staff worked with Municipal Services to repave sections of Waterfall Trail this spring. In Rotary Park, crews removed the dilapidated fence and replaced it with a new one near the parking lot. Trail bollards were installed, spring toys repaired and replacements pieces were added to the playground.

Daily repairs due to graffiti and vandalism continue to keep Park Services crews busy. In addition, crews completed 86 unhouseed clean-ups in park property. Park staff addresses these needs continuously to ensure that facilities are kept in safe, working order throughout the year.

Severe erosion of the stream bank caused the pedestrian bridge along Rock Creek Trail to sink to an unsafe level. The bridge had to be removed before Municipal Services can repair the stream bank.



In June, the Community Development Department issued a demolition permit to remove the unsafe, vacant house on Park Services property. The space will be used by Park Services to store equipment and materials.



Recreation Programming & Operations

Adventure Oasis Water Park

- Swim Lessons – 122 participants
- Fitness Classes – 176 participants
- Replaced lounge chairs around the lazy river & in the kiddie pool area
- Birthday Parties & Small Group Rentals
- Dive-in Movies – 155 participants

Palmer Senior Center

- Home Delivered Meal Program – From January through June staff delivered a total of 6330 meals and served 7,556 meals on-site
- Programs – Controlling your Own Care presentation with Notary on-site for completing advanced directives, Native Animals in MO, Hands-Only CPR
- Special Activities – New Year's Party, Valentine's Day Party, St. Patrick's Party, Coffee with the Mayor, Volunteer Appreciation Event, Oriole Feeder Building
- Day Trips - 129 patrons enjoyed dinner and a show at the New Theatre Restaurant and tours of Warm Springs Ranch and Hermann, MO
- Pickleball Tournament - February



Truman Memorial Building

- Spirit of Independence Band rehearsals
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration
- Little Princess Ball
- City of Independence Sustainability Commission Meeting
- TRX Boot Camp – 127 sessions
- SS Classic, Yoga – 75 sessions
- Table Tennis Club: 129 sessions
- Bridge & Duplicate Bridge – 76 sessions
- Private Rentals – birthday parties, baby showers, talent shows, anniversary party, graduation reception, church services and events, Men's Speaking Club



Roger T. Sermon Community Center

- Fitness Classes – 3063 participants
- Fitness Visits – 12,699 participants
- New or Renewing Fitness Members - 818
- Fitness Classes & visits by City Employees – 1648 participants
- Open Play Pickleball – 1 Saturday in May & June, 8 participants
- Warming Site – 10 people served during 3 days
- Cooling Site – 4 people served during 3 days
- Rentals & Park Reservations of other PRT sites – 170 park reservations with 7361 visitors
- Rentals – 97 private rentals with 5495 visitors
- Events – Powerpalooza, 31st Annual Festival of Color Youth Art Show, Fort Osage Summer Feeding Program at McCoy Park (24 days in May & June serving 2400+ meals)
- Encore Theatre – “Wild Women of Winedale” in April & May, attendance 150
- City Theatre of Independence – “Miracle on South Division Street” in January, attendance 355
“Moonlight and Magnolias” in March & April, attendance 280
“Into the Woods” in June – all 6 shows sold out, attendance 969
- Children's Performing Theatre – “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz” in February, attendance 841
Children's Theatre Workshops in May & June, 17 participants



Independence Uptown Market

- Winter Market & Farmers Market with EBT snap tokens program – 35 to 45 vendors serve 750 to 1000 patrons weekly
- Programs & Events – Hogabaloo, Valentine’s Day Paint & Sip, Book Swap, DIY Chia Pet, May the 4th Be with You, Rummage Sale, Uptown Garden Faire, Spirit of Independence Band Concert, Bingo, Juneteenth Celebration, Japanese Cultural Festival, Crafternoons, Creating over Coffee
- City of Independence Employee Recognition Dinner
- CSL Winter Clothing Drive
- Independence Square Streetscape Open House
- Private Rentals – birthday parties, wedding receptions, celebrations of life, fundraisers, and more

Wellness, Sports & Inclusion

- Homeschool Recreation Program – 117 students
- Miracle League – 34 athletes, 6 meetings
- Reservations – 49 game fields & 24 tennis courts, 129 baseball/softball practice fields
- Community Gardens – All beds reserved
- Truman Trot 5K & Kids Dash – 600+ registrations with additional same-day registrations



George Owens Nature Park & Family Programs

- On-Site Programs – Build a Bluebird Box, Pickup Chess, Earth Day, Stories by the Campfire, Missouri Extension Office Partnership Program, Nature Walks, Spirit of Independence Band Lakeside Concert, Endangered Species, Bat Day, Insect Safari, Feeding Days, and Girl Scouts STEM activity in addition to fishing, hiking, birding & picnicking
- Off-Site Programs – Sky-High Kite Festival, Fun in the Park, Popsicles in the Park, Oriole Feeders and Endangered Species programs at Palmer Senior Center, Tree ID and Bird Bingo at Fairmount Community Center



In Closing

It is the opinion of the Independence Park Commission that the activities, initiatives, and projects supported by the Parks Improvement Sales Tax are in keeping with the program's intent, and that the work of the Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department continues to enhance the quality of life in Independence.

The members of the Independence Park Commission, on behalf of the residents of Independence, express our gratitude and appreciation to the Mayor and City Council for their continued support of providing the best possible parks, recreation facilities, and programs for the residents of Independence.

