

Independence Parks Commission



Independence Uptown Market Holiday Lighting 2020

37th Parks & Recreation Sales Tax Program Report April 19, 2021

Executive Summary

The Independence Parks 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 awareness, facility use, and program participation regarding Parks and Recreation activities. The Commission also serves as the official Parks and Recreation Sales Tax Oversight Committee.

It is the opinion of the members of the Independence Parks Commission that the activities, initiatives, and projects funded by the Parks Sales Tax are in keeping with the sales tax program's intent, and that the sales tax program is critical in supporting the work of the Department to enhance the quality of life in Independence.



DeWitt Hall at George Owens



Vaile Mansion Holiday Lighting 2020



Truman Heritage Habitat For Humanity Hero Award 2020



Independence Winter Market

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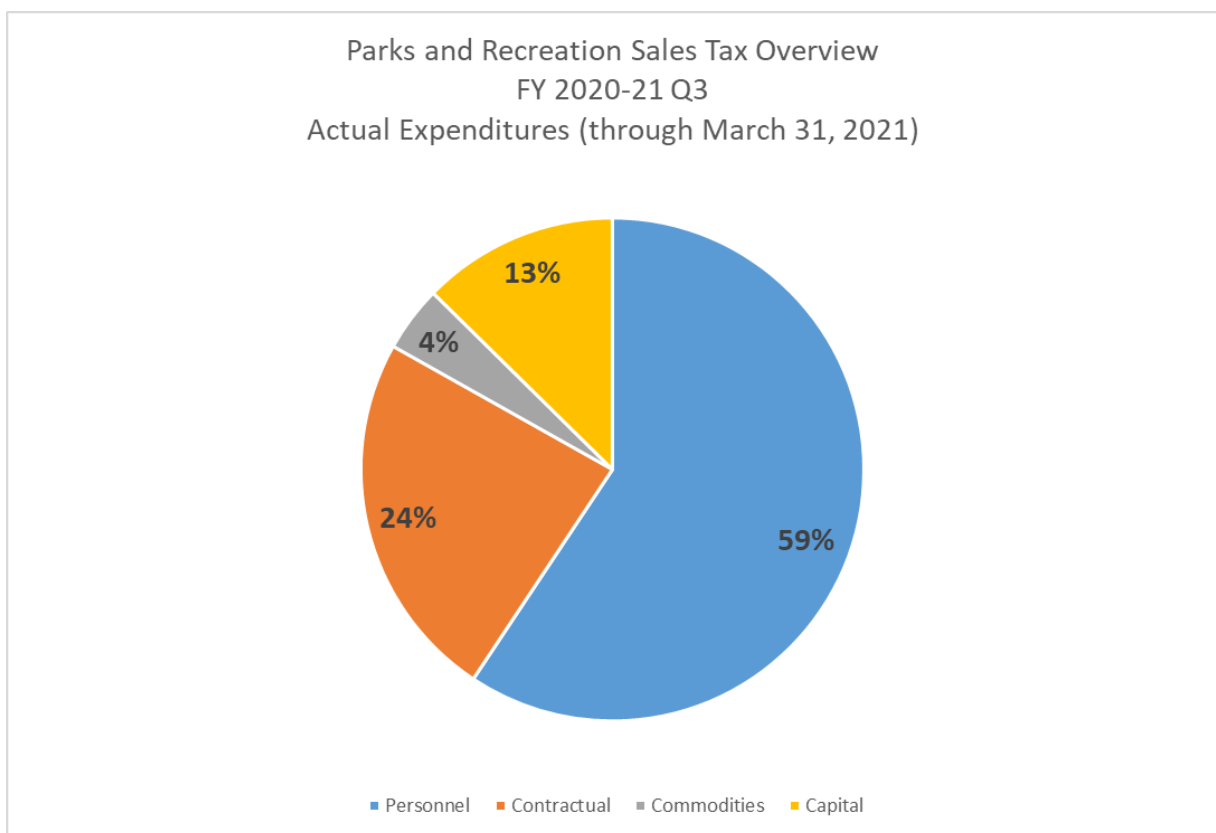


Sales Tax Review

The current Parks & Recreation Sales Tax (PRST) was renewed in perpetuity in August of 2010. This tax is estimated to generate approximately \$4.2 million this fiscal year and is dedicated to fund on-going parks maintenance, certain facility operations, recreation programming and various parks and recreation related capital projects. Through March 31, 2021, the tax has generated \$3,213,262, or 76.5%, of the PRST revenue anticipated for this entire Fiscal Year.

Despite revenue losses last Fiscal Year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the continuance of capacity limitations, overall revenues this fiscal year are projected to increase in the Parks and Recreation Sales Tax Fund by approximately \$350,000.

Following is a chart showing a breakdown of actual expenditures in the Parks & Recreation Sales Tax Fund through March 31, 2021.



For the official Monthly Financial and Operating Report prepared by the City's Finance and Administration Department, please visit: <http://www.ci.independence.mo.us/Finance/FinancialReports>.

Current Commissioners

The Parks Commission is comprised of seven voting members and one ex-officio member, all appointed by the City Council. Current members of the Park Commission include: Zachary Gall – Chair, Gail Price, Jolie Austin, Diane Kyser, Shawn Brimer, April Schuler, and Ira Anders. Roger Hershey serves as an ex-officio member of the group.

Current Project Status

Plans for several new projects and park improvements were placed on hold in response to COVID-19; but, we are now bringing back some of the smaller, more modest, but necessary projects that had been placed on hold, as part of the Park Revitalization Program. These projects are in harmony with the high priority our residents have expressed for maintaining and improving our existing facilities and parks.

Park Revitalization Program

The Park Revitalization program is an on-going effort that addresses routine needs such as replacing park benches and trash receptacles, repairing damaged playground equipment and picnic benches, repairing mechanical systems and pumps, replenishing playground safety surfacing, repairs to trails, parking lots and concrete surfaces. Park staff addresses these needs continuously to ensure that facilities are kept in working order throughout the spring, summer, and fall seasons.



Washout repair with riprap installation at Waterfall Park



Ballard Fabrication & Installation along Rock Creek Trail



Landscaping clean up at Adventure Oasis

Park Maintenance Operations



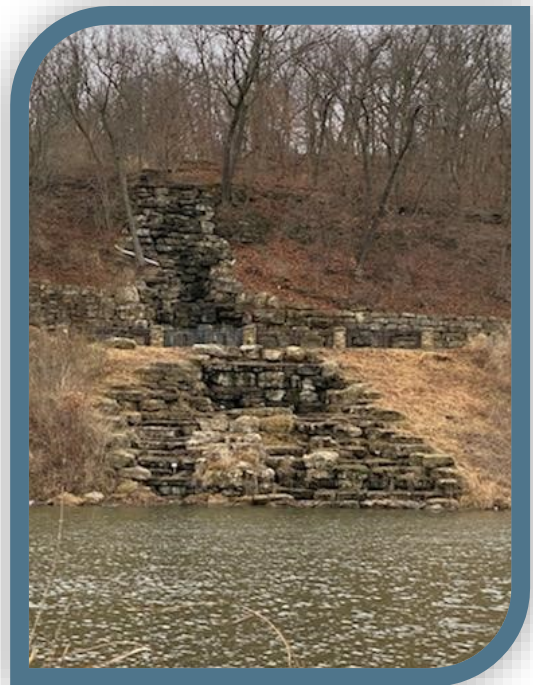
Log Fence repair at George Owens Nature Park

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, park maintenance staff have modified operations in accordance with guidelines established for the various phases of reopening. Since playgrounds have re-opened, crews disinfect them twice per week. They also perform additional disinfection facility-wide within the recreation centers twice per week.

Routine maintenance and operations continue, including: tree trimming, graffiti and vandalism remediation, snow removal, and general park cleaning and maintenance.



Park Maintenance Snow Removal



Waterfall Park – After Brush and Debris Removal

Recreation Programming & Operations

Recreation Programming & Operations have remained modified in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Recreation staff continue to work diligently to provide high-quality programming and maintain operations while adhering to proper safety protocols for patrons, participants, and staff. Highlights from each area of Recreation operations are as follows:

Palmer Center & Senior Programs

- Home Delivered Meal Program: From October 2020 – March 2021, Palmer Center staff delivered a total of 15,960 meals to 174 unduplicated individuals. These meals are above and beyond the regular on-going home delivered meals that are delivered by Trio.
- Wellness Phone Calls: Palmer Center Staff or Volunteers (including AmeriCorps volunteers) made 4,705 Wellness Check phone calls.
- Virtual Programming: Palmer staff has hosted Virtual Walk with Ease and Virtual Tai Chi for Arthritis classes. Total attendance at these programs October – March was 309 with 21 unduplicated individuals.
- MARC Vaccine Registration Helpline: Palmer Center Staff assisted 155 callers to Mid-America Regional Council's COVID Vaccine Registration Helpline.
- Senior Christmas Drive-Thru Event: Attended by 235 seniors, this event was very well received. Palmer Center Staff also delivered 129 Christmas gift bags with stocking caps and candy in them to home delivered meal recipients.



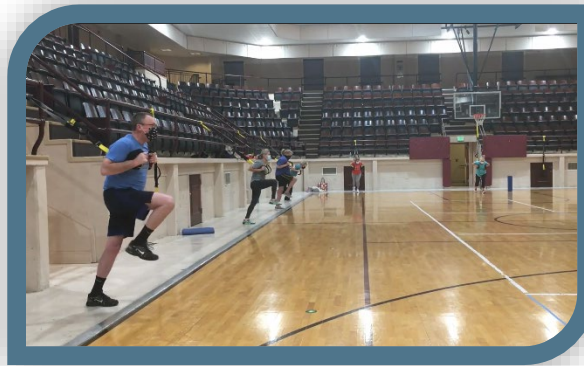
Palmer Center's Home Delivered Meal Program



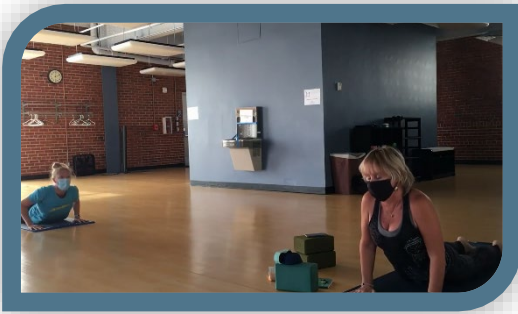
Palmer Center's Senior Christmas Drive-Thru Event

Truman Memorial Building

- Programs Hosted: Community Blood Drive, Spirit Band of Independence Rehearsals
- Various Rentals: Graduations, Birthday Parties, Baby Showers, Memorial Services
- Fitness Classes: TRX Evening Class, Noon TRX Class, Silver Sneakers Yoga, Zumba Gold
- Table Tennis Club: average of 100 players every month



Socially Distanced TRX Fitness Class at Truman Memorial



Yoga Class at Sermon Center



Fitness Equipment at Sermon Center

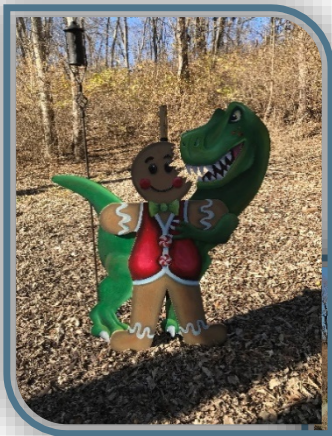
Roger T. Sermon Community Center

- Fitness Classes: Yoga, Extreme Boot Camp, ZUMBA, and Turbo Kick - 1,950 participants
- Daily Visits – 11,099 (including Silver Sneakers & Renew Active)
- Rental Attendance – 2,400
- Shelter/Pavilion Attendance – 1,143
- Best Little Arts & Crafts Virtual Show: 589 Event Page Views with 188 People who responded
- Warming Center: 110 People visited the Warming Center and 116 free hotel night stays were provided to those in need, via a partnership between Parks/Recreation/Tourism and Community Services League

George Owens Nature Park & Family Programs

Programs Hosted:

- Young Matrons Naturalist Lead Hike
- Full Moon Hikes
- Family Nature Projects Program
- Gingerbread Trail, 17th Annual Winter Solstice Torch Lit Hike
- December Nature Talk with KC Public Library via Zoom
- Winter Seeding Classes
- Spring Wildflower Hike
- Coyote Webinar
- 200 native plants distributed to participants at Palmer Center Holiday Drive Thru
- Independence Fire Department's Water Rescue Training



IFD Water Rescue Training at George Owens



Gingerbread Trail



Winter Solstice Torch Lit Hike

Wellness, Sports, Aquatics, Inclusion

Sports: Since October, the City has rented its fields for soccer, softball, football, baseball, kickball, and tennis. During the months of October – March, fields were rented for games and practices over 200 times.

Community Garden: The wellness team rented out all the garden beds at the White Oak Community Garden. Gardeners were given access to their beds on April 1st.

Homeschool Recreation Program: The Parks/Recreation/Tourism Department offers recreational opportunities for homeschooled children. Staff has made modifications including sanitization, social distancing, and mask wearing to keep children safe while they come into the Truman Memorial Building for recreational activities. There have been a total of 207 participants in the homeschool recreation program during this reporting period.

COVID Testing/COVID Vaccines: Wellness staff assisted with both COVID testing sites and vaccine clinics.

Farmers Market: The Winter Farmer's Market was held the first Saturday of each month from December and will continue through April. Each market had 16-22 vendors and had approximately 100-200 patrons each weekend.



Independence Winter Market



USDA Food Box Distribution at Independence Athletic Complex

ESF6 Coordination Efforts

ESF6 (Emergency Support Function #6) – Mass Care: Parks/Recreation/Tourism Department staff continues to assist in many areas of ESF6 operations, including the setup, planning, coordination, and operation of: USDA Food Box Distribution events, coordination of COVID-19 Testing Sites, Eastern

Winter Solstice Torch Lit Hike

Phone Bank, coordination of emergency sheltering and warming centers. Additionally, staff converted Palmer Center into a dormitory for AmeriCorps Service volunteers.

In Closing

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

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



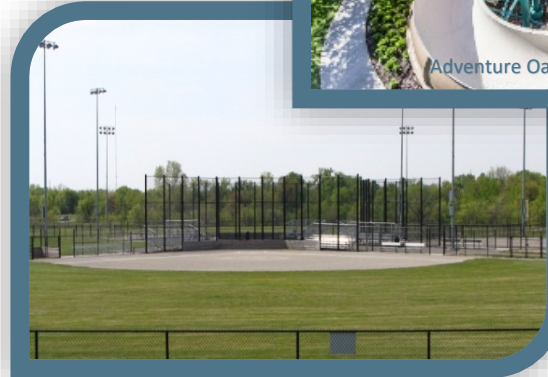
Truman Memorial Building



Santa Fe Park



Adventure Oasis Water Park



Independence Athletic Complex



Palmer Senior Center