



City Council

Special Recognition - Proclamation Recognizing July as National Parks, Arts and Recreation Month

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Title

Special Recognition - Proclamation Recognizing July as National Parks, Arts and Recreation Month

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Proclaim July as Parks, Arts, and Recreation Month in the City of Olympia.

Report

Issue:

Whether to proclaim July as Parks, Arts, and Recreation Month in the City of Olympia.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Paul Simmons, Department of Parks, Arts, and Recreation

Background and Analysis:

July is recognized nationally as Parks and Recreation Month by the National Recreation and Parks Association and this year's theme is "Where You Belong".

With strong support from Olympia voters, we established the Olympia Metropolitan Park District in 2015 and Voted Utility Tax in 2004. These critical funding sources have allowed us to enhance staffing across the department, improve park safety through a dedicated Park Ranger Program, and meet several long-standing land acquisition goals. Our Park system now features 54 properties totaling 1,469 acres, with over 1,191 acres of open space.

These voter-established funding sources provide over \$1.1 million annually to invest in the existing park system through our Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP), ADA Facility Upgrades, and Percival Landing Maintenance. This consistent investment is allowing us to essentially rebuild the park system from the inside out, with the replacement of playgrounds, shelters, restrooms, trail bridges, sport courts, backstops, dugouts, and parking lots. We've been able to open new playgrounds, spraygrounds, and 3 new dog parks.

We have some major projects on the horizon, including the development of a new multi-modal trail on the westside at Grass Lake Nature Park, and a new mountain bike park at Kaiser Woods.

We are also very close to developing Phase I of Yelm Highway Community Park, which will include Olympia's long-awaited first soccer field, a mini-pitch, 12 pickleball courts, playground, dog park, great lawn, and several walking paths.

Of course, we are more than just Parks. Our Recreation staff have been busy with continuous improvement of our existing programs. We have subsidized 5 years of the very popular Oly on Ice, added our 3rd and 4th very popular summer daycamp locations, expanded outdoor recreation programs for both youth and adults, continue our partnership with The Bridge Music Project, and have significantly increased the distribution of scholarships with Ina's Fund, which is now distributing over \$20,000 per year to youth and families in need.

The Arts Division has also thrived, with OMPD funds providing a modest arts maintenance budget, while also expanding our programs to include Music Out Loud, Traffic Box Wraps, Olympia's Poet Laureate, and enhancements to the Percival Plinth sculpture project. Our signature Artswalk event has evolved to include more street activities, and our public art collection continues to grow each year. The Armory is also finalizing the Phase I design which will fulfill another long-awaited need of providing an Arts Center for the community. When complete, this 50,000 square foot facility will be home to 8 art-based non-profits who are all serving the community.

When I think about this year's NRPA theme - "Where You Belong" - we couldn't be prouder of the work happening around Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. We now have staff dedicated and committed to infusing equity into all aspects of our operations. Our hope is to have a set of equity-focused metrics and data in place by the end of 2024 so that we can track our progress. We also have grown a comprehensive Cultural Event Series which features partnered celebrations for Black History Month, AANHPI Heritage Month, Juneteenth, Lula Fest for Hispanic Heritage Month, and Indigenous Peoples' Day. We also provide financial sponsorships and support to Capitol City Pride, the Festival of the Steh-Chass, and the Latinx Youth Summit.

July is our busiest month, and for the Olympia's Parks, Arts and Recreation Department, there is no better time to celebrate the commitment made by our community, officials, and staff, which all help us in providing exceptional Parks, Arts, and Recreation services.

Attachments:

Proclamation