

Good Afternoon!

As we continue to navigate our way through the COVID-19 pandemic, I want to provide an update regarding Parks & Recreation Department facilities and programs.

Recent decisions by Gov. Kim Reynolds and the Ames City Council have extended many facility closures. In addition, City Council has given staff the authority and criteria to assess future reopening plans for facilities and programs.

City Offices/Facilities:

- City offices/facilities (including City Hall and Ames Public Library) and utility plants along with the Animal Control Shelter, **dog park**, and **skate park** will not be opened to the public any earlier than Wednesday, July 1, 2020.
- The Community Center and City Auditorium will not be opened to the public any earlier than Wednesday, July 1, 2020.
- While the Library building will not open to the public prior to July 1, a new outdoor pickup/drop-off service will be initiated in the front of this facility.

Furman Aquatic Center and Municipal Pool:

- The Governor has closed swimming pools through May 27, 2020 and this could be extended.
- The City Council delayed any final decision on the opening of Furman Aquatic Center and Municipal Pool until the May 26, 2020, City Council meeting.
- Council has asked staff to provide further information regarding the Governor's directive regarding pool openings, the recommendations from professional organizations (e.g. CDC, American Red Cross, etc.), and staff's determination on whether the decision-making criteria to open can be met.
- Because pools have been closed and certification restrictions in place, staff has been unable to certify and/or train lifeguards.
- The earliest Furman Aquatic Center could open is late June.
- Once a decision is made, information will be issued regarding season passes, admission options, etc.

Ames/ISU Ice Arena:

- The Governor has closed ice arenas through May 27, 2020 and this could be extended.
- The City Council delegated to staff the authority to determine reopening the Ames/ISU Ice Arena based on using decision-making criteria that considers state regulations, public health guidance, and factors such as the number of people involved, how densely crowded people will be, what type of protective supplies are available or provided, and whether social distancing is possible.
- Staff is reviewing the decision-making criteria, as well as, recommendations from various organizations (e.g. US Rink Association).
- Staff is hopeful a decision can be reached by June 1, 2020.

Homewood Golf Course:

- The course is currently open with modified rules which can be found at <https://www.cityofames.org/home/showdocument?id=55201>
- The clubhouse will remain closed for public access until further notice.
- Restrooms will remain closed until further notice.

Parks and Recreation Programs:

- The City Council delegated to staff the authority to determine on a case by case basis which recreation programs will be offered during the summer session (June through August 2020) by using decision-making criteria that considers state regulations, public health guidance, and factors such as the number of people involved, how densely crowded people will be, what type of protective supplies are available or provided, and whether social distancing is possible.
- Programs held in facilities that are currently closed would not start until July 1, 2020 at the earliest.
- If programs are not held, registration fees already paid will be credited to accounts or refunded. More details will be provided once decisions are finalized.

Parks and Park Amenities

- **City Parks** remain open.
- **Trails** remain open.
- **Tennis and pickleball courts** remain open.
- **Basketball courts** remain open only for shooting baskets.
- **Playgrounds** will remain closed until July 1, 2020.
- **Drinking fountains** will remain closed until further notice.
- **Restrooms** will remain closed until further notice.
- **Portable restrooms** will not be available in the park system until further notice.
- **Park Shelters** can be reserved as long the number of people in the shelter meets the Governor's orders regarding social gatherings which is currently no more than 10 people.
- **Athletic Fields and Volleyball Courts** can be reserved as long the number of players meets the Governor's orders regarding social gatherings which is currently no more than 10 people.
- **Skate Park** remains closed until July 1, 2020
- **Ames Dog Park** remains closed until July 1, 2020

These decisions have been challenging for the City Council and staff. As someone who has spent decades in the parks and recreation profession, I love to provide ways for the public to enjoy parks, facilities, and programs. It is painful to know these opportunities are no longer available. Yet, the safety of our participants and staff remains our focus. We will move forward cautiously and seek guidance from the CDC, Iowa Department of Public Health, and many other organizations.

I know not everyone will agree with these decisions, but please understand we are doing what we feel is best for the entire community. Thank you for your understanding during these unprecedented times.

Be safe,

Keith Abraham
Parks and Recreation Director