

DECEMBER 2023

MONTHLY PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



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LIBRARY

Mental Health First Aid: Ames Public Library will host a series of free Mental Health First Aid training sessions in January, presented by Mary Greeley Medical Center. Participants should register to attend both sessions on Wednesday, January 24 and Wednesday, January 31 from 5:00 – 9:00 p.m. Sign up at www.AmesPL.org/events.

Repair Café: A winter Ames Repair Café is coming up on January 27 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Community members are invited to bring their broken items for volunteers to attempt to repair.

The Repair Café aims to reduce waste, share tools and resources, and help build self-reliance skills in the community. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please email AmesRepairCafe@gmail.com.



PARKS AND RECREATION

Auditorium: On December 9, the Ames City Auditorium partnered with Laura Ernst and the Bliss Cirque Show to present a family friendly Circus event titled “Twas the Night Before the Circus.” The event featured aerial stunts, juggling, song and dance, and storytelling. The high energy performance was thoroughly enjoyed by all in attendance. Admission for the event was \$5, and approximately 300 people attended the performance. This is the second event the Auditorium has presented featuring the Bliss Cirque troupe, and the Auditorium will likely present this event again next year.



On December 10, the Auditorium presented an evening of holiday music featuring Felicity from the Satin Dollz. Accompanied by a piano player, Felicity performed a wide variety of holiday songs. Though attendance was lower than anticipated, the audience thoroughly enjoyed the performance and staff received many positive comments. Some feedback received was that a matinee show may be a better option than an evening show. The performers are open to a matinee show in the future. It was a successful event and staff hopes to bring Felicity back again next year!



Forestry: The contractor hired for Year 10 Emerald Ash Borer Response Plan removals removed 43 ash trees across town. Three trees remain to be removed, as road construction prevented the contractor from accessing those trees. These removals are anticipated to be completed in the coming weeks.

Staff completed regularly scheduled tree inspection and pruning at Daley Park. Daley Park is one of the six parks planned for tree inspection and trimming this winter as part of the Department's 5-year inspection cycle.



Tree work continued at Gateway Hills Disc Golf Course in conjunction with other renovations being made. Staff moved downed trees to line new fairways, hauled out several loads of old brush, and widened the path outside of the sledding hill fence.



Invasive species and volunteer vegetation was removed along the College Creek Greenbelt between Thackeray Avenue and S. Dakota Avenue.

On behalf of the City, Forester Gabriele Edwards submitted the annual application for Tree City USA recognition. In FY 2023, the City of Ames spent \$13.03 per capita towards urban forestry. Staff also applied for a Growth Award, which is an additional recognition based on a variety of accomplishments. The Growth Award application included: 1) applying for and receiving three separate grants from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources in FY 2023; 2) staff receiving

additional credentials, as Maintenance Worker Matt Rochford earned the International Society of Arboriculture's Tree Risk Assessment Qualification; and 3) converting urban wood into public art through the new chainsaw carving in Brookside Park.

Homewood Golf Course: Santa visited the Homewood Clubhouse on December 2 for Homewood for the Holidays. A picture with Santa, crafts, and a light breakfast was included. Forty-six children participated in the event, up from 34 in 2022.



Homewood Golf Course partnered with Painting with a Twist and hosted a holiday painting class. Nineteen people registered for the event and created their own masterpieces!



Inis Grove Park Restroom Renovation: HPC, LLC of Ames, Iowa, has completed the Inis Grove Park Restroom Renovation after it was damaged by fire in July 2022. The work included

demolition of portions of the interior and exterior, installation of a new electrical system, roof, interior walls, exterior siding, and limestone veneer replacement. The restroom will be open for use next spring.

Playground Replacements: The City Council approved the purchase of three new playground structures to be installed at Lloyd Kurtz, Country Gables, and Christopher Gartner Parks. They will be installed next spring. Pictured below are renderings of the playgrounds that will be purchased.



Christopher Gartner Park



Country Gables Park



Lloyd Kurtz Park

Sand Volleyball Fencing in Inis Grove Park: Des Moines Steel Fence of Des Moines, Iowa, completed installation of six-foot tall vinyl coated fencing on the west side of the sand volleyball courts at Inis Grove Park. The fencing was installed to prevent volleyballs from rolling down into the ravine west of the courts.



Steven L. Schainker Plaza: Henkel Construction LLC of Ames, Iowa, is continuing to make progress on the water and ice amenities at the Steven L. Schainker Plaza. Contractors for the water portion of the Plaza installed water transmission lines from the mechanical room in the restroom building out to the splash pad location. The ice rink contractor completed the installation of the coolant tubes and connected them to the main transmission header. Concrete for the ice-skating ribbon was also poured in December.

Wellness: A free Chair Yoga class was offered to promote an upcoming class in January. Twelve individuals participated. Additionally, multiple free holiday drop-in classes were offered, and the new winter session begins on January 3.



PLANNING AND HOUSING

Duplex Development Standards: On January 17, the Planning and Zoning Commission will consider duplex development standards for low density residential areas for a recommendation to the City Council. The draft standards are based upon the City Council direction from October 10 and feedback from public outreach this past summer. Background information can be found at www.cityofames.org/addhousing.

Former ACSD Maintenance Shop Site: The property owner of 1621 Wilson Avenue, the former Ames Community School District (ACSD) maintenance shop site, plans to propose reuse of the site and existing building with residential apartments.



The City Council was first approached with this idea in 2021 and directed the property owner to have a neighborhood meeting before considering any proposed rezonings of the site. The owner plans to have a neighborhood meeting in late January to get feedback on his proposal. City planning staff will assist in hosting the meeting and be present to hear feedback from neighbors.

Infill Housing Development Opportunity: City staff recently identified that unused Harrison Road right-of-way on the east side of the railroad tracks may be a viable infill housing option for small lot development.

Pursuing a housing development would be consistent with recent City Council interests for promoting more housing options in the City. Staff will present an option to the City Council for a RFP as part of the Department’s workplan update in January or February.



Possible Housing Project at ISU Research Park: Iowa State University (ISU) Research Park staff has an interest in considering options for apartment housing on an unused parcel located at the Cottonwood/University Blvd. roundabout.



Development of housing at this location would require a land use amendment and rezoning, likely to a medium density zoning district with PUD Overlay. A unique issue for this site is the City’s RISE Grant compliance agreement with the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT), which specifies land use limitations and accounting for job creation. This agreement would need to be changed to allow for housing. The owner will likely request that the City Council initiate a land use change in early 2024, and the City could then pursue a modified agreement with the DOT to ensure that the proposed residential use is allowable in the area.

PUBLIC WORKS

Resource Recovery In the News: Resource Recovery worked with KCCI TV to supply information and a location for filming a story about Food Waste Diversion (FWD). This informative story covered the options for food waste disposal, including the FWD program managed by Resource Recovery. The article was broadcast on the nightly news with a live report from the Resource Recovery Plant. This report increased awareness of the program and encouraged people to ask more questions and start using the program. Read more here: <https://www.kcci.com/article/iowa-ames-provides-people-easy-way-to-get-rid-of-food-waste/45347674>.

In October, WHO Radio did an interview about the Great Pumpkin Disposal program that was then rebroadcast on Radio Iowa for additional playtime. Also in October, the Iowa State Daily ran an article about the Great Pumpkin Disposal that generated calls about the program. The article was also highlighted in an announcement on LinkedIn from the United States Composting Council about how to increase organics diversion and build awareness around seasonal organics generation. Check out the article here: <https://iowastatedaily.com/286177/news/over-14000-pounds-of-pumpkins-kept-from-landfill-in-city-diversion-program/>.



Sidewalk Safety Program Updates: Staff will be bringing proposed updates to the Sidewalk Safety Program Standards to the City Council in January 2024. The updates reflect revised final guidance from the United States Access Board regarding Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG). A holistic review of the program will be presented along with recommendations for updated standards and repair options.



TRANSIT



Shop Rehabilitation: The Shop Rehabilitation Project construction began during the week of December 4. Shop employees spent time rearranging the shop, moving items out of the area of construction, and adjusting work areas. Progress is being seen as walls are being torn down and the floor is being cut. Metal working is set to begin early January and the precast concrete panels should be installed in mid-February. Project completion is projected to be in March or early April.

