

From: McNeeley, Kimberly <Kimberly.McNeeley@austintexas.gov>
Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 10:38 AM
To: Reed, Holly - BC <BC-Holly.Reed@austintexas.gov>; Villalobos, Pedro - BC <bc-Pedro.Villalobos@austintexas.gov>
Cc: Dombeck, Tim <Tim.Dombeck@austintexas.gov>; Hugman, Lisa - BC <BC-Lisa.Hugman@austintexas.gov>; Maurer, Jason <Jason.Maurer@austintexas.gov>; Jay, Jodi <Jodi.Jay@austintexas.gov>; Kallivoka, Liana [PARD] <Liana.Kallivoka@austintexas.gov>; Massie, Lucas <Lucas.Massie@austintexas.gov>; Piper, Suzanne <Suzanne.Piper@austintexas.gov>
Subject: RE: Requesting Discussion Item for PARB Agenda, 10/23/2023

Good Morning-

Thank you for including me in the conversation. Given the standard annual timeline, please know an October presentation will be brief and lack specifics about this year. Below outlines the points to be presented. Should these points satisfy the immediate questions, the Department prefers providing a presentation at the November meeting as it will allow for the assessment to be completed and any mitigation plans to be established and launched. Please advise as to your preferred path forward and the Department will prepare accordingly. Tim has been copied for his awareness.

Current ACL status:

ACL is currently undergoing load out for the 2023 event. Substantial completion is expected Friday, October 19. At that time a preliminary punch list is drafted, followed by additional site visits the following week. It takes time to finish assessing conditions through in depth site visits from multiple staff including the events, operations and turf management teams during the maintenance week. For this year that is anticipated to occur from October 21 – November 1.

During that time, immediate work commences. Examples to envision include power washing, signs post replacement, and additional cleaning work.

For at least 15 years, annual fall park maintenance is coordinate for the park lawns. This includes aeration, irrigation, and nutrient application to prepare the lawn for winter after the peak summer usage and fall events season. This is a common practice across parks systems, including examples of Central Park's Great Lawn which by difference is closed for 3-4 months annually for maintenance.

Who pays for park repairs after an event?

After any event, work required to mitigate impacts to parkland are the responsibility of the organizer by contract. PARD substantially requires the organizer to contract outside resources to implement the actions prescribed by PARD.

PARD's role is to supervise the implementation of the performed contractor work to meet PARD standard.

Turf Health:

Tifway 419 and the PARD schedule of maintenance is specifically formulated for the various recreational uses at Zilker Park.

- Tifway 419 – type of Bermuda grass is heat and drought tolerant, grows quickly and densely, and tolerant of wear

- Recovery depends on root system health and less on blade appearance. While turf blade appearance may change in any area with turf, it is the root system that primarily drives lawn health.
- The Tiffway species has a 12-14” root system often chosen specifically for year round field and recreational area use.
- PARD’s schedule of maintenance including aeration, fertigation, irrigation, and similar anticipates the varying weather and use conditions that may arise at the park in any given year.

In addition, please remember the rugby and great lawn areas are irrigated and an irrigation schedule is implemented each year during the event period that considers weather conditions measured against soil moisture so that the most favorable turf environment is maintained on event days. While the final assessment of the park has yet to be completed, based upon the 15 years of experience, the Department does not expect that the event will have caused “... *damage to the park is markedly worse...*” this year. The assessment described above will provide a more complete picture once it is finished.

ACL Weather facts:

Hottest year on record 2005 107 degrees

Coldest year on records 2019 low 50’s

Wettest year on record 2013 (highest volume of rain on an event day)

Other weather days of note in descending order if impact are:

- 2013 – highest volume of rain in history – cancelled day
- 2005 – hottest year on record – prior to irrigation system and new turf variety – substantial dust due to tropical disturbance
- 2009 – light extended rain ongoing all weekend
- 2021 – heavy rain overnight Thursday into Friday weekend 1 – delayed gates due to rain
- 2016 – delayed gates due to rain
- 2023 – moderate rain overnight Wednesday into Thursday weekend 1

**These are solely event period records/notes for heat/rain*

As a point of awareness for the Board, the department annually shares timelines and updates proactively as follows:

Through the online maps in the event load in/out and event day postings:

<https://www.austintexas.gov/event/austin-city-limits-weekend-1>

<https://www.austintexas.gov/event/austin-city-limits-load-out-period>

Maintenance work status to the public during the maintenance week:

<https://www.austintexas.gov/event/zilker-great-lawn-fall-maintenance>

Best Regards-

Kimberly McNeeley, CPRP
 Director, Austin Parks and Recreation
 512-974-6722