



*"...meeting community needs...enhancing quality of life."*

**PARKS, RECREATION & FACILITIES  
MANAGEMENT**

**Dean R. Gazza, Director**

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TO: Community and Economic Development Committee  
FROM: Dean R. Gazza  
DATE: 10/13/2020  
RE: Homelessness in City of Appleton Parks

Homelessness in parks increased as COVID-19 placed additional challenges on our population during 2020. Many public and private facilities were closed in which the homeless population would visit during the day including the Library and Transit Center. As a result, the park pavilions and restrooms became popular places. The park locations, primarily in the downtown area, experienced increased police call and required significantly more clean-up.

Here are some actions that we have taken to help mitigate the issues in the parks.

1. Turned off outlets in problem areas to deter homeless from congregating around pavilions. This included Jones Park, City Park, Jaycee Park, Linwood Park and Houdini Plaza.
2. Kept all restrooms open in the park pavilions to maintain sanitary conditions in other areas of the parks and City. With many places closed, public restrooms were limited.
3. Closed the Jones Pavilion as it became extremely challenging to keep clean as a result of vandalism.
4. Installed dividers and/or purchased benches with dividers to deter sleeping.
5. Requested that the Police Department have CSO's patrol various parks to help deter outstanding issues.

Overall, our parks experienced increased usage by the homeless population since COVID. We realize that this is a challenging issue. It is important to note that many within this population are respectful and utilize the facilities in a responsible manner. The parks are a resource for everyone in the community and when used responsibly we welcome their usage.

Please contact me at 832-5572 or at [dean.gazza@appleton.org](mailto:dean.gazza@appleton.org) with any questions.