

**Kilbourn Reservoir Park Project Update May 12, 2008**

Dear Friend of Kilbourn Reservoir Park:

I have good news and two requests of you.

The good news is that work resumed on the park April 16. In the next few months you will see the landscaping completed (to finish the topsoil and place seed and other plantings), site furnishings installed (benches, stairway handrails, and ornamental fencing on the south side of the hill along North Avenue), addition of wiring and lighting, and paving of pathways. All of this work, of course, is weather dependent.

Our first request is that everyone allow the grass on the new hill to take root to avoid soil erosion. Although the work will be substantially complete by mid-July, most of the site will continue to be fenced off and closed until next spring. It is very important that the plantings and grass seed are allowed to take hold on the site to ensure their healthy growth and to prevent erosion of the site.

With the help of Ald. Milele Coggs and Ald. Nik Kovac, we have identified areas we can open this season. We will place sod instead of planting seed in the areas of the tot lot and basketball court. As soon as the heavy construction is completed, we will lay the sod and relocate some of the fencing to open those areas on the north side of the park. We'd also like to invite you to an "open house" of sorts. We will select a couple of evening and weekend hours to open the site so everyone can see the exciting progress. For the reasons stated above, walking will be restricted to the pathways only. We will also prepare signs to inform people that the site needs to remain closed to protect the plantings.

Secondly, we are interested in your ideas about what to do with the brick structure that stood at the top west edge of the reservoir. This structure has chronically been covered with tagging and graffiti despite efforts to keep it clean. The 12'x22' four-walled structure has no floor and no foundation. It is essentially a brick shell. There are photos of the structure on our website, [www.water.mpw.net/1specialprojects.htm](http://www.water.mpw.net/1specialprojects.htm). Before construction started on the park, the structure was removed from the top of the hill at a cost of \$26,000. The structure is now sitting on its transport frame at the base of the hill on the northwest side of the park.

We have received an estimate of \$250,000 to remove the graffiti and restore the building. This does not seem to be a prudent use of funds, especially if it continues to be a target for vandals and graffiti taggers. We are looking for suggestions for what could be done with the structure other than return the restored building to the top of the hill. Among the options considered thus far:

- Sell or give the structure to someone willing to move it from the park.
- Demolish the structure and recycle or donate the bricks.
- Leave the structure on the park property, cleaned of graffiti and sealed to prohibit entry. Again, there is concern the building may continue to be a target for vandals and graffiti taggers.

Any and all suggestions will be considered. Please give us your ideas of what could be done with this structure by emailing [watwebcs@milwaukee.gov](mailto:watwebcs@milwaukee.gov) or mail your comments to our office by June 15. The Milwaukee Water Works will discuss the responses with Ald. Cogg and Ald. Kovac and will make a final decision. The Milwaukee Water Works will present this decision to the Historic Preservation Commission to meet the requirements of the historical designation of the entire park.

As always, thank you for your interest and participation in this project.

Very truly yours,



Carrie M. Lewis, Superintendent  
Milwaukee Water Works

Help determine the future of the gatehouse structure. Please see the letter above for details.



The 12'x22' four-walled brick gatehouse structure was built as a cover to protect gate valves on top of the reservoir. It was never occupied. The structure had only a wooden floor and no foundation; it essentially is a shell. The chimney is ornamental. This Oct. 23, 2006 photo captures the chronic problem of graffiti defacing the exterior.

These historical photos (<http://www.water.mpw.net/KilbournResHistory.html>) show how the structure perched on the edge of the open reservoir.



Before demolition of the reservoir beneath it, the structure was moved off the “hill” to the west side of the park. Because it has no floor, the contractor inserted beams into the walls of the gatehouse so it could be hoisted onto a trailer for moving. These interior views were photographed before the move.





The gatehouse structure in transit (November 2006)



The structure rests on a trailer on the west side of the park. (May 1, 2008)

2008 projects include plantings and grass seeding. Watch for installation of lighting, benches, stairway handrails, and ornamental fencing, and paving of pathways.



Underground wiring is marked with flags at the base of the western staircase before lighting is installed. Electrical wires will be trenched along walkways to avoid boring under the trees. Preparations are made for installing railings on the staircase. (April 23, 2008)



Workers frame east staircase and will install a short concrete wall near the east entrance to prevent erosion. (May 5, 2008)



Site erosion control measures appear to be holding up despite recent rains. There are a few areas on the hill where grass has started to grow while other areas have yet to show signs of life. The grass seed will need the entire growing season without foot traffic on it so the hill will be covered with healthy grass for the full opening of the park in 2009. (May 5, 2008)