

my MONROETM NEWSLETTER

A Message from the Director of Economic & Community Development

Dear Monroe Residents,

We all know one of the best parts of living in Michigan is when the seasons change. April is one of the best months of the year! We're shaking off the heavy coats and cold, and the dull brown and gray landscape is transforming by the hour with the emerging vibrant and colorful hues. Spring also brings about longer days and opportunities to get outside, be more active, and take in the fresh air and sunshine!



From Munson Park to Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, to miles of trails, including the Mark G. Worrell Trail and the Downtown Riverwalk, our hard-working crews in the Parks Division and Department of Public Services (DPS) are preparing our open spaces for you to get back outside and enjoy. I'm happy to report that the court nets are up, the Riverwalk is open, community garden plots are getting tilled, ball fields are being prepped, playscapes continue to be inspected and repaired, trees are being trimmed and planted and flowers will soon be going into the ground. Additionally, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Pedestrian Bridge across the river is undergoing much-needed rehabilitation to help you access St. Mary's Park or the Riverfront Pavilion.

But one of the most anticipated events of this spring is the official opening of the newly renovated Father Cairns Park at the corner of South Roessler and West Eighth Streets in southwest Monroe. Father Cairns Park now features a brand new playscape, a splash pad that will open when the weather is warmer, restrooms, three new tennis courts, a volleyball court, walking trails and new pavilions. While most of the construction wrapped up last fall, we're putting on the finishing touches. **And yes, we are exploring how we can incorporate basketball in the neighborhood, too (more to come on that in the coming weeks!).**

Please join City Council and your neighbors as we officially rededicate this beautiful jewel in the crown of our well-loved park system on Monday, April 15 at 6:30 p.m. We think Father Cairns, the first chairman of the Monroe Recreation Commission, would be proud of the new improvements available to park visitors of all abilities and ages!

As you gear up to enjoy the beautiful parks this summer, I encourage you to take a moment to say thank you to the amazing crew who works tirelessly to keep the parks safe and clean all year long. It is because of them that residents and visitors have such amazing park opportunities and events to enjoy.

Please be sure to follow the Monroe Parks & Recreation Facebook page so that you can stay up to date on all of the happenings in our parks system all year long. I'd also encourage you to do your part in helping us keep our parks clean and enjoyable for everyone by following the park rules that were recently updated (more on that below).

I look forward to joining many of our friends and neighbors in our beautiful parks and trails across our City.

Sincerely,
Mark Cochran

The Development of Father Cairns Park

The year was 1933; the idea was to create a space that would encourage play and movement while offering constructive activities to keep the youth in the community focused and engaged. Cairns Field - as it was called at the time - was the beginning of city-owned parks in Monroe. Now, nearly a century later Cairns Field is Father Cairns Park - a redesigned staple in the community.

Decades ago, Reverend Father George Cairns led the effort to secure and develop the field at the corner of Eighth and Union. Cairns Field became Monroe's first city-owned playground. It started small with playground equipment and spaces for baseball, softball, deck tennis and horseshoes.

"This is a new awakening," Father Cairns told the Monroe News at the park's opening in 1939. "We have hopes that the new awakening of recreational interests in Monroe may stir up a deeper and more effective civic-mindedness."

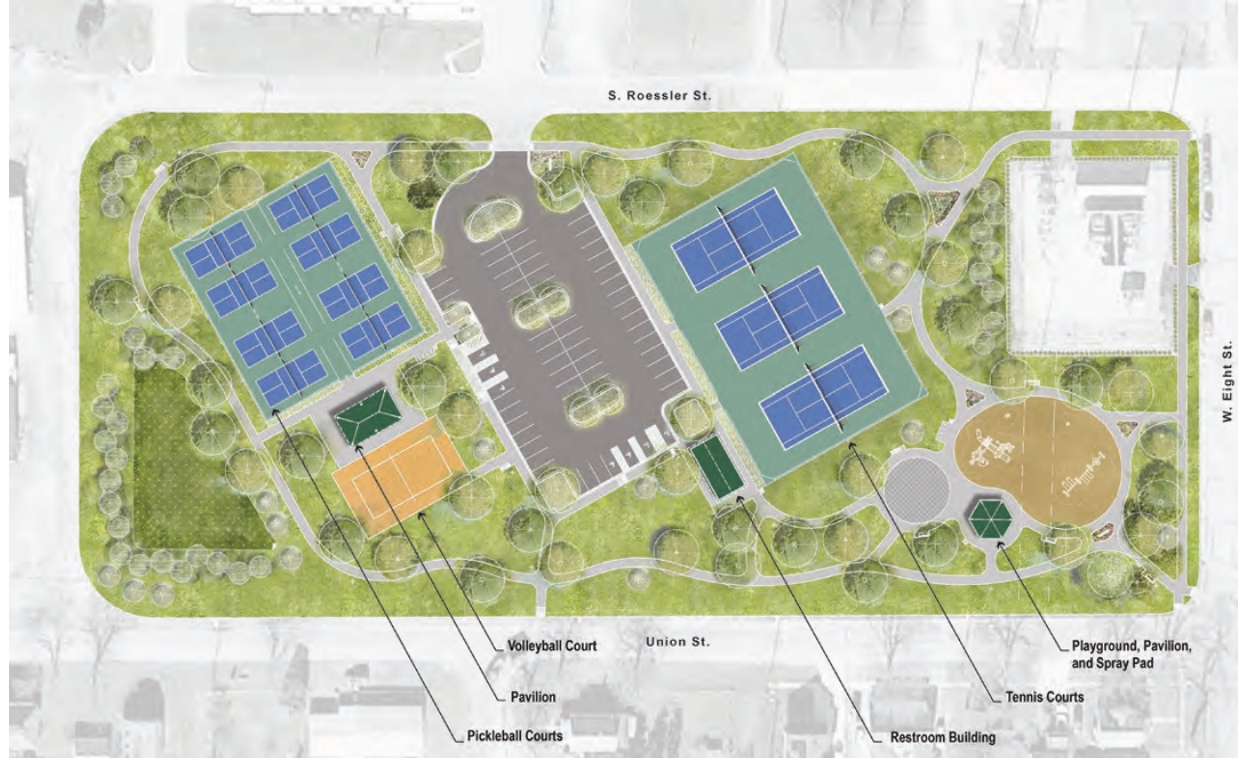


□ Monroe County Museum System



□ Monroe County Museum System

Fast forward 90+ years and Father Cairns Park is on the verge of another awakening. In 2017, the City of Monroe Parks and Recreation Division established its Master Plan after receiving extensive input from the community and stakeholders. Father Cairns Park was identified for major redevelopment. Not only was the park underdeveloped but it is located in a neighborhood that is underserved in overall park offerings. The City Council approved the plans for redevelopment in 2022 and now the vision is reality.



After months of overhaul, the park has been reimagined. Today, it features a playground, multiple swings, a splash pad, three tennis courts, eight pickleball courts, a sand volleyball court, a walking path, bike racks, a pavilion and restrooms. It offers ample space to play, and areas to explore and creates the environment that Father Cairns had always pictured. Already the surrounding neighborhood is enjoying the new amenities - and it's only the beginning.

This month, the City of Monroe will officially open the new and improved Father Cairns Park just in time for the spring and summer seasons. Join us to celebrate the history of the 4.2-acre park and experience its reimagined future.

Celebrate with us!

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Father Cairns Park Ribbon Cutting

WHEN: Monday, April 15, 2024

TIME: 6:30PM

WHERE: 802 W. Eighth Street



Explore Father Cairns Park



Playscape



Pickleball Courts



Restrooms



Splash Pad



Tennis Courts



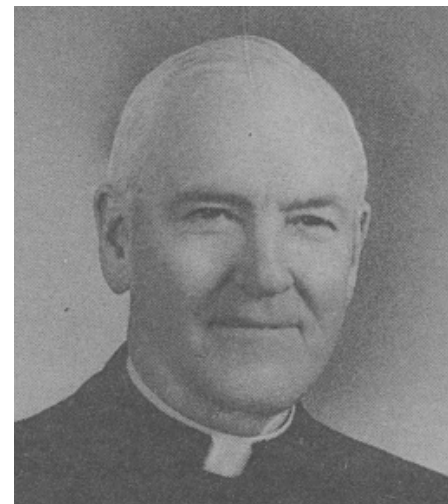
Walking Path

The Founder of Parks in Monroe

Meet Fr. George Cairns Ph.D.

April 15th will mark the rededication of Cairns Park, named after Reverend Father George J. Cairns, who served the Monroe community in various capacities throughout his life.

Father Cairns was born in Providence Rhode Island, where he attended primary and secondary school. He later graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Brown University in 1926 with his Bachelor's degree. Father Cairns also received his PhD in philosophy from Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. and took subsequent courses at the University of London and the University of Michigan.



In addition to his education, Father Cairns was ordained as a priest in 1925, eventually leading him to serve as a religious leader in various Michigan communities. Some of Father Cairns' most notable accomplishments included serving as an Assistant Pastor of St. John's Catholic Church for 17 years, as well as spending 13 years as the priest for St. Mary's Catholic Church in Royal Oak. Overall, Father Cairns served 36 years in active priesthood.

Although Father Cairns was a prominent figure in the religious community, he was heavily involved in other areas of the Monroe community since settling here in 1928. He served as the head of the education department at St. Mary Academy, teaching courses in theology, philosophy, and education. He held membership on the Wolverine Council, was the Boy Scouts of America president, and was the Monroe Community Chest's treasurer. Along with many other activities and titles, Father Cairns was the Founding Chairman of the Monroe Recreation Commission, leading Cairns Park to be named in honor of his work and service to the community.

As a result of Father Cairns' work on the Monroe Recreation Commission, which works to develop and uphold multiple parks and recreation systems for county residents, the City of Monroe is now home to 38 parks that cover 300 acres of land, as well as multiple recreation programs that City youth and adults can participate in. Many of these properties are owned by different public institutions around Monroe, such as the school system, furthering Father Cairns' values of education and community.

Father Cairns passed away on March 3, 1983, and was buried at St. Mary Cemetery in Royal Oak. However, even 40 years later, his legacy lives on throughout the Monroe community.

Parks at a Glance



Welcome to **YOUR** City Parks



38
Parks



11
sports programs
like youth tee ball,
softball, & tennis, &
adult soccer, flag
football & volleyball
programs.



526
Residents
per park



94
volunteers with
184 volunteer
hours



300
Acres



26
special events
scheduled
throughout the
year including the
Summer Concert
Series, Finally
Friday, Bark in the
Park and more.



207
facility
rentals in
2023 -
including
garden plots.



∞
memories &
experiences.



Plan Your Visit

Park Hours: 6AM-10PM unless otherwise noted

Restrooms: Facilities open in early April and close on November 1.

Park Rules: It is our goal that all residents and visitors alike are able to enjoy the parks & trail ways located throughout the City of Monroe in a safe and secure way. **Recently, the City updated all park rules and regulations.** We encourage you to take a moment and review the park rules & regulations and familiarize yourself with the updated language.

QUESTIONS? ☎ 734-243-0700

[Park Rules](#)

Commitment to Service

The City of Monroe's Parks and Recreation Division boasts a small but mighty team. Comprised of five full-time employees (director included), Parks and Rec is responsible for keeping Monroe beautiful, vibrant and FUN!

We are pleased to introduce to a few members of our dedicated staff.

Meet Amy Mason

Parks and Recreation Programmer

What does your job entail?

My position entails many different duties, in and out of the office. Working with local partners, I organize indoor events such as the Daddy Daughter Dance, Mom-Son Bowling, Cabin Fever Beach Party and Fantastic Family Movie Nights. I book the bands and attend the Summer Concert Series, along with organizing Line Dancing, Summer Dance Parties, movie nights, and other fun free events in City parks! I maintain the calendars for City Park amenities and process Park Facility Rental and Tournament requests, along with running the Parks & Recreation Division's social media.



What do you like most about your job?

I love that I have the opportunity to help improve the quality of life in Monroe by offering free activities and events to our Monroe area residents!

Most memorable moment on the job?

In July of 2022 Shout! Beatles Tribute Band was performing and people continued to arrive, all evening long. More than 13,000 people attended that concert!

Any professional achievements you'd like to mention?

Helping prepare me for this position, I received my Bachelors in Business Administration from Siena Heights after attending three years at MCCC. I also worked for Monroe Public Schools Community Education for about 15 years, organizing indoor programs and events.

When you're not at work, what are you doing?

I enjoy being outside in the fresh air and sunshine whenever possible, walking on my lunch hour, even in the winter cold. BRRR! I look forward to weekly church, and spending time with family and friends! My husband Aaron and I enjoy listening to all types of music and go dancing often!

Fun or surprising facts about yourself

In our friend group I am usually the coordinator, offering fun things to do. My husband says I am like Julie from The Love Boat, always facilitating fun!

How did you end up working for the City of Monroe?

I was looking for a position where I could work 12 months instead of nine like I was working with the schools. This position opened at the perfect time!

What motivated you to pursue this career or role?

I like to organize and it gives me joy seeing others enjoy themselves!

If you could program a robot to do anything, what would it be?

If a robot could accurately predict the weather on concert and event days that would be very helpful. Rainy days are challenging in outdoor programming!

Meet Brad Wiley

Parks and Recreation Supervisor

What does your job entail?

I assess and coordinate all aspects of parks maintenance. Everything from record keeping involving maintenance logs, herbicide, to

inspections that include playgrounds, trails, trees, courts and fields, skate parks, benches and bleachers. I also do Landscape planning and development, park planning, special event and tournament setup and coordination.



What do you like most about your job?

The best part of my job is seeing our parks full of people and families, whether it's for a special event or just enjoying the space, and knowing our department played a part in it.

Most memorable moment on the job?

Any time a seasonal worker comes back and says that summer parks work was the best job they've ever had.

Any professional achievements you'd like to mention?

I have a bachelor's degree from the University of Toledo in Recreation and Leisure. I'm also a Certified Playground Safety Inspector and I've received a Recreation Installation Specialist certification. I graduated from Parks & Recreation Management School (NC State University through Oglebay training institute) and I'm in the process of becoming a certified arborist.

When you're not at work, what are you doing?

I spend my time at my family's sporting events, coaching, and trying to stay outside as much as possible.

Fun or surprising facts about yourself.

I have awesome dad jokes!

How did you end up working for the City of Monroe?

I was hired in as a 19-year-old who was searching for a skill set and a direction.

What motivated you to pursue this career or role?

Once I realized parks and recreation was a way I could give back to my community and it involved everything I enjoyed growing up, I knew I was in the right place.

If you could program a robot to do anything, what would it be?

WEED LANDSCAPE BEDS!!

Get Involved with Your City Parks

Seasonal Workers

Are you looking for summer work? Dive into the great outdoors and join our dynamic team as a Seasonal Parks and Recreation Employee!

We're looking for people who are passionate about the great outdoors and want to make a positive impact on their community. Working with Parks and Recreation you'll get to:

- **Beautify Your Community:** Transform ordinary spaces into vibrant oases where families and friends create lasting memories.

- **Get Your Hands Dirty:** Dive into the dirt and let your green thumb flourish as you plant, water, weed, and mulch your way to park perfection.
- **Embrace Adventure:** From mowing lawns to raking leaves, every day brings new challenges and opportunities to explore the great outdoors.
- **Harness Teamwork:** Join a passionate team of outdoor enthusiasts who share your love for nature and making a difference in the community.

Ready to embark on your next outdoor adventure?

[Apply Now!](#)

Volunteer & Make a Difference

Are you interested in making a difference in your community? Become a volunteer with Parks and Rec!

Volunteer opportunities range from:

- Teaching a class in your area of expertise
- Cleaning the park
- Helping to build a new park amenity



Individuals, families and groups are welcome to sign up. When you contribute your time and energy into your parks, YOU help our community flourish and thrive.

[Apply Here!](#)

City of Monroe Calendar of Events & Important Dates

April 1

City Council Meeting

Council Chambers | 7:30PM

[Watch Online](#)

April 8

Total Solar Eclipse Viewing Event

Council Chambers | 7:30PM

[Watch Online](#)

April 13

Daddy Daughter Dance

10AM-5PM | River Raisin National Battlefield Park

April 15

Father Cairns Park Ribbon Cutting

6:30PM | 802 W. Eighth Street, Monroe, MI

April 15

City Council Meeting

Council Chambers | 7:30PM

[Watch Online](#)

[View City Events](#)

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