The Municipal Park Grant Commission (MPCG) is the steward of a portion of the Prop P (Parks) County sales tax, generating about $6 million annually for the parks of the 90 municipalities throughout incorporated St. Louis County.  (This Prop P is different than the Prop P passed a few years ago for Public Safety). Since its formation, the Municipal Park Grant Commission has focused its efforts on delivering on the promise made to voters in 2000:  to use taxpayers’ funds to help enhance parks as demand for leisure increases, the pressure from development grows, and the need to protect property values intensifies.

More information on the MPCG can be found at <https://www.muniparkgrants.org/about-us>.

Prior to 2019, Bel-Nor was awarded only one grant from Prop P funding, which was used to build the gazebo at the intersection of Arlmont and Bellerive back in 2004. In the meantime, our surrounding communities have taken advantage of this funding to build or improve upon parks or common areas in their cities. In late 2018, our Board of Aldermen decided to apply for a grant to create a small walking trail in Bel-Nor South, to be known as the Horatio Park Trail (HPT). A series of public hearings were conducted to obtain input from our residents in mid-2019.

Because the City lacks sidewalks in this area, adding a trail system where residents would be able to walk or bike as part of their routine recreation and health activities would provide a safe alternative to using public streets. We contracted with Weis Design Group to help us win a planning grant (step one in the process), lay out and draw up plans for the park trail, and prepare our application for a construction grant (step two). Fortunately, we were awarded the construction grant in the amount of $265,000 in October of 2019. Weis Design Group took us through a competitive bidding process and we awarded a contract to Gershenson Construction in May of 2020. Work is now underway.

Given the success we had with winning planning and construction grants for the HPT, the Board decided to submit another application for funding to replace the current gazebo with a new, more accessible and sturdier structure, and make improvements to the large island at Clearview and Racquet. We were awarded the planning grant in July of this year and applied for the construction grant in late August. Grants from the MPCG are awarded in amounts based on the per capita population of the municipality (another reason why this year’s Census count is so important!). Other factors such as past awards, number of existing parks, etc. are also taken into account.

Your Board of Aldermen sincerely hope that all our residents will be proud of this capital improvement project in our neighborhood!