Riley Park

Park and Recreation Board...Did You Know?

August 28, 2018
Park Features

- 2.8 acres
- Open-air shelter
- Playground
- Soccer field
- Parking lot
- Portable restroom
- Drinking fountain
- Grills and picnic tables
Early 1900’s

• The Bragdon brothers purchased property for a dairy farm.
• In 1914, a fire destroyed most of the farm.
• The brothers decided to develop the property.
Deerfoot Acres

- The development was named Deerfoot Acres.
- Des Moines School board purchased 3 acres.
- A temporary school house was built.
Riley School

• Bond issue passed to fund a new building.
• In 1917 the school was named for James Whitcomb Riley to honor the famous "Hoosier Poet".

"When I see a bird that walks like a duck and swims like a duck and quacks like a duck, I call that bird a duck."

James Whitcomb Riley
Riley School Closes

• In 1973, consolidation of schools led to the Riley closing and being offered for sale.

• In 1975, the School Board rented the building to the Des Moines Civic Ballet.

• By 1982, vandalism and fires caused the ballet to move and the building to be removed.
Riley School Site

- The site became a park with off-street parking, a play field and playground.
- In 2002, the Parks and Recreation Department worked with the Merle Hay neighborhood to get ideas for developing a new Riley Park.
Riley Park

• In 2005, the Parks and Recreation Department began a two-phase plan to develop the park.
• Phase one included landscaping, a parking lot and sidewalk to soccer field.
Riley Park

Phase two added playground equipment, open-air shelter and picnic area with grill.
Patriotic Tree

• In 2007, the Greater Des Moines Garden Club planted a tree to honor Irmundine Breymann.
Malibu’s Friendship Fountain

- Park neighbor, Tracy Struble, donated a drinking fountain in memory of her dog Malibu.