

MINUTES
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Park Board Administrative Offices, 1923 N. Weller Ave., Springfield, Missouri
And via Microsoft Teams for Park Board Members
Friday, April 10, 2026

1. ROLL CALL

Chair, Susie Turner, called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

Park Board Members Present: Don Chenevert, Jr., Cody Danastasio, Curtis Jared (via-Teams, visual confirmation), Mark McNay, Dr. Dale Moore, Dr. Dianna Parker, Royce Reding (via-Teams, no visual confirmation), Susan Turner

Park Board Members Absent: Leslie Carrier

Park Board Staff Members Present: Tim Carpenter, Matt Coats, Jenny Edwards (via-Teams), Leigha May, Tim McCrea, Jerry Mitchell, Ron Schneider, Jill Simmons, Jeff Smith, Jackson Thompson, Lana Woolsey

Guests: Madelyn G'Sell, Missouri State University, Josh Gallardo, Missouri State University, Dan Dawson, Railroad Museum Grant Beach Park

2. READING & APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2.1. Mark McNay made a motion to approve the minutes from March 13, 2026, Park Board Meeting, seconded by Dr. Dianna Parker. The motion was approved unanimously.

2.2. Mark McNay made a motion to approve the closed session minutes from the March 13, 2026, Park Board Meeting, seconded by Cody Danastasio. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. REPORT OF THE OFFICERS

3.1. None was provided

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1. There was no unfinished business

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1. **McDaniel Park Improvements Update** Senior Parks Planner, Jeff Smith, presented an update to the Park Board Members on ongoing improvements at McDaniel Park, including design concepts for a new pavilion and restroom facility, an inclusive playground, and a bicycle pump track. The project, originally planned in three separate phases, has been consolidated into a single construction effort due to a combination of city funding and significant private donations. Staff indicated that construction documents are underway and that a public announcement with updated timelines and conceptual renderings is forthcoming.

Phase one includes the installation of the pump track, funded largely through a donation from Trail Spring, along with a new, safer entrance off National Avenue and a centrally located 55-space parking lot designed to improve access and reduce traffic conflicts within the park. Subsequent phases include construction of the pavilion and development of an inclusive playground, which will feature safety enhancements such as perimeter fencing. Additional improvements include upgraded pedestrian connections, removal of outdated infrastructure, and considerations for future enhancements such as trailhead features. Overall, the project emphasizes safety, accessibility, and efficient use of space while advancing the long-term vision.

- 5.2. **Approval of an agreement with the Board of Education for the School District of Springfield, R-12 for shared use of facilities** Director Ron Schneider provided an overview of ongoing discussions with Springfield Public Schools (SPS) to formalize a shared use agreement for facilities. He noted that while both entities have collaborated for over 20 years through an informal arrangement, this is the first effort to establish a written agreement. Over the past year, staff have worked with SPS representatives to develop terms, with increased urgency due to a school-imposed deadline to finalize an agreement by June.

The proposed agreement outlines the mutual use of facilities, including the Park Board's reliance on school properties for SPARC programs, such as before- and after-school care, summer camps, and youth sports, as well as Parks providing SPS access to outdoor amenities at no cost. The agreement also incorporates new SPS requirements, including enrollment of eligible summer camp participants in the district's Launch online learning and meal assistance programs, which SPS will provide at no direct cost to Parks. Staff recommended the approval of the agreement, noting only minor indirect impacts such as additional staff training. Mark McNay made a motion that the Board approve and authorize entering into a shared use agreement with the R-12 School District of Springfield, seconded by Dr. Dale Moore. The motion passed unanimously.

- 5.3. **Accept a donation to fund court divider nets at the Cooper Tennis Complex** Cooper Tennis Manager, Mallory Weber, presented the Park Board with a private donation staff was informed of, in the amount of \$7,525. This donation will fund the replacement of tennis court divider curtains at the Cooper Tennis Complex indoor facilities, as the existing divider system that was installed in the early 2000s, has deteriorated beyond repair and now presents safety concerns, including loose netting and structural wear that could disrupt play or cause injury.

The proposed replacement will improve safety and functionality while creating consistency with the divider system currently installed on the north side of the facility. The new curtains will remain retractable for user flexibility and enhance the overall appearance and usability of the courts.

Cody Danastasio recused himself from the vote, due to a family connection to this donation. Dr. Dianna Parker made a motion for the Board to accept the donation of \$7,525 offered by Sherry Hellweg, that will be used to reimburse the Park Board for its purchase of tennis divider nets for the southside indoor tennis courts at Cooper Tennis Complex. Mark McNay seconded that motion and the motion passed unanimously.

- 5.4. **Approval of an agreement to place a temporary sculpture at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park** Director Ron Schneider provided an update to the Park Board regarding the initiative celebrating Springfield as the birthplace of Route 66 through the installation of themed public art. Following initial

discussions in November 2025, the Board expressed support for the concept but raised concerns regarding long-term ownership and maintenance costs. In response, staff declined permanent ownership of sculptures while remaining open to temporary arrangements that mitigate financial and maintenance responsibilities.

Staff was presented a proposed agreement with Vital Farms and the City of Springfield to install a sculpture at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park under a temporary arrangement of up to three years. Under the agreement, the sponsoring entities will retain ownership and assume all costs associated with installation, maintenance, and removal or relocation. The selected location within the park was identified as a high-visibility, low-risk area with limited vehicle access and reduced potential for vandalism. The Board discussed the proposal, noting it aligns with prior concerns while still supporting the broader goals of the initiative. Don Chenevert, Jr., made a motion that the Board approve and authorize entering into an agreement for the temporary placement of a Route 66 Sculpture at the Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park. Dr. Dale Moore seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

- 5.5. **Approval of easements for the Ward Branch Trail** Assistant City Attorney, Lana Woolsey, presented two easement agreements to the Park Board related to the Ward Branch Connector Trail project, which will provide an important connection extending toward Fremont Avenue. One easement has been secured with Burrell, while another has been executed with Ozark Motor and Supply Company, represented by its president, Larry Lipscomb. These agreements represent significant progress, bringing a total number of approved easements for the project to three, with one remaining easement pending final documentation.

Staff noted that both easements are critical to advancing the trail connection. Additionally, Burrell has agreed to maintain existing bridges on its property that will be incorporated into the trail, alleviating anticipated project costs and supporting project feasibility. The Board reviewed the easements and proceeded with separate motions for consideration of each agreement.

Dr. Dale Moore made a motion to approve the easement with Burrell and accepting this portion of the Ward Branch Trail Connector into the Park Board's trail system, seconded by Cody Danastasio. The motion passed unanimously.

Cody Danastasio made a motion to approve the easement with Ozark Motor and Supply Company, accepting this portion of the Ward Branch Trail Connector into the Park Board's trail system, seconded by Dr. Dianna Parker. The motion passed unanimously.

- 5.6. **Superintendent of Park Business Operations Report** Superintendent of Park Business Operations, Jerry Mitchell, presented an updated financial projection for the Park Board through June 30, 2026, reporting projected operating revenues of approximately \$37.49 million and expenditures of \$36.16 million, resulting in a projected net income of \$1.33 million. Strong sales tax revenues continue to be a key driver of this positive outlook, with April collections exceeding the prior year and total projected sales tax revenue estimated at over \$16.1 million. These gains are helping offset unplanned maintenance and repair expenses, including improvements at the Botanical Center, Jordan Valley Park, Brightspeed Ice Park, and demolition of the Hog Barn at Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park. Additional positive developments included lower-than-expected bids for multiple roof replacement projects, reducing anticipated out-of-pocket costs for the Park Board. The Golf Enterprise Fund also

continues to perform exceptionally well, with record-breaking revenues and increased rounds played, contributing to a strong fund balance and supporting future capital needs. The Capital Projects Fund reflects ongoing investments, including major expenditures for the Cooper Park ARPA project and the Dickerson Park Zoo bear exhibit boardwalk. Overall, the financial performance remains strong and aligned with projects, with continued monitoring of revenues, expenditures, and capital needs.

5.7. Director of Parks Report Director Schneider and staff met with representatives from Waters Edge Aquatic Design and SAPP Design who provided an update on the current conditions study being performed on outdoor swimming pools. While the report is still in draft form, there are emerging trends such as pool vessels that are at the end of life, inefficient chemical feed systems, low attendance and revenue. Staff anticipates a final report to be delivered to the Park Board in June or July.

Parks administrative staff attended a retreat, facilitated by Habitat Communication and Culture on March 24, 2026, as a follow up to the Board's retreat on March 2, 2026. Staff reviewed and built on the key areas of focus the Board identified and translated them into actionable objectives and key results (OKR's). Director Schneider anticipates a presentation of the OKR's from a representative with Habitat Communication and Culture at the May 8, 2026, Park Board Meeting.

Director Schneider expressed appreciation for staff that celebrate service anniversaries in April:

Larry Odle – will celebrate 5 years on April 19, 2026

Jeffrey Wiltz – will celebrate 5 years on April 27, 2026

Rebecca Lesmeister – will celebrate 10 years on April 18, 2026

Jarrett Brown – will celebrate 10 years on April 11, 2026

Matthew Coats – will celebrate 25 years on April 30, 2026

Mikael Irvine – will celebrate 30 years on April 14, 2026

Construction of the Bear Boardwalk is complete and opened for guests on March 31. The improvements are well received as they provide critical access to animal exhibits and connectivity throughout the venue. Director Schneider encouraged Board members to attend the grand opening and ribbon cutting event scheduled for 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 14.

Staff has been working with representatives from Dark Sky Missouri to bring more attention to light pollution and preserving dark sky viewing at certain parks. Director Schneider encouraged Board members to attend an event being held at Lost Hill Park on Thursday, April 16 at 7 p.m. at the Lost Hill Pavilion. The Mayor will present a proclamation declaring International Dark Sky Week in the City of Springfield.

Director Schneider mentioned the efforts of staff in gearing up for reaccreditation through the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA). Reaccreditation is needed every 5 years and required an extensive review of the management, operation and services provided to the community. A welcome reception for the CAPRA review team is scheduled to take place at the Botanical Center on Tuesday, April 21, at 5 p.m., and Board members are encouraged to attend.

Director Schneider mentioned that nominations for Park Board officers will be conducted at the May 8 meeting, with elections to follow at the June meeting. The election process will include the

subsequent rotation of officers.

6. CALENDAR

- 6.1. Park Board Meeting: Friday, May 8, 2026, at 8:30 a.m., at the Park Board Administrative Office, 1923 N. Weller Ave., Springfield, Missouri.

7. ADJOURNMENT

- 7.1. Cody Danastasio made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Dr. Dianna Parker. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.