

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Friday, December 9, 2016
Park Board Administrative Offices
1923 N. Weller, Springfield, Missouri**

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Matt Bailey, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Members Present: Matt Bailey, Carolyn Gerdes, Dee King, Sidney Needem, John Price, Michele Risdal-Barnes

Members Absent: Scott Bailes, Bob Horton, Sarah McCallister

Park Board Staff Present: Jon Carney, Matt Coats, Mike Crocker, Jeff Cumley, Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Jim Fisher, Karen Herron, Anne-Mary McGrath, Jerry Mitchell, Pam Montanez, Miles Park, Kim Reser, Diana Tyndall, Lana Woolsey

Guests: Dickerson Park Zoo: Joey Powell, Public Relations and Marketing Director and Chelsea Hoover, Events Coordinator

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. John Price made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2016, Park Board Meeting, and the November 10, 2016, Closed Park Board Meeting as submitted; seconded by Mr. Sidney Needem. Motion was approved unanimously.

III. DICKERSON PARK ZOO PROJECTS UPDATE

Mr. Miles Park, Assistant Director, reviewed two recent projects at the Dickerson Park Zoo. The first one was the construction of a new public restroom facility in the west end of the Zoo. This project was a high priority and consistently mentioned as a suggestion from Zoo patron surveys. Mr. Park showed several interior and exterior pictures of the new facility. The restroom facility project has been completed and is now opened to the public. The second project was rebuilding the boardwalk. The boardwalk project was challenging due to its elevation in a confined area. The deck is two feet wider than the previous boardwalk with a wood frame made of recyclable materials, and a roof structure for an overlook area. Mr. Crocker mentioned that the project is scheduled to be completed in January.

Mr. Mike Crocker, Assistant Director, provided a brief history of the Friends of the Zoo (FOZ), and the important role this organization has played in the successful operation of Dickerson Park Zoo. FOZ was formed in the early 1990's, and the organization has been responsible for the majority of the capital projects completed at the zoo including the administration building, which was finished in 1995. The funding support that FOZ provides is very essential to the operation of the zoo due to limited financial resources available to address older infrastructure maintenance and repair needs. In addition to capital projects, FOZ provides funding for staff

and the operations of the education, special events, and public relations and marketing departments, along with the fundraising coordinator position. Financial support has also been provided for other maintenance and repair projects, the purchase of capital equipment, and the acquisition of the remaining properties surrounding the zoo. In the last few months, FOZ has purchased the last remaining parcel of land adjacent to the zoo with long-term plans of moving the playground area to this location, and then expanding the parking area. Parking is very difficult when both the Zoo and the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds have events at the same time. Mr. Crocker stated that FOZ also supports field conservation and helped to start the zoo's job shadow and internship program. The zoo typically host 25-40 interns each semester, with a job shadowing program for students as young as eighth grade. Mr. Crocker also introduced two new FOZ employees, Ms. Joey Powell, Public Relations and Marketing Director, and Ms. Chelsea Hoover, Events Coordinator.

IV. PARK BOARD MARKETING INITIATIVES

Ms. Diana Tyndall, Marketing and Sponsorship Coordinator, provided an update about the Park Board's recent marketing initiatives. Ms. Tyndall stated that she has been working with each division to help with their marketing flyers and brochures to create a recognizable, but unique, identity to the Park Board. Along with printed materials, Ms. Tyndall also manages over 40 social media pages. Ms. Tyndall explained that she and Ms. Jenny Edwards, Public Information Administrator, collaborate on many projects, but Ms. Edwards works more with the public relations aspect and distribution of news related information to various media outlets. Ms. Tyndall seeks out opportunities to advertise in various publications or obtain corporate financial support for upcoming programs, events, or activities.

Brittney Bywater, our graphic designer, has been instrumental in the design of several new marketing pieces including the new Golf Patron Plan brochure, Weddings in the Park brochure, and the recent CAPRA Party invitation. Ms. Tyndall featured several before and after pictures of redesigned publications. We also recently designed a new ad for the Springfield Convention and Visitor's Bureau highlighting a variety of Park Board attractions for visitors. Working with our technology staff, Ms. Tyndall helped to make the purchase of gift certificates available online.

With the Park Board's recent participation in wedding shows, a new brochure, and a specific web page dedicated to wedding reservations and locations, we have seen a significant increase in inquiries and reservations for weddings at our facilities. The Botanical Center reported a 17 percent increase in wedding reservations over the past year. Last January, we featured a new promotion for our family centers. The two-week promotion helped us welcome 310 new family memberships. Our new Golf Patron Plan not only was renamed, but the new brochure also better describes the value of participating in the program, and we have recorded a 48 percent increase in participation.

Ms. Tyndall stated that the brochures are available at our facilities and online. Ms. Dee King, Park Board member, stated that she thought our display booth at a recent wedding show was inviting and informational.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee Reports.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

Mr. Jeff Cumley, Superintendent of Jordan Valley Parks and CODP Programs Mr. Cumley reported that Jordan Valley Park served as a parking and viewing area for the recent Veteran's Parade in November. Mr. Robert Crampton, a community volunteer, arranged for a shuttle to pick up and bring Veteran's to the parade. It was a well attended celebration for the men and women who have served our country.

The Festival of Lights kick off was on November 19 in Jordan Valley Park. The staff installed more speakers, so that the holiday music could be heard throughout the park, while visitors observed the lights dancing timed to the music. Santa Claus also made his yearly visit. This Saturday, the annual Holiday Ice Skating Show will be held in Mediacom Ice Park. There will be several free ice-skating sessions over the holidays.

Ms. Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Public Information Administrator Ms. Edwards stated Ms. Pam Montanez, our web designer, has been instrumental in helping with the redesign and function of our new website, along with being an additional photographer at various events and programs. Ms. Montanez also created a SnapChat filter during the Springfield Lasers season, and for Turkey Trot, which had 11,000 views. She has also been reviewing our top visited pages and search words to help streamline information.

Mr. Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities Mr. Coats reported that staff has been conducting seasonal cleaning and maintenance activities at the Lake Springfield Boathouse, and updating the maps along the trails within the park. Candy Cane Lane, a drive-thru lighted park with over 10,000 lights at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park, will be open weekends from 5-8 pm until December 18. At the Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center, staff has been completing a painting project on the observation deck.

Mr. Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations Mr. Mitchell reported that sales tax revenue continues to be above budget for the year even though December sales tax figures were down by five percent. The Golf Fund is down for the year, but we have seen additional revenue sales for the Golf Patron Plan. With the recent good weather, the Dickerson Park Zoo has seen an increase in visitors for this time of the year, representing an increase in revenue. The Mediacom Ice Park has seen an increase in pro shop sales, lessons, and strong attendance for ice hockey games, making revenue numbers higher compared to last year at this time. The internal audit firm, RubinBrown, presented their findings to the City Council's Finance and Administration Committee, which went well with few questions. Mr. Mitchell thanked the Board for their guidance through the process. We expect a press release soon from the Committee regarding the audit report.

Ms. Kim Reser, Assistant Director Ms. Reser provided the Recreation Report on behalf of Ms. Anne-Mary McGrath, who had laryngitis at the meeting. Ms. Reser stated that at the United States Tennis Association's Missouri District annual meeting, we were awarded the Event of the Year Award for our "Tennis Under the Lights" event that was held this summer. In cooperation with Woodland Heights Neighborhood Association and the USTA Missouri District Office, we provided this first-time event to help teach fundamentals and ball control skills to first time tennis players. The event was open to all ages and was attended by over 80 youth and adults.

Ms. Reser mentioned that Ms. McGrath attended the recent Price Cutter Charity Championship (PCCC) Celebration of Sharing luncheon. The Park Board has participated in the PCCC event for the past 17 years by providing volunteers to marshal hole #15, staff the volunteer tent, host a Junior Golf Outing at Betty Allison, provide rounds of golf for tournament volunteers, and bleachers for the driving range. By participating, our Park Board Scholarship Fund is one of the charities that receive proceeds from the event. This year marks the second largest distribution of money to the 45 community children's charities recipients.

At the USA National Council meetings, it was announced that we were awarded the 2018 USA Softball Girls 18U "B" Northern National Championship, which will take place in July of that year at Kilian Sports Complex. This will be our first time hosting this event, and we anticipate at least 20 teams participating. The last time this event was held in Missouri was in 2010 in St. Joseph.

Ms. Reser stated that we hosted our second largest turnout for the 22nd annual Turkey Trot event, with over 8,378 registered participants. A full report and check presentation with our event partner, Developmental Center of the Ozarks, will take place at the January Board Meeting.

Mr. Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services Mr. Carney stated that with the recent good weather, Zoo attendance, golf rounds, and trash collection numbers are up significantly for this time of year. Mr. Carney stated his appreciation of the crews that assisted with the closing and opening of the streets along the Turkey Trot route, and the clean up and tear down of the 1000-foot safety fencing for the race. It is a great example of departmental team work. Board Member, Ms. Carolyn Gerdes, inquired if several weeping willow trees could be replanted near Drummond Lake. Mr. Carney stated that the trees were removed in an initial effort to remove weeds and replace with more manageable items. Also, with the help of a recent grant, we are making improvements to the area by planting items that help mitigate populations of geese that are attracted to bodies of water.

Mr. Miles Park, Assistant Director Mr. Park stated that the Springfield Botanical Gardens recently received formal Arboretum Accreditation through the ArbNet program created by the Morton Arboretum. Accreditation is based on self-assessment and documentation of an arboretum's level of achievement of accreditation standards, including planning, governance, number of species, staff or volunteer support, education and public programming, and tree science research and conservation. There are four levels, and we are a level 2, with just 59 other entities in our level. There are a total of 159 accredited entities world-wide. The Friends of the Garden were helpful in the process due to their award of a TRIM grant administered through the Missouri Conservation Department. The grant allowed the purchase of a tree inventory software program, which was used to complete the inventory collection requirements for the arboretum accreditation.

Mr. Jim Fisher, Assistant Director Mr. Fisher thanked everyone who assisted with the preparation of the CAPRA Party on December 5. We collected \$825 in donations for our Park Board youth scholarship fund at the event. The recent PGA Golf Sale was successful and included merchandise from eight area golf courses. We also had several investments made into Golf Patron Plan accounts during the sale.

Mr. Mike Crocker, Assistant Director Mr. Crocker reminded the Board that staff has already begun budget meetings within their divisions. Budget discussion meetings with the Board will be scheduled for late January or early February. He thanked the Board's ongoing support throughout the year and wished everyone and their families a happy holiday season.

VII. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Matt Bailey, Vice Chair, thanked everyone who attended the CAPRA Party. He said he was confident that Dr. Sarah McCallister was particularly proud of this achievement as she understands first hand the magnitude of work that it takes to complete and pass the accreditation standards. Mr. Bailey continued by saying both he and Dr. McCallister appreciate the honor of being recognized by our peers.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

X. CALENDAR

The next Park Board meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 13, 2017, at 8:30 am, at the Park Board Administrative Offices.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Sidney Needem made the motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ms. Michele Risdal-Barnes. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned by 9:36 am.