

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Friday, September 8, 2017**

Springfield-Greene County Botanical Center, 2400 S. Scenic, Springfield, Missouri

I. ROLL CALL

Dr. Sarah McCallister, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Members Present: Scott Bailes, Matt Bailey, Dee King, Dr. Sarah McCallister, Sidney Needem, John Price, Michele Risdal-Barnes

Members Absent: Carolyn Gerdes, Bob Horton

Park Board Staff Present: Bob Belote, Jon Carney, Matt Coats, Mike Crocker, Jeff Cumley, Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Jim Fisher, Kevin Holle, Cindy Jobe, Katie Keith, Ben Kellner, Anne-Mary McGrath, Karen Mellinger, Jerry Mitchell, Miles Park, Kim Reser, Diana Tyndall, Lana Woolsey

Guests: Lisa Bakerink, Director, Friends of the Garden; Brad Bodenhausen, President, Sister Cities; Andy Drennon, Sister Cities Board Member; Seiran Chiba, Calligrapher; Robert Booker, MSU Intern

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Dee King made a motion to approve the minutes as a group and as distributed: August 9, 2017, Food and Beverage Committee Meeting; August 11, 2017, Park Board Meeting; and August 30, 2017, Workshop Meeting; seconded by Mr. John Price. Motion passed unanimously.

III. JAPANESE FALL FESTIVAL OVERVIEW FROM SISTER CITIES

Ms. Cindy Jobe welcomed the Park Board members to the Botanical Center and invited everyone to attend the Japanese Fall Festival, which begins on Friday, September 8, with a parade of Springfield Public School children through the Japanese Stroll Garden, at 5 pm. The event would not be possible without the partnership and cooperation with the Park Board staff and the more than 400 volunteers who help with the event. We are fortunate to work with performers from all over the world who bring their talent and culture to share with our community. Local performer, Shoji Tabuchi, will be our featured guest on Saturday, September 9. Last year, the attendance throughout the weekend totaled to more than 17,000 visitors. Mr. Andy Drennon, Sister Cities Board, thanked the Park Board for their support and for the many cultural opportunities that Ms. Jobe brings to our community. He also invited everyone to attend the "Day of the Dead" event, which is a unique Tlaquepaque cultural experience, to be held in Springfield on Friday, October 13. Sister Cities will be taking a group to visit Tlaquepaque, Mexico, our other Sister Cities' partner city, in February. Interested participants can contact Ms. Jobe for more details. Mr. Brad Bodenhausen, President of Sister Cities Board, also expressed his appreciation to the Park Board and for our recent cooperation with the Peace through People Pavilion, which is a visible symbol and celebration of the partnership. Ms. Seiran

Chiba, calligrapher, using ancient art techniques and her calligraphy talent, drew a picture representing “harmony” for the Board members. Mr. John Price, Board member of both the Park Board and Sister Cities, emphasized the importance of the partnership, which he has been a part of for over 20 years. He has seen the Sister Cities organization grow significantly by conducting memorable educational experiences in the community. Mr. Price explained more about the “Day of the Dead” event on October 13, which is a deeply spiritual event that is celebrated in Mexico. It is an event to celebrate loved ones.

III. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Food and Beverage Committee Mr. John Price, Committee Chair, stated that the Food and Beverage Committee has been working with Park Board Administrative Staff, who have been researching and gathering information about other park systems and cities that offer enhanced food and beverage options. Mr. Price explained that there are three primary reasons why our parks system is choosing to move forward with a proposal to amend the City Code to allow alcohol at specific venues where youth-oriented activities are limited. The first reason is to meet the demands from our park patrons, and the hundreds of partnership groups, event organizers and sponsors, who have been contacting us for years requesting to host events at our venues. The event organizers and park patrons choose other facilities specifically because the sale or possession of alcohol is not allowed per City Code, causing the park system to lose thousands of dollars in event revenue. The second reason is that without a parks sales tax initiative, we do not have funds for capital projects to expand current facilities or develop new facilities, or repair aging infrastructure. The Park Board has looked at other possible sources of revenue, but have been unsuccessful in identifying a continuous and significant resource. Adding this amenity to specific venues would provide an elevated level of service, and the revenue would help to build the parks reserve fund for unexpected maintenance and repair situations. Thirdly, with the anticipated increase in revenue funds, it will allow us to keep our fees and charges for programs, services, and events at a reasonable rate. The last several budget cycles, the Park Board has had to make some hard decisions to increase fees for programs to make sure that the necessary funding is in place to keep us viable.

Mr. Price stated that it is important to understand what we are not proposing as well. We are not proposing to allow sale or possession of alcohol in our neighborhood parks, not at the pool concessions stands, and not at the baseball or softball complexes. Our focus remains keeping our parks and facilities family friendly. The specific venues that are being proposed are locations that repeatedly have been requested for the enhanced services for adult-oriented, private rentals. It is the Park Board’s intention to amend the authority to grant permits, following approved guidelines, for the three 18-holed golf courses, Rivercut, Bill and Payne Stewart, and Horton Smith. Therefore, this would exclude the Betty Allison at Oscar Blom, nine-hole, par 3, golf course. Our research shows that we are the only golf course within 50 miles that does not allow the sale or possession of alcohol at their golf course. Not allowing this amenity causes a significant loss of revenue through golf rounds, special events, and tournaments. As an enterprise fund, the golf operation is independent from the rest of the Park Board’s budget. With enhanced beverage options, it will help the golf fund become more self-sustainable for much needed repairs and renovations. Additionally, we are proposing to allow private rentals at Dickerson Park Zoo in designated locations only when the Zoo is closed to the public. Lake Springfield Boathouse is becoming a premier wedding venue, but is currently under utilized due

to the current city code restrictions. Mediacom Ice Park and Cooper Tennis Stadium would be options as permitted venues for college, professional, and private rental events. The Springfield-Greene County Botanical Center and Davis House would also be a permitted venue to offer enhanced beverage options. All requests for this enhanced service would be subject to strict permit requirements.

Mr. Price state that the Park Board recognizes that with this upgraded service comes great responsibility. We accept this responsibility and will train staff appropriately and make the necessary adjustments by adopting a permitting process and additional rules and regulations that will protect all users, facilities and the public. We will oversee and monitor the new service, along with enforcing the regulations. We will review the process and amend as necessary to preserve the family-friendly environment that the Park Board has created over the past 100 years. Mr. Price made a motion to continue to move forward with researching, investigating, developing and presenting food and beverage options for and on behalf of the Park Board, which will include, but not be limited to seeking an Amendment by City Council of the Springfield City Code, Section 78-4, to allow alcohol at limited events and locations within designated Park Board properties; seconded by Michele Risdal-Barnes. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, stated that although Park Board members Mr. Bob Horton and Ms. Carolyn Gerdes were not in attendance at today's meeting, they expressed that they were fully in support of the motion and would like the proposal to move forward. Mr. Belote thanked the other Food and Beverage Committee Members, Dr. Sarah McCallister, Scott Bailes, and Dee King, for their time and careful consideration. The Park Board has spent two budget cycles over 18 months reviewing options to identify capital funding sources. We plan to meet with City Council and the Greene County Commission for additional resource information.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Jeff Cumley, Superintendent of Jordan Valley Park and CODP Programs Mr. Cumley stated that the Route 66 Festival was a great success with over 53,000 people in attendance August 11 and 12. Parks helped to support the event with setting up and tearing down of equipment in Jordan Valley Park, providing the stage for the pre-parade party, and Robert Uckele's division catered the food for the pre-party, as well. In CODP Archery, we had three state champions, including our CODP Coach Amy Francka who also received the Missouri Archery Association Shooter of the Year award. We will host a golf tournament benefitting the CODP program on Saturday, October 14. The Athlete of the Year reception will be held on Sunday, October 15.

Mr. Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities Mr. Coats mentioned that staff continues to prepare for Harvest Fest at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park, which begins on September 29. Ms. Cassie Hayden became the sixth certified instructor on staff at the Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center, which means we now have the most certified instructors in southwest Missouri. The Equestrian Center continues to conduct 140 lessons a week. Last month, staff baled 200 square bales. At Lake Springfield, we added new signs that also include City Utilities updated logo. The maintenance staff built six new benches along the Fulbright Trail.

Ms. Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation Ms. McGrath stated that we had an active, successful outdoor pool season, with over 68,000 people who visited the pools.

We also had seven heat advisory warnings this season in which we provided extended hours and reduced admission with a canned food item. Fassnacht and Grant Beach are our most visited pools with 22,000 visitors at Fassnacht and 18,000 visitors at Grant Beach. On Tuesday, September 5, we had our annual Dog Swim at Fassnacht Pool. We close the pools to humans, and let our canine friends take a dip in the pool. We had 95 dogs participate in the safe and fun event. In cooperation with the American Heart Association's Better U Program, our Outdoor Initiatives and fitness center staff worked with 15 participants over 12 weeks to help them learn about leading healthy active lives through training sessions and programs, including activities designed for families. Ms. McGrath stated that the Skate Park celebrated their three-year anniversary recently. The Skate Park has seen a 103 percent growth in membership and have added several new camps and programs. Additionally, the Skate Park has seen an increase in families visiting.

Mr. Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations Mr. Mitchell explained that due to the timing of this month's Board meeting, August revenues and expenditures were not available to report. However, Mr. Mitchell provided a five-year trend analysis graph for both revenues and expenditures. Reviewing past performance of these key numbers, helps us to prepare future budget projections, as well as the budget itself. To meet the increasing "cost of doing business", we will continue to carefully review and determine where future adjustments in fees and charges may be necessary, so we make sure our budget is balanced.

Ms. Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Public Information Administrator Ms. Edwards stated that we are partnering with Dickerson Park Zoo to make sure their latest news releases are also posted on the Park Board website and social media pages to help keep our patrons informed. Ms. Diana Tyndall, recently worked with 13 kids for an upcoming parks radio announcement.

Ms. Kim Reser, Assistant Director Ms. Reser reported that the Lake Country Soccer is expecting 180 teams to participate in the Fall Classic, scheduled for October 13-15. Ms. Reser introduced Mr. Robert Booker, a Missouri State University intern, who is currently pursuing his Master's degree in Health Promotion and Wellness. Mr. Booker is interested in parks administration and how parks affect the community.

Mr. Miles Park, Assistant Director Mr. Park indicated that park staff assisted with six neighborhood night out celebrations in August, and there are four more scheduled in September. Neighborhood Works Projects continue to make steady progress toward completion. Mr. Park mentioned that the Gray-Campbell Farmstead will host the 1860's Lifestyle and Expo event at Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park on September 16-17. There will be a ribbon cutting for the new pavilion on Saturday, September 16 at 1 pm. Mr. Park reported that Mr. Ben Kellner will receive the Partnership Award from the Missouri Department of Conservation during the grand opening festivities for the Wonders of Wildlife Museum. Mr. Park mentioned that he is working with several agencies for unique ways to manage the geese issue that we have in several parks.

Mr. Jim Fisher, Assistant Director Mr. Fisher mentioned that staff continues to review new point of sale software for our golf courses. Mr. Fisher thanked the Park Rangers for their continued "behind the scenes" hard work at a wide variety of events throughout the park system.

Mr. Mike Crocker, Assistant Director Mr. Belote stated the Mr. Crocker was awarded a Certificate of Merit for Zoo Keeper Education Award by the American Association of Zoo Keepers at a recent conference in Washington, DC. Mr. Crocker was recognized for his commitment and support of keeper training and animal care through professional development opportunities. Mr. Crocker mentioned that Lee Hart, Zookeeper, was elected to the national American Association of Zoo Keepers Board of Directors, which is a four-year term. Mr. Crocker stated that visitor attendance at the Zoo is up over 20,000 people from this same time last year. Mr. Crocker stated that he should receive confirmation regarding the recent accreditation visit at the upcoming Association of Zoos and Aquariums conference next week.

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks Mr. Belote recently met with City Manager's office to provide an update of the recent projects that have been completed at Founders Park. One of the first priorities was to address any safety related concerns such as filling in the concrete pools. We plan to keep the fountain, but without the stream feature. Staff will clean out the excess vegetation and install fencing, as well. The City Surplus Fund is providing \$17,000 towards the Founders Park renovation and repair work, along with parks operations funds. Mr. Belote stated that one year ago this month we were defending our NRPA Accreditation at the national conference in St. Louis. Several administrative staff will be attending the annual conference this year on September 25-29. Mr. Belote stated that he will focus on learning how to share the economic value of our parks system to local community. Mr. Belote invited everyone to attend the Ozark Greenways dedication of the Trail of Honor at the Missouri Veteran's Cemetery at 2 pm on October 12. This is the first trail that crosses a cemetery in the United States. Posted signs indicate that walkers and cyclists should stop for a moment of reflection while on the trail. Mr. Belote stated that Mr. Tim Smith, Deputy City Manager, will retire at the end of the year. Mr. Smith has been a supporter of Parks in his current position and when he was the Greene County Administrator. We will miss him in his role and affiliation with Parks. Mr. Smith does plan to come back to manage several projects after he retires.

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair did not have a report.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

IX. CALENDAR

The next Park Board meeting will be at the Park Administrative Offices on Friday, October 13.

X. ADJOURMENT

Mr. Sidney Needem made the motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. John Price. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:38 am.