

MINUTES
FOOD AND BEVERAGE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Wednesday, October 25, 2017
Mediacom Ice Park, 635 E. Trafficway, Springfield, Missouri

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. John Price, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Scott Bailes, Dee King, Dr. Sarah McCallister, John Price

Committee Members Absent: none

Park Board Staff Present: Bob Belote, Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Jim Fisher, Karen Mellinger, Lana Woolsey

Guests: Tim Smith, Deputy City Manager, City Council member Phyllis Ferguson, City Council member Craig Fishel

II. FOOD AND BEVERAGE COMMITTEE REVIEW

Following introductions, Mr. John Price, Chair, Food and Beverage Committee, explained that when the Parks Sales Tax sunset in 2012, our parks system was left with limited resources for rebuilding old infrastructure, reinvesting in neighborhood parks, and no available capital funding. For the last several budget cycles, the Park Board and Administrative Staff have been reviewing alternative ways to increase revenue, while still maintaining the park system at a high level and meeting the demands of our patrons at a fair and reasonable cost.

Mr. Price stated that the Food and Beverage Committee recently presented their research of a potential proposal to increase revenue to the Park Board, which would meet the demands of our partner groups and patrons and generate additional revenue for our golf fund and help to repair and restore neighborhood parks. At the September Park Board meeting, the proposal was presented to seek approval to amend the City Code authorizing the Park Board to adopt and enforce rules and a permit system allowing the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages at a limited number of designated park facilities. The Park Board unanimously approved the proposal.

Mr. Price explained the three primary reasons the Park Board chose to move forward with a proposal to amend the City Code for this purpose. The first and primary reason is to meet the demands from our park patrons and hundreds of partnership groups, event organizers, and sponsors, who have contacted us for years requesting to host events at our venues. We have had to turn away sponsors for Mediacom Ice Park and various golf tournaments, along with park patrons and event organizers who choose other facilities specifically because the sale or possession of alcohol is not allowed per the City Code. Secondly, as stated earlier, without a parks sales tax, we do not have funds for capital projects to expand current facilities, develop new facilities, repair aging infrastructure, and reinvest in neighborhood parks. Thirdly, an

anticipated increase in available funding would allow us to continue to keep our fees and charges for programs, services, and events at a reasonable rate.

Mr. Price stated that it was important to understand what we are not proposing. We are not proposing to allow the sale or possession of alcohol in our neighborhood parks, not at the pools or their concession stands, and not at the baseball or softball complexes. The specific recommended venues are locations that repeatedly have been requested to include enhanced services for adult-oriented and private rental type of events. We are not promoting this service at youth-oriented activities nor at youth-oriented facilities when they are open to the general public. Mr. Price stated that we recognize that this upgraded service requires additional responsibility and training on behalf of the Park Board. We accept that responsibility and will oversee and closely monitor this new service to protect all users, facilities, and the public. We will continue to focus on preserving the family-friendly environment that the Park Board has created over the past 100 years, while still serving the demands of our patrons and partner groups.

Mr. Price mentioned that with the help of Lana Woolsey, Assistant City Attorney for Parks, we have drafted two options for consideration to amend the City Code for review. Option A would remove parks from the current City Code restriction and allow the Park Board to specify which events and locations within designated facilities would apply and develop and oversee their own permitting process and guidelines. Option B would allow the Park Board to offer enhanced services at only limited events and locations within designated park properties, and changes to the locations would need additional approval by City Council. Mr. Price reviewed our recommended list of nine specified locations out of 104 park sites that we are proposing to offer the enhanced services. The two City Council individuals asked questions regarding how the enhanced services would be offered. Mr. Belote indicated that the golf courses would be equipped to sell closed container cans or bottles, but additional permitting and rules would apply to other facilities. Additionally, the City Officials offered recommendations for additional information that should be provided for a future meeting with the Community Involvement Committee or City Council members. Ms. Woolsey provided a brief history from 2002, when the Park Board previously approved a similar food and beverage concept proposal, which was then presented to City Council. Both City Council individuals felt strongly that the Park Board would be the best entity to administer and oversee the enhanced service process including developing the rules, regulations, and permits and authorizing which events and locations within the park system. The City Officials mentioned that event organizers have seen an increase in attendance and revenue from the many special events on the Square and at the Fairgrounds where the sale or possession of alcohol has been allowed, and noted there have not been any reported incidents, as well. They also agreed that offering enhanced services would attract more private rentals and events within the park system, which would continue to help the local economy. Mr. Belote indicated that we are estimating conservatively that \$250,000 of additional revenue may be received in the golf enterprise fund and an additional \$200,000 to our general parks budget from private rentals and special events at specified venues, as a result of this development.

The Committee discussed with City Officials on a possible timeline in presenting the proposal to the Community Involvement Committee, and then, to City Council at large. It was suggested that the Park Board should obtain letters of support, along with identifying supporters of the proposal who might speak to City Council at a future meeting. Mr. Belote mentioned he would

also meet with the Greene County Commission to make them aware of our proposal and our hopes to move forward.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no additional comments or concerns, Dr. Sarah McCallister made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ms. Dee King. Motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:28 p.m.