MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Friday, May 10, 2019
Park Operations Building on the Administrative Campus
1923 N. Weller, Springfield, Missouri.

I. ROLL CALL

Ms. Carol Gerdes, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:01 am.

Members Present: Randy Blackwood, Mike Chiles, Carolyn Gerdes, Dee King, Tammy Mast, Sidney Needem, Michele Risdal-Barnes

Members Absent: Scott Bailes, Cynthia Lipscomb

Park Board Staff Present: Bob Belote, Jon Carney, Matt Coats, Mike Crocker, Jeff Cumley, Jenny Edwards, Jim Fisher, Anne-Mary McGrath, Karen Mellinger, Jerry Mitchell, David Moore, Miles Park, Kim Reser, Jeff Smith, Diana Tyndall, Lana Woolsey

Guests: Presiding Greene County Commissioner Bob Dixon; Deputy City Manager, Maurice Jones; Ozark Greenways Executive Director, Mary Kromrey; Susie Turner, Ozark Greenways Board President; Amber, Ozark Greenways Intern.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Sidney Needem made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 12, 2019, Park Board Meeting and the April 12, 2019, Closed Park Board Meeting; seconded by Ms. Michele Risdal-Barnes. Motion passed unanimously.

III. TOUR OF PARKS AND TRAILS FACILITIES

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, thanked everyone for joining us on the Parks and Trails Facilities tour today, and introduced our guests: Presiding Greene County Commissioner Bob Dixon; Deputy City Manager, Maurice Jones; Ozark Greenways Executive Director, Mary Kromrey; Susie Turner, Ozark Greenways Board President; Amber, Ozark Greenways Intern. We also welcomed Jeff Smith, our new Senior Park Planner.

Mr. Belote stated that the bus tour today is at the request of the Board members as a follow-up to our November tour of park facilities, which was conducted in lieu of a typical Park Board Meeting. The park sites that were selected for the tour were not intended to be our newest properties with the latest amenities, but rather a snapshot of current challenges throughout our park system. Mr. Belote stated that although we have not had a capital funding source for more than seven years, the Park Board was the recipient of $1.5 million dollars in HUD and Neighborhood Works program funds, which allowed the installation of new playground equipment, walking trails, restroom facilities, lighting and parking lot upgrades in several neighborhood parks. Additionally, the City Manager's office and City Council also approved more than $500,000 for much needed upgraded equipment and repairs at Jordan Valley Ice Park and Fountain, along with funds for the redesign of Founders Park.

Many of the park sites visited have aging infrastructure, and the type of improvements needed include upgrading current sewer lines, creating better stormwater drains for flooding situations, reconstruction of parking lots, and repairs and renovations of pavilion structures, restrooms, and concession stands. Additional infrastructure improvements include updating current recreation sports facilities with better lighting, crowd seating, playing fields, along with creating enhanced recreational facilities such as turf soccer fields, locker rooms, media capabilities, and commentator booths. These improvements and enhanced amenities would allow us to provide better facilities for our local athletes, but also to host more tournaments and championships, generating additional revenue to maintain the facilities. Renovation of all three golf club houses is needed to provide a better customer experience and allow for more non-golf social events and rentals, with the hope of generating additional revenue that is not weather dependent. We visited several areas where the park site is currently leased or where adjacent land could be purchased to enhance the park amenities, but with no identified future funding mechanism, we simply cannot purchase any land for future park developments. The tour also identified several opportunities whereby we have partnered with organizations to improve or enhance the patron's experience at the park site, but also highlighted what other opportunities we could develop if funding were available.

Mr. Belote mentioned that several Ozark Greenways and Park Board members, along with other community officials, recently visited the Northwest Arkansas community to see their trail development infrastructure and the economic impact the trail system has made on their community. On today's bus tour, many areas were identified where a trail could be connected to an existing trail or the development of new trails could expand our system, enhancing the economic impact of this outdoor activity. However, after visiting Northwest Arkansas, it was quickly noted that their trails were also much wider (12 foot verses 8-10 feet), made of concrete, and lined for bike and walk use, making their trails far more user-friendly, and a designated alternative mode of transportation to travel throughout their city, along with serving as a travel destination site for tourists.

Today's Parks and Trails bus tour included the park sites listed below. There was discussion of the repairs and improvements needed to refurbish and restore the vitality of each of these park sites. We took the opportunity to also identify the various projects we have completed, despite the lack of capital funding, thanks to our valuable partner organizations. Additionally, we reviewed the extensive list of over $1 million dollars of deferred maintenance items as the tour was conducted.

Park Sites: Silver Springs Park, Tefft School/O'Reilly-Tefft Gymnasium, Smith Park, Cooper Park and Sports Complex, Glenwood Park, Valley Water Mill Park, Stewart Golf Course, Dickerson Park Zoo, Grant Beach Park, Nichols Park, Zagonyi Park, Ewing Park, Springfield-Greene County Botanical Gardens, Horton Smith Golf Course, Chesterfield Park, Davis House & Property, Rivercut Golf Course, Riverbluff Cave Area, future Kreider Park, McDaniel/George Moore Park, Meador Park, Phelps Grove Park, Fassnight Park, Founders Park, Route 66 Roadside Park.

Due to time constraints, not all proposed park sites were visited, but the Board members agreed that the tour was a valuable experience and helped them to see the magnitude of the Park Board's financial situation and how it has become such a significant financial challenge to just maintain our current daily operations without a new funding source.

IV. COMMITTE REPORT

a. Future Funding Committee Update Chair, Carolyn Gerdes, stated that she has attended the first two Future Funding Committee meetings. The Committee has reached a consensus as to what the next steps should be and pursuing this option should be sooner than later due to the significant impact of the new minimum wage laws and current deferred maintenance repairs. Mr. Belote mentioned that he will make plans to speak with our City Manager's Office and the Greene County Commissioners, along with the Springfield Chamber of Commerce Executive, to further discuss the Board's recommendations of the next step to pursue.

V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. Greene County Family Justice Center Proposal for Tefft School Mr. Belote mentioned that Greene County Family Justice Center has made a proposal to partner with Springfield Public Schools (SPS) by moving their offices to the vacated Tefft School, which is adjacent to the O'Reilly-Tefft gymnasium that we currently lease from SPS. Mr. Belote has met with Greene County Family Prosecutor's Office to inform them of our current lease, which allows us to share the parking lot. We are confident that we will be kept informed regarding the use, renovations, or planned development of the parking lot should the proposal be accepted, and plans are made to move forward.

b. Grant Beach World War 1 Memorial Proposal Mr. Belote stated that the Sons of the American Revolution have proposed to move the World War I Memorial commemorative marker, which is currently located in Grant Beach Park, because the marker has been vandalized several times. To preserve the marker, the Organization has offered to move the marker to the Springfield National Cemetery at Hazelwood as it is considered a more secure and appropriate location. The Board discussed that staff should first discuss with the Grant Beach Neighborhood Association to see if they support the move to the new location. Additionally, it should be researched to see if we can determine who initially paid for the marker and placed it in the park. Otherwise, the Board was generally supportive of the proposed move of the marker.

c. DRAFT Park Board Hammock and Slack Line Policy Mr. Belote explained that our office has received a wide variety of comments about the use of hammocks and slack lines in several of our parks. Although typically this is a seasonal activity, it has received a lot of attention and there has been discussion about the topic on social media sites. A proposed policy was reviewed and discussed with the Board members. The Board members were not in full agreement of all aspects of the policy and requested that they discuss the issues and proposed solutions in more detail at a future meeting.

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 regularly scheduled Park Board meeting is Friday, June 14, 2019, at the Park Board Administrative offices (or facility to be determined).

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Michele Risdal-Barnes made the motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ms. Tammy Mast. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m.