

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD**

Friday, October 11, 2019

Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park, 8325 W. Farm Road 146, Springfield, Missouri

I. ROLL CALL

Ms. Carol Gerdes, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

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

Members Absent: Scott Bailes, Dee King, Cynthia Lipscomb

Park Board Staff Present: Lisa Bakerink, Bob Belote, Tim Carpenter, Matt Coats, Mike Crocker, Jeff Cumley, Jake Dill, Jenny Filmer Edwards, Jim Fisher, Valerie Haigh, Tom Highfill, Anne-Mary McGrath, Jerry Mitchell, Miles Park, Jennifer Pennington, Jenny Perkins, Kim Reser, Lynn Vanden Berg

Guests: Denny Pilant, Springfield Sister Cities Association

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Randy Blackwood made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 13, 2019, Park Board meeting; seconded by Ms. Michele Risdal-Barnes. Motion passed unanimously. Ms. Michele Risdal-Barnes made a motion to approve the minutes from the Park Board Presentation with Greene County on September 13, 2019; seconded by Mr. Mike Chiles. Motion passed unanimously.

III. HARVEST FEST OVERVIEW & INTRODUCTION OF RUTLEDGE-WILSON FARM PARK STAFF

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, welcomed everyone to Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park. Mr. Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities, introduced his staff who coordinate the many activities during Harvest Fest. Matt stated that Harvest Fest has been an annual event for 12 years. Tom Highfill, Facility Maintenance Crew Leader, manages the parking areas and electrical set-up during Harvest Fest. Matt said that over 13,000 cars were parked over the five-weekend event in 2018. Lynn Vanden Berg, Community Recreation Coordinator at the Equestrian Center, brings 15 horses to RWF, and her staff provide lead-line rides during Harvest Fest. Last year, 3,800 lead-line rides were provided. Jake Dill, Community Recreation Coordinator at the Farm Park, starts planting sorghum for the corn maze in June, and coordinates the preparation and growing season of the mums and pumpkins. Jake is head of the staff "drive team", who drive the hay ride wagon, cow train, and grain train. Jenny Perkins, Community Recreation Coordinator at the Farm Park, oversees corporate rentals and the Haunted Trail, which includes scheduling 60-70 part-time employees each week. Jennifer Pennington, "JP", Community Recreation Coordinator at the Farm Park, takes care of the barn and the farm animals. Matt said he relies on JP to fill in where needed as she is quite versatile in all areas of the farm duties, including substituting as a drive team

member. Bob explained that Matt and his staff help facilitate the Parks Department Employee Appreciation Picnic and extended an invitation to the Board to attend the picnic on Saturday, October 26.

IV. JAPANESE FALL FESTIVAL REPORT & SISTER CITIES CHECK PRESENTATION

Bob introduced Denny Pilant, current Springfield Sister Cities Association President, and Lisa Bakerink, new Executive Director for Springfield Sister Cities Association. Denny stated that the festival was very successful this year. Lisa thanked several behind the scenes staff who assisted in the success of the event including Brittany Bywater, Parks Graphic Designer, who designed the program and printed material, and Diana Tyndall, who obtained event sponsorships. Lisa said that three delegates from Isesaki, Japan were at the festival. One of them performed, one did pastel painting, and the other was a representative from the Isesaki government. Lisa stated that over 13,000 people attend the festival based on admission sales and the number of cars. Lisa displayed a Japanese wooden cup and ball toy (kendama) and indicated they sold out of this toy because one of the performances called Zoomadanke used the toy with a dance and music.

Lisa and Denny presented half of the proceeds to the Park Board Chair in the amount of \$25,050.08. Lisa said that the Japanese Fall Festival is more like two events because she coordinates the festival itself, and the delegation from Isesaki, as well as guest performers. Additionally, she also coordinates finding host families for the Isesaki guests and planning meaningful activities for them during their visit to Springfield. Lisa estimates that there are between 100-125 volunteers for this event, including our Japanese/American friendship group, Kizuna. They help to make sure the Tea Ceremony, the Tea Café, and the kimono try-on experience is authentic to their culture. Bob stated that last year's volunteer report from Anne-Mary McGrath indicated a dollar value of \$1,700,000 for the volunteer service the Park Board received. Bob stated we should continue to share with the community not only what the Parks Department does daily, but the amount of time and commitment we receive from our volunteer groups who assist us in coordinating quality events such as the Japanese Fall Festival. Bob reminded the Board that we reinvest our portion of the proceeds back in to the Mizumoto Stroll Garden and the park. Bob mentioned that Ben Kellner and Katie Keith also are instrumental in the success of this event. Robert Uckele and his division also provide concessions throughout the weekend event. Lisa mentioned that Sister Cities has used past proceeds from this event to install electrical service throughout the gardens, which now allows them to host the Gardens AGLOW event that begins at the end of November.

V. COMMITTEE REPORT

Bob gave a brief update on behalf of the Future Funding Committee. He said it was a really great opportunity to meet with the Greene County Commissioners last month and provide them with a Parks update, including budgeting issues and the ability to make repairs and renovations, address minimum wage, and develop Park facility improvements. The committee met last week and established a couple of important benchmarks. We plan to meet with the other eight parks agencies in Greene County to talk about their park system challenges, commonalities, future goals for their departments, and the projects they completed with the parks sales tax proceeds they received in 2001 and 2006. We also plan

to meet with our key partner groups and organizations like Sister Cities, Friends of the Garden, Ozark Greenways, and Friends of the Zoo to discuss their upcoming projects, future development, and concerns they may have with respect to funding challenges. We are working to schedule these meetings in November.

The Sports Tourism Feasibility Report will be presented to the community on Thursday, October 17, at 10:30 a.m. at the Springfield Chamber of Commerce office. The Committee reviewed sports facilities within the community, determining facility gaps, and provided advice about what facilities the community should focus on in the future. Bob believes there will be implications for the Parks system within the report, and the next concern would be how to pay for those recommendations.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services Mr. Carney said September was a unique month with 18 days over 90 degrees and rainfall at 1.61 inches below normal. We were 9.4 degrees above the normal temperature for this time of year. The litter report was 71,000 pounds. Jon said that we schedule ten calendar days each year and shut down the Chesterfield and Doling Aquatics Centers. Our staff drain the pools, clean, paint, polish, and perform necessary maintenance tasks. We completed Doling pool in September, and we are currently performing the annual cleaning tasks on Chesterfield's pool. It's a time-consuming task that is performed along with all of our normal daily duties and special events.

Jon mentioned that they have noticed an increase in vandalism the last two months at a variety of facilities, on picnic tables, and other surfaces. Bob mentioned that Jim Fisher and Tim Carpenter, along with Park Operations staff, are working very closely together reviewing different types of cameras to install in the problem areas. Bob mentioned that we may have some funding support from City Council member, Phyllis Ferguson, so we plan to spend that money very wisely. Ranger Tim Carpenter said a game camera has been ordered. Mr. Randy Blackwood inquired about changing out the various ballfield stadium lights to LED within the parks system. Jon said the lighting at Cooper Tennis Complex has been our first big LED lighting change and success.

Ms. Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation Ms. McGrath stated that the Concessions staff provided authentic Japanese food at the Japanese Fall Festival. Robert Uckele worked with some of the Sister Cities volunteers, who actually shared their family recipes. Robert offers concessions at the Farm Park each Harvest Fest weekend and has extended their hours, so they can accommodate visitors who come out for the Haunted Trail in the evening. Anne-Mary stated that due to the weather, several of the activities and festivities that were planned for the Stanley Cup celebration downtown and on the square had to be moved inside to Jordan Valley Ice Park. Anne-Mary mentioned that we have a partnership with the American Heart Association and their Go Red Better U promotion. Ten women from our community are selected for a heart healthy makeover during a twelve-week period. She said the Go Red Luncheon is a culmination of those twelve weeks where attendees meet the ten women and hear about the positive health changes they made as a result of the program. Anne-Mary unveiled the 25th anniversary Turkey Trot shirt. She said the Turkey Trot is still the largest 5K race on Thanksgiving Day in the state of Missouri. New for this year is the Traveling Trotter option for folks who want to participate but will not be

in town. They can register as a Traveling Trotter by November 11, and we will mail them a shirt, so they can run with us in spirit. Normal Early Bird registration ends November 22. Anne-Mary said that this year our presenting sponsor is Brad Bradshaw. She said that last year one of our founding fathers, Monty Montgomery, passed away. Unfortunately, our other founding father, Gene Mulner, passed away recently, so we will pay tribute to Gene like we did for Monty, with a special inscription on the back of the shirt. She said that Gene was always the one who picked the t-shirt color each year, as he reviewed the New York Times Fashion Section before recommending his selection. This year, the trending color is navy blue, so Gene selected navy blue as the t-shirt color.

Mr. Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations Mr. Mitchell reported that the September sales tax revenue was high, and the October sales tax revenue was up for the third consecutive month. The Parks Property Mill Tax revenue was up for the year ending June 2019. Just like our sales tax revenue, we budget conservatively with our Parks Property Tax revenue. We have projects and operational costs, such as minimum wage increases that any additional revenues help us to cover. Overall expenditures are down from last year. As expected, revenue at Jordan Valley Ice Park was down about \$30,000 due to the ice being down for several weeks. There was a decrease in operating expenditures to help offset some of that cost. Zoo revenues were up, and golf revenues are continuing strong. Jerry stated we will soon be reporting year-end numbers to the City's Finance Department, and the City's audit report will come out in January. Mr. Randy Blackwood asked if any of the revenue lost due to the ice being down fall back on the contractors. Bob said they were still reviewing the information, but it is likely that the revenue loss will not be covered by the contractors. Mike Chiles asked if we have a way of benchmarking our Parks system financial performance with other comparable parks systems around the country in terms of cost per resident in Greene County compared to other counties to demonstrate the fiscal prudence that's being exhibited. Bob said yes, and we intend to do that with the economic impact study, and some of the benchmarking will be a part of that study.

Ms. Jenny Edwards, Public Information Administrator Ms. Edwards stated that Friday, October 25 at 4 p.m. is the rededication of the historic marker that was moved to Zagonyi Park noting Zagonyi's charge, which was a Civil War battle event that took place in Springfield in 1861. We are dedicating the new fountain installed in the Sensory Garden at the Botanical Center on Saturday, October 26, at 1:30 pm. We are also planning a dedication for the new playground equipment at Lafayette Park sometime that week. Jenny reported that the Stanley Cup visit was very exciting and well attended. The parking lot was full by 5 pm; the event didn't start until 7 pm, and the Cup didn't arrive until 8 pm. There was live music and the St. Louis Blues game on the jumbo-tron. The recent KSMU "Take It Outside" series featured three of our parks: Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park, Valley Water Mill Park, and Springfield Botanical Gardens. Jenny worked on the Recreation, Sports and Leisure section of The Community Focus Report that was issued from the Community Foundation of the Ozarks. Jenny noted the Red Flags and Blue Ribbons from the report for the Board to review. She mentioned that an expanded edition is available online for more information about any section.

Mr. Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities Mr. Coats reported that corporate rentals are very popular at the Farm Park, and they are booked every weekend during Harvest Fest. Several companies have already made their reservation for next year.

Field trips are also very popular. There will be over 50 field trips to the Farm this year Tuesday through Friday. Matt said that staff built a new platform for the lead-line rides during Harvest Fest to help children get on and off the horses. Lake Springfield Park will have about 500 cross country runners tomorrow for the Springfield Public Schools Cross Country Meet. Timmons Hall is starting a Brown Bagging It program on the third Tuesday of every month. There will be a different theme and educational program each month.

Mr. Miles Park, Assistant Director Mr. Park stated that we hosted the 1860's Gray Campbell event in addition to all of the other festivals in September. Gigs in the Garden is a new event offered each Sunday in October at the Peace Through People Pavilion in the Botanical Gardens and is sponsored by Central Bank. Miles reported that the mechanical equipment repairs at Jordan Valley Ice Park are nearly completed. He stated that it has been a challenging project, and he appreciates everyone's patience. In regard to replacing LED lighting on the sports fields, Miles stated that the engineering for sports fields and LED lighting would require a considerable amount of capital funding support. He thinks that in time the technology will be more consistent, and a long-term decision we will want to consider in the future. On October 24, Ozark Greenways will open bids for a project to complete a section of the Fulbright Springs Trail. It's the gap between the David C. Murray Trail and the Lost Hill Park, which will result in a trail that begins at Ritter Springs Park and will go all the way to Truman School Park. Ms. Carolyn Gerdes mentioned that October 19 is the Ozark Greenways dedication of the Willard Trail Head to commemorate 25 years of the Frisco Highline Trail.

Ms. Kim Reser, Assistant Director Ms. Reser stated that Lake Country Soccer recently introduced United States Youth Soccer Organization's TOP Soccer program. TOP stands for The Outreach Program for soccer. This is a free local program for youth with physical or cognitive disabilities primarily for ages 5-14. Each player is paired with a buddy or two and interested volunteers can call 862-3211. Michele Risdal-Barnes asked if there was an age requirement to be a buddy. Kim indicated that volunteers should be high school age or older.

Mr. Jim Fisher, Assistant Director Mr. Fisher stated we hosted the Community Olympic Sports Development Program's Athlete of the Year Awards at the Davis Property on October 6th. Jim reported that we now have a signed and executed contract with Arts Market for our economic impact study. The contractor plans to visit Springfield before the end of October. Carolyn Gerdes asked if or when we will receive a progress report, and Jim stated that we hope to have a preliminary report in December.

Mr. Mike Crocker, Assistant Director Mr. Crocker stated that we hosted the 2nd Annual Brew at the Zoo on September 14th. Last year, we had 300-400 people, and this year, attendance was estimated at 1100-1200 people. Mr. Crocker mentioned a new event called Zoo Goes Boo, which was proposed by the Bull 105.1 radio station, will be very different from Spooktacular. Based on social media reports, Zoo staff is expecting a good turnout for the event. Parking is the biggest challenge during events like these at the Zoo. Mike reported that the zoo has had more scheduled field trips in October and early November. Groups have indicated that due to late spring testing, it makes it difficult to schedule spring field trips. Changing the Zoo winter hours to start in November instead of October, and opening at 9 am instead of 10 am, may also be a tribute to the increase of fall

field trips. Mike reported that the zoo has received several types of reptiles and will be receiving more soon. Mike said the plan to send the hippos back to Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs has been delayed because of construction. Meanwhile, the hippos have started fighting, so modifications have been made to separate them, which the construction company in Colorado Springs will cover on our behalf. Mike reported that sometime in the next couple of months we will be getting a new pair of tigers.

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks Bob mentioned that the State of Greene County 2019 Report to Citizens is available and copies are on the table. Bob said that the City's InBalance Health and Wellness Program will be receiving Springfield Business Journal's Corporate Wellness Program of the Year Award in November.

VII. CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Carolyn Gerdes said she attended the Community Sports Development Program's Athlete of the Year event for the first time and was very impressed with the event and the caliber of our young athletes.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Randy Blackwood said one of the handouts today was about the dangers of vaping. He said he would like Parks to discuss vaping on Parks property. Bob said that the Health Department is addressing this issue, and we should play a role in that discussion. Bob said that another issue that has come forward through the Mayor's Commission is bullying. The Commission suggested that Parks look at a potential anti-bullying policy, and Bob asked Kim Reser to do some research with the Mayor's Commission.

X. CALENDAR

- a. Park Board Meeting: Friday, November 8, 2019, 8:30 a.m., Park Board Administrative Offices

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Sidney Needem made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Michele Risdal-Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.