

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Wednesday, September 16, 2020
Jordan Valley Ice Park, 635 E. Trafficway, Springfield, Missouri

I. ROLL CALL

Ms. Carolyn Gerdes, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

Members Present: Scott Bailes, Randy Blackwood, Mike Chiles, Carolyn Gerdes, Curtis Jared, Tammy Mast, Sidney Needem, Heather Noggle

Members Absent: none

Park Board Staff Present: Bob Belote, Jon Carney, Matt Coats, Mike Crocker, Jeff Cumley, Jenny Filmer Edwards, Jim Fisher, Anne-Mary McGrath, Karen Mellinger, Jerry Mitchell, Miles Park, Kim Reser, Diana Tyndall (via Webex)

Guest: Mary Kromrey, Executive Director, Ozark Greenways

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Sidney Needem made a motion to approve the August 14, 2020, Park Board Meeting minutes; seconded by Mr. Curtis Jared. Motion was approved unanimously.

III. TRAILS UPDATE FROM OZARK GREENWAYS

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, introduced Mary Kromrey, Executive Director of Ozark Greenways, and congratulated Mary on her recent nomination as one of the Springfield Business Journal's Most Influential Women. Ms. Kromrey stated her appreciation for the support Ozark Greenways receives from Greene County, City of Springfield, Ozarks Transportation Organization, and especially the Park Board as we take over the maintenance once a linear park becomes a trail. Ms. Kromrey stated that four years ago Ozark Greenway began their Trails for Generations Funding Initiative. Since 2016, they have raised over \$1 million dollars for four projects which resulted in trail enhancements and over two miles of new hard surface trails, filling gaps within our trail system. The four projects include: Tal's Trailhead/Wilson's Creek Greenway Trail, which included a hard-surface trail, parking lot, and a pavilion; the Frisco Highline Trail, celebrating 25 years last year, received new wayfinding signs and a public restroom facility; Trail of Honor/James River Greenway Trail is the first of its kind as a hard-surface trail through a Missouri Veterans' Cemetery; Fulbright Spring Greenway Trail-Phase 4 received a \$150,000 Recreation Trail Grant towards the cost, which was over \$484,000 for the 8,102 linear feet of hard-surface trail.

Ms. Kromrey also updated the Board on several other trail projects including South Creek Greenway Trail addition, which is under construction providing an extension from the south to the new bridge at Barrington Park and the West Meadows Trail project that is under the direction of the City of Springfield, with EPA and Federal regulation staff visiting the property

this week. Through the Forward SGF comprehensive plan discussions, citizens continue to express interest in connecting paved and soft-natural trails integrated into the city. TrailSpring and Progressive Trail Design recently broke ground on the first 6.65-mile soft surface trail segment at Fellows Lake, with OG coordinating public trails on this City Utilities property. The Lone Pine Bike Park is the latest community-based project underway, which is accessed via the Galloway Creek Greenway trail. Ms. Carolyn Gerdes, Chair, shared that she personally enjoys walking the trails and extended her congratulations to OG for their many accomplishments. Ms. Kromrey answered several of the Board Members questions including confirming that OG is involved with the Grant Avenue Parkway Project and looking at a multimodal pathways. Additionally, she mentioned that OG receives support from developers within the community on how to best incorporate trails into new residential areas. Ms. Kromrey mentioned a study completed in Northwest Arkansas in 2017 stated that homes located one-quarter of a mile from a trail were selling faster, and on average of \$14,000 more, than homes one mile from a trail. With additional funding, OG is working with the City of Ozark on the design phase to link Ozark to Springfield. Mr. Belote mentioned that we have also had discussions with Burlington Northern and City Utilities about possibly donating the rail-spur in the Galloway area.

IV. GREENE COUNTY SANITARY SEWER EASEMENT REQUEST FOR RUTLEDGE-WILSON FARM PARK

Mr. Miles Park, Assistant Director, stated that in August, Greene County staff contacted the Park Board requesting an easement for development and construction of a public sanitary sewer line through Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park. He explained that the purpose of extending the sanitary sewer main is to provide service to the residences and a business located to the east of the Farm Park, which will allow these homes and business to be taken off septic tanks. Mr. Park stated that it is Greene County's goal to protect our water quality, which is achieved through the retirement of septic systems and placing the homes and businesses on public sanitary sewer service whenever feasible. Parks may continue to use the easement area for park purposes. Staff reviewed the proposed location and the sanitary sewer alignment is within the flood plain, so it would not be used for extensive future park development. Mr. Randy Blackwood made a motion to approve this easement and requests authority for the Park Board Chair to execute an easement document or grant substantially similar to what is marked at Exhibit 1, which was reviewed by the Board; seconded by Heather Noggle. Motion was approved unanimously.

V. DEPARTMENTAL COVID-19 UPDATE

Mr. Belote mentioned a press release from September announcing that temperature checks would be conducted on everyone before they can enter any Park Board Family Center. Mr. Belote stated that this latest requirement is partly in response to a situation in which a patron visited one of the family centers several times while the person was infectious. Mr. Belote stated that we continue to ask anyone who shows any signs of sickness to please stay at home. We are researching the potential of restoring other family center services such as day care in small groups using a reservation system. Mr. Belote stated that it was very disappointing to staff to cancel most of our fall events, but we are working to still offer some fun activities. Harvest Fest type of activities at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park will include the sale of pumpkins and mums and visitors can walk through the corn maze free of charge. The Springfield Sister Cities Association, along with the help of Friends of the Garden volunteers, recently offered a Japanese Fall Festival inspired Mini-Series with a variety of classes and activities to allow people to visit the Stroll Garden in a responsible way. We are working with Springfield Public Schools,

Home School Organization, and Missouri State High School Activities Association regarding fall sport games and championships. Mr. Belote stated he appreciated the sponsors that are continuing with their financial contributions as agencies such as Ozarks Food Harvest, Developmental Center of the Ozarks, Dickerson Park Zoo, and our own Park Board Youth Recreation Scholarship fund greatly depend on that support. Our Park Operations staff continue to clean and sanitize outdoor restrooms as there is still a lot of patrons visiting our parks.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORT

- a. **Nominating Committee** Mr. Belote stated that he recently received Ms. Cynthia Lipscomb's resignation from her service as a Board Member. Her input and involvement on the Board was appreciated. Mr. Scott Bailes' second term as a Board Member has expired, but we have been fortunate that he has been able to remain on the board until a replacement has been named. Mr. Belote stated that the Nominating Committee will review the applications received and interview several candidates for the two City representative seats that are available. After the interviews are conducted, the Nominating Committee will make recommendations to the City Manager. The Nominating Committee will consist of Board Members Randy Blackwood and Tammy Mast, along with Park Board Chair, Carolyn Gerdes, facilitated by Bob Belote, Director of Parks. The City Manager's Office will be invited to participate in the candidate interview process, as well.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services Mr. Carney stated that he is working closely with the Risk Management Office in trying out the new disinfectant misters, which can dispense disinfectant to a larger area at one time. Mr. Carney mentioned that one of our first shift supervisors recently retired and an employee stepped up to fill in as the interim supervisor while the hiring process took place. We welcome Tommy Fite to the First Shift Supervisor position. Mr. Carney stated he appreciated the assistance of the Public Works Department and allowing us to use their boom mower to help clear out surrounding brush on the Frisco Highline Trail.

Mr. Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities Mr. Coats stated that 903 people enjoyed a canoe/kayak rental in August, which is double the number of people from August 2019. Pumpkins and mums will go on sale at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park on September 26. Admission is free for visitors to walk through the corn maze. The Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center staff are still averaging 80 lessons each week. Timmons Hall Coordinator, Christine Peoples, is assisting in the coordination of the Community Remembrance Project Soil Collection Ceremony scheduled for September 19 on the City square. The ceremony remembers three African-American men that were tragically hung on the Square in 1906. The event will be live-streamed. The Special Facilities' Maintenance staff completed painting and staining work at the Lake Springfield Boathouse.

Mr. Jeff Cumley, Superintendent of Jordan Valley Park and CSDP Mr. Cumley welcomed the Board and mentioned that the Ice Park opened 19 years ago in September of 2001. He stated that it was one of the first buildings as part of the City's downtown revitalization efforts. Adult Ice Hockey league participation is up this season. Mr. Cumley mentioned that one of Archery participants, Jessica Branson, a high school sophomore, recently competed in an adult tournament, taking home first place honors. Archery instruction has been held outside due to

the reduced capacity numbers for inside participation. Most likely, Archery staff will have to reduce participation to 25 percent capacity to allow proper spacing for shooting. Mr. Belote thanked Mr. Cumley and Mr. Park and participating staff for their diligent work last year in rebuilding the ice chiller at this facility, which was approximately one-third of the cost of a new one and should last another 20 years.

Ms. Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation

Ms. McGrath stated our outdoor pools, which included Fassnight and McGee-McGregor Pools, were officially closed on Labor Day. We collected over 1,000 items in conjunction with our Splash 'n Sizzle events, which allowed free pool admission with a donated canned food item. Dog Swim was held at Fassnight Pool with 87 dog participants on September 8. Staff appreciated the cooperation of patrons who wore their masks during the event. Turkey Trot will be a virtual event this year and participants can post their results beginning Thanksgiving morning through Sunday. Turkey Trot registration begins on September 21. Packet pick up will be conducted via a drive through/curb service. As part of the USTA Missouri Valley District's 100-year anniversary, the following received Gold Star Awards for professional accomplishments in the tennis field: Springfield Lasers professional tennis team, long-time tennis instructor at Cooper Tennis Complex, Jean Larrick, and our Park Board head tennis pro, Kyle Wartick.

Ms. Jenny Edwards, Public Information Administrator

Ms. Edwards stated that the Communications Team main focus was the preparation of the powerpoint and a detailed document of proposed project specifications for the Darr Family Foundation presentation on September 11. A copy of the powerpoint was included in the Board member's packets for review. Mr. Belote commented that at this time, we do not know the timeframe for the Darr Family Foundation's next project announcement. We appreciated the opportunity to present several projects that we thought may align best with the Foundation's goals. Mr. Belote thanked Tammy Mast, Park Board member, who provided an introduction that led to the presentation opportunity. Mr. Belote stated that we would like to have more conversations with other groups, as well, that may be interested in partnering with us for legacy projects that benefit the community. Ms. Mast stated that it may be three to five years before we hear back from the Foundation as they already have several project commitments. Mr. Belote stated that one of the Foundation members inquired about soft-surface trail opportunities, which we could also help facilitate. Our main advantage is the potential impact each of our projects can have on our community.

Mr. Mike Chiles, Board member, inquired about a Parks Passport System. Ms. Edwards stated that a patron commented on social media how they had used the Park Bench publication map to visit all the parks. We are in the discussion stages of how we might offer some type of "passport" or Parks to Visit activity for interested patrons. Ms. Edwards mentioned that we did not print a Park Bench summer issue due to so many event details constantly changing. We have again elected to not print the fall edition because of the uncertainty of many events. Patrons should visit our parkboard.org website for the latest updates about events.

Mr. Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations

Mr. Mitchell stated that August sales tax revenue was up over 20 percent compared to last year at this time. He anticipates a more likely downward trend in the next few months. The Golf Fund revenue continues to be strong and marks one of the highest revenue months for August ever recorded. With cooler temperatures, the Dickerson Park Zoo enjoyed a strong month of revenue and is up compared

to this time last year. Expenditures are down, which is due in part to timing and how money is spent. The City of Springfield's application for funds from the Federal CARES Act grant for expenditures associated with addressing the COVID-19 pandemic have been approved through Greene County. The amount awarded to the City was \$1.1 million dollars with Parks representing a substantial portion of that total. This should help to cover a significant portion of our proposed deficit for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020. The award amount is based upon expenditures we anticipate will incur through December 31, 2020.

Mr. Mike Crocker, Assistant Director Mr. Crocker stated that the Friends of the Zoo also made an application for CARES Act grant funding as the Friends of the Zoo operates all revenue operations including the Front Gate and Gift Shop. Cancellation of a number of the Zoo's fund-raisers, including Summer Shoot Out, Brew at the Zoo, Halloween-themed event, Kids Fair, and Ball of the Wild, has significantly impacted the Zoo's budget. We recently remodeled the hippo exhibit, which is now occupied by our newest animal, a capybara, known for being the world's largest rodent. We welcome Dr. Stephanie Zec as our new Zoo Veterinarian.

Mr. Miles Park, Assistant Director Mr. Park reported that a group of volunteers and a major garden supporter approached the Friends of the Garden and Sister Cities Executive Directors, Trysta Herzog and Lisa Bakerink, respectively, with some ideas for improvements for the Pink Dogwood Garden. Working with our Senior Park Planner, Jeff Smith, plans and details of the group's vision are coming together and will enhance this garden. Mr. Park stated that the architect and engineer working on the Kachel Memorial Fountain are gathering site information to begin working on preparing conceptual designs. The design committee is anxious to begin working with consultants to reflect the wishes of Mr. Kachel.

Mr. Jim Fisher, Assistant Director Mr. Fisher stated that he has been working on gathering documentation associated with our CAPRA reaccreditation application. Less than 2 percent of all park agencies are accredited, so meeting all best practice standards is quite an accomplishment. We have seven documents, previously approved by the Park Board, that are needed to be reviewed by the Park Board, but do not require revision for our 2021 re-accreditation application: Mission Statement; Comprehensive Revenue and Fees and Charges Policy; Gifts and Donations Policy; Grant Procedures and Processes Policy; Sponsorships Policy; Comprehensive Marketing and Community Relations Plan; Cash Reserve Statement. There will be several more policies that will require Board action at the October and/or November Park Board Meeting. Mr. Fisher noted that our Management Team is involved in the preparation of the reaccreditation documents, which includes meeting all 10 standards, involving more than 1,100 electronic Evidence of Compliance documents. Ms. Heather Noggle, Board member, inquired about other accredited agencies in Missouri, which would be four, including two organizations in both Kansas City and St. Louis, and the Springfield-Greene County Park Board. Board Member, Mike Chiles, asked if a comparison is done among park systems in similar size cities. Mr. Belote stated that the City conducts a citizen survey in which park data is included, but we should provide more detail through the master planning update. We also received an agency assessment completed through the National Recreation and Park Association which compares where we are in relation to other park systems. We can make this information available to the Board.

Ms. Kim Reser, Assistant Director Ms. Reser stated that she, Miles Park, and Lana Woolsey, Parks Assistant City Attorney have been working on updating the lease agreement

with Lake Country Soccer. It should be completed by mid-November with implementation December 1, 2020. Mr. Belote stated that Kim is serving as Chair with the MPRA's Leadership Development Institute, which begins with virtual training tomorrow. The Leadership Development Institute is designed for young park and recreational professionals.

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks Mr. Belote stated that he wanted to make sure that the Board was aware of the opportunity to participate in the Forward SGF discussion regarding the Grant Avenue Parkway. Our master planning consulting firm, Houseal/Levigne, will be contacting Board members in the next few weeks to conduct one-on-one phone interviews. Our Management Team participated in a similar group exercise.

Mr. Chiles, Board Member, asked if we were involved in the recent soccer development discussions involving a Tulsa developer, who is interested in building a 12-field soccer complex near the Springfield-Branson airport on the Deer Lake property. Mr. Belote stated that he has served more as a resource of soccer complex information for the City Manager, who is leading the discussion. The current proposed plan for the new soccer development includes 11 grass fields and one turf field, along with an indoor facility for volleyball and basketball activities. City Council is greatly interested in increasing sports tourism, but more turf fields is what is truly needed to compete with other markets for tournaments. Mr. Belote mentioned that Lake Country Soccer just started a \$10 million dollar capital campaign to reinvest in the facility and provide more turf fields. Kim Reser, Assistant Director, serves as our liaison with Lake Country Soccer. Mr. Belote stated that the Sports Commission's recent "Sports Tourism Study" stated that keeping existing facilities in great shape is key to continuing to compete regionally for tournaments. Mr. Belote will keep the Board updated as more information becomes available.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

X. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

XI. CALENDAR

The next Park Board meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 9, 2020, at 8:30 am. We will meet at the Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Curtis Jared made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Sidney Needem. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:03 a.m.