

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

Friday, January 15, 2021

**Springfield-Greene County Botanical Center, 2400 S. Scenic, Springfield, Missouri, and
virtually via Microsoft Teams Teleconferencing**

I. ROLL CALL

Ms. Carolyn Gerdes, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

Members Present: Randy Blackwood, Leslie Carrier, Mike Chiles, Carolyn Gerdes, Curtis Jared, Tammy Mast, Sidney Needem, Heather Noggle, Susie Turner

Members Absent: none

Guests: Marissa DeClue (virtually) and Robin Helsel (virtually), Developmental Center of the Ozarks; Sarah Byrd (virtually), Ozarks Food Harvest

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

Ms. Carolyn Gerdes, Chair, welcomed our two new Park Board members, Leslie Carrier and Susie Turner, who were recently approved by City Council.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Randy Blackwood made a motion to approve the December 11, 2020, Park Board Meeting minutes; seconded by Mr. Sidney Needem. Motion was approved unanimously.

III. 2020 TURKEY TROT EVENT & PARTNER OVERVIEW

Ms. Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation, shared the history of the Turkey Trot event, which has taken place on Thanksgiving morning for 26 years. Ms. McGrath stated she appreciated our partners Brad Bradshaw, Central Bank, and CoxHealth for continuing their financial support of the race even though it was a virtual event this year. We had several in-kind supporters, as well, including KGBX, KY-3, O'Reilly Automotive, Watkins Outdoor, and Camp BowWow. Ozark Ridge Runners mapped out several certified 5K race routes for participants to run throughout the community or runners could run their own race and submit their race time results, although no medals were awarded this year. Although the packet pickup for pre-registered participants looked a little different this year, we were pleased with the outside drive-through process, which took place in the parking lot at Killian Complex. Thanks to Tim McCreia and our Business Operations team, we were able to process 167 onsite registrations for participants who drove through at Killian on the Wednesday before race day. We received positive feedback from the participants who utilized the drive-thru packet pick up service. We appreciate the 2,137 participants who continued this community tradition virtually this year. Ms. Sarah Byrd from Ozarks Food Harvest stated that they have partnered with the Park Board

since 2001, which has provided more than 260,000 meals for people during that time. This year's Turkey Trot provided 2,500 meals. Ms. Byrd stated that engaging with the community and providing hunger advocacy through this race tradition is just as important as the food collected. Several of our in-kind sponsors such as Starbucks, Panera, and Krispy Kreme continued their support by displaying Turkey Trot signs at their restaurants. Ms. Marissa DeClue, with Developmental Center of the Ozarks, thanked everyone for their continued support as they have been partners with the Park Board since the first Turkey Trot race. In the fourth quarter last year, over 400 youth received therapy services through DCO. Ms. McGrath thanked the other Park Board divisions such as Park Operations, Community Sports, and the Communications Team for the important roles their staff played in creating another successful event. Ms. McGrath stated that Developmental Center of the Ozarks would receive \$24,673.00, representing 50 percent of the proceeds from Turkey Trot 2020, with the Park Board's 50 percent of the proceeds to be placed in our Youth Recreation Scholarship Fund. Our goal for 2021 would be to host the race in person, but we will continue to work with the Springfield-Greene County Health Department to discuss the safest options for the 2021 event.

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, mentioned our Business Operations staff is currently developing our budget document for the Board's review. We plan to conduct a budget workshop meeting before the February Board meeting, so we can match the City's budget process calendar. The materials for discussion will include a draft budget document that contains our fees and charges with any proposed new changes and summary documentation to help explain this year's proposed budget. Greene County operates their budget on a calendar year, but we typically provide them with a Parks Budget overview, as well.

V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations Mr. Mitchell stated that the total sales tax revenue is up from the same period one year ago, along with the January sales tax revenue, which is up 3.61 percent. The Golf Fund continues to report strong revenues and remains up compared to the same period as last year. Expenditures will begin to increase as the new minimum wage of \$10.30/hour was implemented January 1, 2021.

Mr. Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities Mr. Coats stated that 2,800 cars drove through the Candy Cane Lane lighted drive-thru display this year, making it the second highest number of visitors for this event. Mr. Coats thanked Parks Marketing/Sponsorship Coordinator, Diana Tyndall, for writing a grant and obtaining funding through Bass Pro for 40 new kayaks and life jackets for Lake Springfield Boathouse. Christine Peoples, Timmons Hall Coordinator, is working with a community group to virtually host the annual Martin Luther King March in Springfield, which will include a walk to the African-American Trail Marker within Silver Springs Park, on Monday, January 18. Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center staff continues to conduct 60 riding lessons per week.

Mr. Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services Mr. Carney mentioned that Gardens Aglow was a very successful event this year and continues to grow in attendance. Mr. Belote appreciated the staff and volunteer groups who helped to keep the event as safe as possible. Staff will begin making plans for next year soon. With the unseasonably warm December weather, the Park Operations maintenance staff completed many outdoor projects to get the

parks ready for spring activities, including repairing a drainage issue on the third base line in Killian Stadium.

Mr. Jeff Cumley, Superintendent of Jordan Valley Park and CSDP

Mr. Cumley stated that 33 skaters participated in the ice-skating Holiday Exhibition. With social distancing protocols, only 175 tickets could be sold for each performance held on December 4-5, 2020. The Missouri State Ice Bears recently played hockey against Iowa State, and the limited amount of tickets, 350 instead of 1,100 tickets, were sold out for the game. Staff and volunteers took temperatures of players and visitors and distributed bottles of hand sanitizers, as well. The Ice Bear players and fans appreciated the safety precautions that were followed, which allowed the games to still be played. Mr. Cumley mentioned that all three of the Park Board's lighting displays, Gardens Aglow, Candy Cane Lane, and Jordan Valley Park's Festival of Lights, were listed in the News-Leader's top displays in the community. Mr. Cumley stated that Al Valdivia, Ice Hockey Coordinator, is retiring today after 16 years of service with the Park Board. During his career, Al was very dedicated to growing the youth hockey program. We wish Al the best in retirement.

Ms. Jenny Edwards, Public Information Administrator

Ms. Edwards stated that the newly designed Park Bench publication has been distributed to Springfield Public Schools and our Park Board facilities. New features include more pictures and charts to help patrons determine which amenities are included at park sites, along with a special section of Instagram posted pictures taken by patrons visiting our parks. We will debut a new activity, Stress Recess with Parks, soon on the Park Board website. We recently hired a new Graphics Production Assistant, Charity Keniley, who started last week.

Ms. Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation

Ms. McGrath stated that she appreciated the continued hard work of the Recreation staff who are collaborating to bring programs to our patrons in a responsible, safe manner. Enrollment numbers in our SPARC programs are slowly increasing, and our recent Winter Break day camp was full every day. Last month, using proper safety protocols, our Recreation Division conducted ceramics classes for accessible recreation participants, provided concessions at the Farm Park and the Botanical Center for the holiday lighting displays, and hosted Santa Dive, a special event at Chesterfield Family Center, which included taking pictures underwater with Santa Claus.

Mr. Jim Fisher, Assistant Director

Mr. Fisher stated that we appreciated the City Manager's Office lifting the hiring freeze recently, so we can begin to fulfill our position vacancies. Mr. Fisher stated that Zach Sawyer was recently changed from a contract Park Ranger to full-time employee status. Mr. Tim Carpenter, Park Ranger Administrator, introduced our newest Park Ranger, David Bright, who is from Montiqua, California, with 17 years of law enforcement experience. Mr. Carpenter stated that the Park Rangers are commissioned through Greene County, and the hiring process takes about 12-weeks to complete. With respect to CAPRA Accreditation, Mr. Fisher reported that the evidence of compliance documents has been submitted, and the narrative for the reaccreditation application is nearly completed. We have submitted our corrections on the second draft of the Master Plan. Board Member, Randy Blackwood, asked if data was collected from park patrons and citizens for the Master Plan before the pandemic. Mr. Fisher stated that we were able to use relevant data from the extensive community focus groups that participated in the Forward SGF forums.

Mr. Mike Crocker, Assistant Director Mr. Crocker mentioned that staff completed renovations within the raptor, bird of prey, and deer exhibit areas. Mr. Crocker stated that recently a bald eagle was found by the Department of Conservation and dropped off at the Zoo for treatment. Tests and blood work showed the eagle had high levels of lead poisoning. The eagle is responding well to the fluids and antibiotics, and we are hopeful that the eagle will make a full recovery. Mr. Belote stated that Dickerson Park Zoo has made an ongoing commitment to conservation and protection of animals for many years.

Ms. Kim Reser, Assistant Director Ms. Reser stated that Tim McCrea, Business Systems Analyst, is assisting the City's Information Systems Department with distributing new leased computers to Park employees. Ms. Reser reported that we will have four interns during the spring semester. She appreciates the supervisors who are committed to working with students in the field as they prepare for various careers in parks and recreation and sports facility management. Board member, Mike Chiles, asked about security in park facilities and firewalls protecting our computers. Tim McCrea responded that we do have integrated software to assist with phishing schemes and conduct daily backups on our computer system. City employees are required to view training videos on computer security issues, which includes a short test. Department head approval is needed to access external websites to provide additional security safeguards. We are also reviewing key access protocols at several park facilities.

Mr. Miles Park, Assistant Director Mr. Park reported that over 21,000 people visited Gardens Aglow during the 19 days that the event was opened to the public. Mr. Park stated that generous donors have provided funding for garden enhancements and improvements for the White Garden, Founder's Garden, Drummond Garden, and the Peace Garden. The upgrades include broadening walkways and increasing accessibility, garden arbors, benches, new garden signage, wrought iron fence sections, and additional landscaping plantings. Mr. Park stated that the next round of funding through the City's Neighborhood Works program is underway. Several projects that were awarded funding last year, such as a new pavilion at Sanford Park, are under contract or completed like the new picnic shelter at Zagonyi Park. Board Member Mike Chiles asked if we seek donors for other areas in the park system like we do for the gardens and expressed his support to propose a full-time development position. Mr. Belote stated that this is an area that we would like to make a priority in the future. We will have the opportunity to discuss this and other prioritized ideas at the upcoming Budget Workshop.

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks Mr. Belote stated he will present information about the possible expansion of Sequiota Park at the City Council's luncheon on February 2. The proposal includes the transfer of property, which is adjacent to Sequiota Park and currently owned by the City, to the Park Board. It would more than double the acreage for the park. Recently, we obtained support from the City Manager and Phyllis Ferguson, City Council member, to share in the cost and installation of additional lighting for the walking trail within Lafayette Park. Mr. Belote stated that Parks staff is discussing Phase 2 of the Food and Beverage Enhancement Options, and we will bring forward staff's recommendations to the Board soon. Two years ago, we received Park Board and City Council approval to offer alcohol at nine of our most popular park sites for private groups and fund-raising events. We would like to add a few additional park sites, and a possible trail use component, to the list where groups and private patron rentals can utilize the enhanced options. We have also reviewed the rental policies and requirements for these options and will have a few suggestions to make the process easier to follow.

Mr. Belote stated that Clay Goddard is retiring as Director of the Springfield-Greene County Health Department. We are thankful for the partnership we have had with the Health Department through the years and would hope to continue our collaborative efforts to encourage everyone to engage in a healthy lifestyle. With the help of the Health Department, we also implemented an Employee Wellness Program for City and County employees. The Health Department financially helped us with our Parks economic impact study. We appreciate Clay's involvement on these projects and wish him the best in his new position with the Missouri Foundation for Health.

Mr. Belote mentioned that the Annual Missouri Sports Hall of Fame induction class will include Bobby Allison. Mr. Allison's philanthropic efforts have significantly impacted our park system through various projects such as the renovation of the Betty Allison at Oscar Blom Course and construction of Betty's Playhouse, along with the 4-hole course area, at the Betty Allison at Rivercut Golf Course. Mr. Allison is well-known for his support of the Miracle League Field including replacing the field surface, chair-back seating, and lighted field scoreboard. Mr. Allison financially supported the Hailey Owens' memorial playground within Westport Park after the 10-year old's tragic death. Miracle League players and their families are invited to attend a Springfield Cardinals' game in Mr. Allison's suite each season. He was recognized with a Missouri Park and Recreation Association Citation Award several years ago, as well, which is the highest achievement MPRA awards to citizens or organizations. Mr. Allison has not just supported park projects, but he has impacted our community innumerable ways with his generosity and financial support.

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Carolyn Gerdes, Chair, stated that she was proud of the impact parks has on the community and our commitment to make Springfield a better place to live. She wished everyone a Happy New Year, as well.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

IX. CALENDAR

- a. Park Board FY 2021-22 Budget Workshop will be held in February 2021. The date, time, and location will be determined.
- b. The next Park Board meeting will be Friday, February 12, 2021, at 8:30 am, with the location to be determined.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Sidney Needem made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Curtis Jared. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:01 a.m.