

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Friday, February 12, 2021
Meeting Conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams Teleconferencing

I. ROLL CALL

Ms. Carolyn Gerdes, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:38 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

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

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Sidney Needem made a motion to approve the January 15, 2021, Park Board Meeting minutes; seconded by Ms. Leslie Carrier. Motion was approved unanimously.

III. SEQUIOTA PARK/CITY PROPERTIES PROPOSAL

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, provided a brief presentation on the possible opportunity to add three adjacent City properties into our inventory for Sequiota Park and Galloway Creek Greenway Trail purposes. This topic was discussed in detail with the Board during a Closed Session meeting in November. Mr. Belote also shared this proposal and recommendations with the Mayor and City Council on February 2, 2021. The presentation included historical information about Sequiota Park, which according to legend, Sequiota means “many springs”. In 1920, it was a hatchery and one of our first state parks. The Park Board acquired it in 1959, making it one of our 10 historic city parks. Our biggest challenges at Sequiota Park is it is an extremely popular location with the lake, woods, and trail through the park.

With this proposal, we would expand Sequiota Park from 12.7 acres to 28.9 acres and enhance the natural environment surrounding the park. We would protect the wooded areas and wildlife habitat, and propose to improve the greenway trails, add picnic areas and pocket parks. This proposal is citizen driven, and consistent with the recent “Our Galloway” planning process, with the idea stemming from a citizen who originally suggested the City acquire a conservation easement for the north tract during the nearly two-year discussion of new development in the area. The proposal would allow for the Park Board to add amenities such as linear parking, improved restroom facilities, and pedestrian and cyclist safety to this heavily utilized park location, while still protecting the attributes that make this park so attractive. Since the additional tracts are in a flood plain, there will be minimal planned development projects. The three City property tracts already serve as a stormwater function for the park, along with

providing a buffer for the park and trail. City staff have assessed the property, and they, too, agree that this proposal would provide for better long-term planning for the park and trail. City Council has recently approved the Galloway Creek Greenway Trail Connection (Restoration), along with allowing the businesses to develop the Galloway Community Improvement District, which a portion of the tax collected will be utilized for improvements to the corridor such as decorative lighting, cohesive signage, and trash recycling. We are working to expand and make regional trail connections such as utilizing the Burlington Northern Railroad bed, the Chadwick Flyer line, to connect Springfield to Ozark.

Mr. Belote stated that there would be no cost to the Park Board to acquire these three City properties, but just a change on the deed indicating that the City of Springfield designates its use and operation through the Park Board. Mr. Belote mentioned that he received positive comments from City Council indicating that they were very much looking forward to the opportunity to take formal action when we come back to them. Several Board members commented that it was a great opportunity to expand a popular park with little cost. Ms. Susie Turner, Board Member, encouraged our staff to remain engaged in the Grant Avenue Project, as this project may set new standards for the City and allow opportunities for consistency with new areas of development such as the Galloway corridor. Mr. Randy Blackwood made the motion to recommend that Parks Administration continue moving forward with formalizing approval with City Council for the Park Board to acquire the three City tracts of property located near Sequiota Park; seconded by Ms. Tammy Mast. The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. PROPOSED FY 2021-22 PARKS DEPARTMENT BUDGET

Mr. Belote thanked the Board for their in-depth review and discussion of the proposed FY 2021-22 budget at our recent Budget Workshop on February 9, 2021. He reviewed the proposed FY 2021-22 Parks Department Budget including an overview of areas of special emphasis, which include identifying a long-term Parks funding source, supporting our trail-building partner, Ozark Greenways, successful completion of CAPRA reaccreditation, continued neighborhood park restoration, grow the game golf, help manage the park system with safety, security, and stewardship, and continue maximizing our partnership opportunities.

Mr. Belote stated that continued growth in sales tax revenue remains strong. During the pandemic, many facilities were closed for an extended period, along with several pools that remained closed for the season, and programs, activities and events were cancelled, which therefore, lessened the impact of the increased minimum wage rates. Coming out of the pandemic, we are beginning to open facilities, some with decreased operational hours, and offer programs and activities with limited participation. In conjunction with the Springfield-Greene County Health Department guidelines, we will open four outdoor pools this season, but Westport and Meador Pools will remain closed for the season. We continue to experience challenges with hiring seasonal employees especially lifeguards and outside landscaping workers. Our Unfunded Priority List of deferred maintenance, capital equipment, and personnel needs continues to grow without a long-term funding source. We will continue to seek out partnership opportunities including the recent Lake Country Soccer renovation project with the support of City of Springfield and ongoing fundraising efforts.

Mr. Belote stated that the budget preparation process takes approximately four months before being presented to the Board, and he appreciates staff, especially the Business Operations Division, for their assistance in preparation of the budget proposal and accompanying documents. Mr. Belote stated that with the Board's approval of the proposed FY 2021-22 Budget today, we will forward it to the City Manager's Office, and then, to City Council for review and approval. Hearing no further questions or discussions, Ms. Leslie Carrier made a motion to approve the proposed FY 2021-22 Budget, with a recommendation to forward it for approval of the City Manager and City Council; seconded by Mr. Sidney Needem. The motion was approved unanimously.

V. COMMITTEE REPORT

a. Nominating Committee Report Mr. Belote mentioned that the Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for Chair and Vice Chair of the Park Board for 2021-22. The Committee will convene soon to review the nominations and bring the names forward for the Board's consideration and vote at a future meeting.

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation Ms. McGrath stated that over the last year, Recreation staff has had to change their focus and think differently during the pandemic to continue offering programs safely to the community. Ms. McGrath reviewed the upcoming virtual run series of events including a Love Our Parks 5K and 10K run in February, and a Shamrock Race in March. Participants can submit their running results during a selected two-week time frame. All proceeds benefit the Park Board Youth Recreation Scholarship Fund. Ms. McGrath stated that our senior population has greatly missed staff and one another with Northview Center closed during the pandemic. Staff created a private Facebook page, Center Beyond Walls, for participants to review inspirational quotes, meal ideas, friendly challenges, and an opportunity to see one another, even if it is virtually.

Mr. Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services Mr. Carney stated that until recently, it has been a mild winter. He mentioned his staff is coordinating with Recreation staff to properly prepare fields and complexes for the collegiate teams that use our facilities, as their practice schedules for spring sports are in full swing.

Mr. Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities Mr. Coats mentioned that Ms. Christine Peoples, Timmons Hall Coordinator, is involved in a variety of activities and events this month, which are designed to bring people together through education. Mr. Coats stated that two lambs and several calves were born at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park. Lake Springfield Boathouse, Outdoor Initiatives, and Dickerson Park Zoo staff are partnering together for the Owl Prowl event, which includes a presentation and a visit with a few owl species examples from the Zoo, a night-time stroll to listen for owls, and a hot chocolate bar to end the evening.

Ms. Jenny Edwards, Public Information Administrator Ms. Edwards stated that she recently helped to create Facebook pages for Timmons Hall and Northview Seniors and provided some additional training for the staff to maintain the pages. Ms. Edwards mentioned that her staff is working on the summer Park Bench edition, along with the summer camp program guide. She is

discussing with several divisions on creative ways to advertise for temporary and seasonal positions since we will not conduct a traditional job fair this season.

Mr. Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations Mr. Mitchell stated Parks has prepared documentation to request reimbursement for up to \$821,468 from Greene County as part of the CARES Act grant funding. We have requested \$570,017 for expenditures that occurred for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. The remaining \$251,451 is requested for reimbursement of expenditures incurred during the current fiscal year. Mr. Mitchell reported that the sales tax revenue continues to be strong and is up \$348,531 over the same period one year ago.

Mr. Jeff Cumley, Superintendent of Jordan Valley Park and CSDP Mr. Cumley stated that the Missouri State Ice Bears recently hosted four home games at Jordan Valley Ice Park. Due to social-distancing guidelines, only 350 instead of 1,100 tickets were able to be sold. Staff distributed free hand-sanitizer bottles and took temperatures of players and visitors at the games. Mr. Cumley stated that in an effort to reduce crowd size and gathering in the Ice Park lobby areas, staff is limiting the number of people on the ice at any one time.

Mr. Miles Park, Assistant Director Mr. Park stated his appreciation to Public Works for lending our staff a truck especially designed to clean out overhead brush along the Frisco Highline Greenway Trail. Recently, a community meeting was held for the Grant Avenue Project, and Mr. Jeff Smith, Senior Park Planner attended on behalf of Parks. Mr. Park, along with Mary Kromrey, Ozark Greenways, and Mr. Smith, have been participants on several committees regarding this important project. Mr. Park mentioned that we recently hired Amber Gossen as our new Horticulture Interpreter at the Botanical Center. Mr. Park stated that the Anne Drummond statue in Close Memorial Park has been temporarily moved to protect it during upcoming scheduled projects near its original location. Once the concrete work and new landscaping projects are completed, the statue will return to the normal location. Signs are displayed to let patrons know about the location of the temporary site. Additionally, landscaping improvements will also be added to Founders Garden and the White Garden.

Ms. Kim Reser, Assistant Director Ms. Reser mentioned that Lake Country Soccer has two new Board members: Tamara Conn, Deputy Legal Counsel and Vice President of Legal Services, at O'Reilly Automotive, and Jan Stahle, Sales Manager at Cooper Supply, is returning to the Board.

Mr. Jim Fisher, Assistant Director Mr. Fisher stated that we recently converted Zach Sawyer from a contract employee to a full-time employee, making our Ranger Division fully staffed. The final draft of the Parks Master Plan should be available for the Board's review at the next meeting. We continue to finalize the narrative and evidence of compliance documentation needed for our CAPRA reaccreditation application.

Mr. Mike Crocker, Assistant Director Mr. Crocker stated that the Zoo has been closed the last several days due to the extremely cold temperatures and potential slippery sidewalks.

VII. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair did not have a report.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

X. CALENDAR

The next regularly scheduled Park Board is Friday, March 12, 2021, at 8:30 am, and the location will be determined.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Sidney Needem made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Curtis Jared. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:54 a.m.