

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Friday, May 14, 2021
Northview Center, 301 E. Talmage, Springfield, Missouri
Meeting also conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams Teleconferencing

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Sidney Needem, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

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

Members Absent: none

Park Board Staff Present: Bob Belote, Jon Carney, Tim Carpenter, Matt Coats, Debra Course, Mike Crocker, Jeff Cumley, Sheri Davis, Jenny Filmer Edwards, Jim Fisher, Tasia Kinney, Tim McCrea, Anne-Mary McGrath (via Teams), Karen Mellinger, Jerry Mitchell, Miles Park, Kim Reser, Cyrus Taylor, Lana Woolsey

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Randy Blackwood made a motion to approve the April 9, 2021, Park Board Meeting minutes; seconded by Ms. Carolyn Gerdes. Motion was approved unanimously. Ms. Leslie Carrier made the motion to approve the April 9, 2021, Park Board Meeting Closed Minutes; seconded by Ms. Tammy Mast. Motion was approved unanimously.

III. INTRODUCTION OF NORTHVIEW CENTER STAFF

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, introduced Sheri Davis, Community Recreation Services Administrator, at Northview Center. Sheri oversees our senior and accessible recreation programs and has worked at the Center since it opened in 2003. Ms. Davis stated that the Northview Center was definitely affected by the pandemic, but the Northview staff has done a great job developing creative programs for the populations the Center serves. Cyrus Taylor, Supervisor of the accessible recreation programs, and his staff have made a point to reach out to their consistent program participants by making phone calls and creating a craft project activity box that can be picked up in the Center's drive through area. Cyrus recently organized a new Disc Golf program, which was well-received, and a new league will be offered this fall. Although the Miracle League season has been temporarily suspended, we hope to bring back games in the fall. Tasia Kinney, who currently works with our senior population, has worked to organize pick up and delivery of meals. Tasia also set up a private Facebook group for the senior participants, so they can still stay in touch with their friends from the Center. One of the programs that the seniors have enjoyed is parking lot bingo, which participants can play from their vehicle at the Northview Center parking lot. Debra Course works at our Front Desk reception area at the Center. Mr. Belote thanked the Northview staff for all that they do to stay connected to our participants. He also mentioned that after 22 years with the Park Board, Sheri

will retire at the end of June. We appreciate Sheri's contributions to Parks, and she will be missed.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF BASS PRO OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT DONATION

Mr. Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities, stated that we were recently notified that Bass Pro Shops would like to donate equipment to the Park Board. The donation would include 40 kayaks, 65 personal flotation devices, 14 dry bags, and a \$1,500 cash sponsorship for fishing events to be held at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park in 2021. The total value of the donation is approximately \$27,000. The kayaks and personal flotation devices will be shared between Lake Springfield Park and the Outdoor Initiatives Division for outdoor recreation programming. This donation will allow us to replenish our watercraft fleet as they each have a two to four-year life span given how much they are used each season. The Park Board staff at Lake Springfield Park and Outdoor Initiatives recommend the acceptance of the donated equipment. Although many of the Park Board members and staff attended an event on April 15, 2021, to celebrate the donation, formal acceptance of the donation is needed from the Park Board. Ms. Susie Turner made the motion to acceptance the generous donation of equipment and sponsorship from Bass Pro Shops in the amount of \$27,000, seconded by Ms. Carolyn Gerdes. Motion passed unanimously.

V. ACCEPTANCE OF ROTARY CLUB GRANT APPLICATION FOR BETTY AND BOBBY ALLISON MIRACLE LEAGUE PROGRAM

Recently, incoming president of the Rotary Club of Springfield Southeast President, Lisa Blumenstock, met with Jeff Cumley, Superintendent of Jordan Valley Park and CSDP, about a potential opportunity for a Rotary District Grant to be used for infrastructure items for community betterment, with a preference for youth activity. Ms. Blumenstock toured the Miracle League Ball Field with Mr. Cumley and was informed about the use of the field for both adults and children with disabilities. After the initial meeting, the Rotary Club of Springfield Southeast and Rotary Club North agreed to cooperatively apply for the Rotary District grant, and both clubs have agreed to provide these grant funds to the Park Board as donations should they be successful with their application. The application process does require an approved Resolution from the Park Board in support of this application and proposed use of the grant funds.

The total grant amount to be donated jointly by both clubs is \$17,500. If successful, the donated funds will be used for Miracle Field improvements such as lighting for each dugout, permanent sound system, field paint for lines and batters' boxes, a shade structure for the seating behind Homeplate, signage, and a celebration cookout for players and families once the installations are complete.

Park's staff respectfully requests approval to accept the proposed joint donation from the Rotary Club of Springfield Southeast and Rotary Club North, along with the approval of the proposed resolution that was included with the Board members materials for review. Ms. Carolyn Gerdes made the motion to approve the grant application for a proposed joint donation from the Rotary Club of Springfield Southeast and Rotary Club North and the accompanying

resolution; seconded by Mr. Randy Blackwood. Motion passed, with one abstention from Ms. Tammy Mast.

VI. ADOPTION OF PHASE II FOOD AND BEVERAGE OPTIONS FOR PARK SYSTEM

Mr. Belote stated that in 2018, the Park Board and City Council approved our initial Food and Beverage Options to offer alcohol at nine park sites. Recently, we reviewed the success of those nine locations, and at the request of our partner groups and other prospective rental groups and individuals, we have discussed if additional locations should be added to our existing alcohol-permitted sites. Park Board staff recommend the addition of the following sites:

- Lake Springfield Park (LS Boathouse already approved)
- Jordan Valley Park (JV Ice Park already approved)
- Valley Water Mill Park and Equestrian Center
- Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park
- Northview Center and Doling Museum Courtyard
- Meador Park Baseball Stadium
- Greenway Trail events

Mr. Belote stated that the above sites will complement the existing nine park locations, which include: Bill and Payne Stewart Golf Course, Horton Smith Golf Course, Rivercut Golf Course, Lake Springfield Boathouse, Jordan Valley Ice Park, Springfield Botanical Gardens and Botanical Center, Dickerson Park Zoo, Cooper Tennis Complex, and the Davis House and Property. With the proposed new sites, this still only represents about 15 percent of our park system facilities.

We also recommend a slight modification to our Operating Procedures for smaller events. For gatherings of less than 50 people, we will forgo the necessity of bringing in security when we provide the alcohol service through our Park Board Concessions and Catering Division, thus saving the rental group additional expense. Our Concessions and Catering staff would still have access to our Park Rangers if needed, as well as the supervisory staff who are helping to manage the event. Also, as suggested by the Park Board members in Closed Session on April 9, 2021, we have also made a few edits to the Operating Procedures document to provide better clarity and ease of understanding.

A one-page flyer providing a summary of Park Board alcohol-permitted sites served by licensed caterers, and Park Board sites that are licensed to offer beer, and beer and wine for purchase, during specific events was included for the Board's review. The flyer also listed sites where alcohol is not allowed. Mr. Randy Blackwood, Board Member, suggested that we add "School-Parks" to the list of sites where alcohol is not allowed. Several Park Board members complimented the staff for the reorganization of the Operating Procedures document, making it clearer to understand. Mr. Mike Chiles asked if we had any financial projections for adding more alcohol-permitted sites. Mr. Belote stated that since we are just now coming out of the pandemic, we have not made any projections; however, we could prepare projections for review at a future meeting, if needed. Mr. Sidney Needem, Park Board Chair, stated that he appreciated the strict structure that we have in place, and he believes it should remain in place, while still offering partner groups and rental groups the opportunity to raise money for their causes. He stated that it is important that we continue our success of no reported incidents at

alcohol-permitted sites to protect the Park Board's reputation. Ms. Leslie Carrier made a motion to approve the list of new alcohol-permitted sites and the updated Operating Procedures document as part of the Phase II recommendations; seconded by Ms. Heather Noggle. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. ADOPTION OF 2021 PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN, DEPARTMENTAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Parks and Recreation Master Plan Mr. Belote stated that approximately 18 months ago, the City of Springfield started the Forward SGF Comp Plan for the community. As part of our CAPRA reaccreditation application, we needed an updated master plan. We were fortunate to work with the City's consultant for the Forward SGF initiative, Houseal Lavigne, who was able to collect public comments and input from the community about parks, trails, sports, and outdoor space, before the start of the pandemic, which then allowed us to begin developing a new master plan document. Additionally, the consultant interviewed Park Board members and met with Administrative staff to obtain their input. Although the City has not completed the Forward SGF Comp Plan, and additional initiatives specifically for the Park Board may be defined, we needed to pursue completion of a master plan that could be recommended to the Board for approval and adoption. Mr. Jim Fisher, Assistant Director, led the process and assisted the consultant with obtaining information. We appreciate the Board and staff who submitted comments and suggestions to the draft document, and we did our best to collect, organize and submit the input to the consultant to incorporate into the master plan document, which was provided to the Board for review. Mr. Belote stated that Houseal-Lavigne would still like to do a site presentation to show how the master plan fits into the larger Springfield Comprehensive Plan, and we hope to schedule that opportunity later this summer. Board member, Randy Blackwood, stated that the attention to detail proves the effort that was given to produce the document. He also suggested sharing the document with City Council and the Greene County Commission. Mr. Mike Chiles felt the information was quite impressive, as well, and suggested we also provide an opportunity to communicate the information to the public. Ms. Leslie Carrier stated that it was a beautiful, attractive, and easy to read document, and appreciated the time and effort of everyone involved. Mr. Belote stated he first would like the information presented to the Park Board, but it would be a good idea to make future presentations to both City Council and the Greene County Commission, and eventually, make the information available to the public, as well. Mr. Mike Chiles made a motion to adopt the Parks and Recreation Master Plan; seconded by Ms. Tammy Mast. Motion was approved unanimously.

Departmental Goals and Objectives Mr. Fisher stated that our current agency Goals and Objectives were formally approved by the Park Board in December 2015, and they were recently reviewed by the Park Board in December 2020. Although the Goals and Objectives have not changed, to meet the CAPRA compliance criteria, the current Goals and Objectives must be again formally approved by the Park Board. Mr. Fisher mentioned that we did work to include the Goals and Objectives in the Master Plan, as well. Ms. Tammy Mast made the motion to accept and approve the FY 2021-22 Goals and Objectives: seconded by Ms. Susie Turner. Motion was approved unanimously.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORT

- a. **Nominating Committee Report/Update** Mr. Belote stated that we will be reviewing city applications to replace Ms. Carolyn Gerdes, whose second term is set to expire. The Nominating Committee will review all applications, score to determine candidates who will be interviewed, and then, conduct interviews. Once the Committee has made a recommendation, the candidate's name will be forwarded to the City Manager and City Council for their consideration and approval.

IX. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Jeff Cumley, Superintendent of Jordan Valley Park and CSDP Mr. Cumley stated that Drury University recently announced that they will introduce seven new club sports including hockey in 2022, which should put them in the same conference as the Missouri State Ice Bears. This summer's First Friday events will now include Founders Park, with live art and entertainment, scheduled for May 7, June 4, and July 2.

Mr. Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services Mr. Carney mentioned that the temperature range for the month of April was 83 to 26 degrees, which caused the Park Operations crew to open water fountains and restrooms, and then, winterize them again in a short amount of time, in order to protect our infrastructure. Attendance in the Japanese Stroll Garden for the month of April 2021 was double the number of visitors from April 2019. The recent sidewalk improvements and everyone's desire to get outdoors and be active most likely have contributed to the increase in attendance. Mr. Belote stated that there has been more publicity about the park system and outdoor places to visit, as well. He thanked Springfield Sister Cities and Friends of the Garden for their fund-raising activities, which dually benefit the park and their organizations. Mr. Belote reminded the Board about the Rose Garden dedication on May 18, 2021, at 12 noon, at Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park.

Ms. Jenny Edwards, Public Information Administrator Ms. Edwards stated that with the pandemic, we have had more opportunities to promote passive park experiences, such as enjoying a walk through the Mizumoto Japanese Stroll Garden. Our audience has been responding positively. Ms. Edwards mentioned that the latest edition of the Park Bench was distributed for the Board members' review. Mr. Belote stated that there are several new features in the Park Bench, including park photos from our patrons. Ms. Gerdes stated she found the new format easy to read and helpful for residents and visitors. Ms. Edwards mentioned that we print 20,000 copies of the Park Bench, and it is delivered to Springfield Public Schools' elementary and middle schools, along with City Council, Greene County Commission, Chamber of Commerce, Springfield Convention Visitors Bureau, and Springfield-Greene County Libraries. Ms. Heather Noggle, Board member, suggested that perhaps a digital version could be made available and sent to high school students. It was also suggested to provide copies of the Park Bench to the Springfield Board of Realtors.

Mr. Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities Mr. Coats stated that the remains of the Lake Springfield maintenance building that was damaged by a fire last summer was recently demolished. Ms. Christine Peoples, Timmons Hall Coordinator, recently sang at the closing ceremony of a soil recollection event in Kansas City. The Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center staff conducted 100 lessons per week in April. The Special Facilities maintenance staff has been

busy with a variety of projects including installing a pipe in rail fence at the Equestrian Center and new storage cabinets at Timmons Hall, along with mowing and weed eating at park properties.

Mr. Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations Mr. Mitchell reported that sales tax revenue was up 16.4 percent from May 2020. Parks received \$469,050 from the Federal Cares Act funding for reimbursement of COVID-19 expenditures, bringing the total that Parks has received to \$821,439. Zoo revenue and the Golf Fund continue to be very strong. Although we are currently experiencing positive revenue trends, we still face increased operations cost with the new minimum wage rates and higher fuel prices. Without capital funding earmarked for large repairs and maintenance items, should they occur unexpectedly, we would need to fund them from our operating budget. Mr. Belote complimented Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Crocker, along with the Friends of the Zoo Board, for applying for CARES Act funding, which helped to keep all Parks and FOZ employees employed during the pandemic.

Ms. Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation Ms. McGrath stated that we will start offering the Silver Sneakers programs again in our family centers beginning May 19. We will host Missouri State High School Athletic Association boys' tennis and girls' softball championships in the next few weekends. Fasnacht, Grant Beach, and Silver Springs outdoor pools, along with McGee-McGregor pool, will open on Memorial Day weekend.

Ms. Kim Reser, Assistant Director Ms. Reser stated that Tim McCrea, Business Systems Analyst, continues to work with Tim Carpenter, Park Ranger Administrator, installing security upgrades and replacing security equipment. Lake Country Soccer staff continue to raise money to match the City's \$5 million dollar investment to upgrade the outdoor fields and infrastructure at the complex. Mr. Chiles, Board member, inquired about cyber protection, along with the new requirement of two factor authentication process. Mr. McCrea stated that the City requires the staff to complete cyber training on a regular basis, and the City has upgraded its firewall protection, including scheduled incremental and daily back-ups of City computers. There are also protocols in place to obtain permission to access websites. Ms. Susie Turner, Board member, asked about the progress Lake Country is making to meet the fund-raising goals. Mr. Belote stated that he believes Lake Country Soccer staff and Board members have made overtures to several groups and individuals. With the City's generous commitment to reinvest in the complex, there was discussion that Lake Country Soccer may approach the Greene County Commission, as well.

Mr. Miles Park, Assistant Director Mr. Park thanked Rosalie Wooten for her generous donation to fully renovate the Rose Garden at the Springfield Botanical Gardens, which was designed around a small gazebo within the area. There were eight weddings at the Springfield Botanical Gardens this past month. Mr. Park mentioned that several Park Rangers, along with Jeff Smith, Senior Parks Planner, and Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services, attended the recent CPTED Training, to learn site and facility design principles to enhance the safety of citizens. He thanked Chief of Police Paul Williams for allowing Parks staff to participate.

Mr. Jim Fisher, Assistant Director Mr. Fisher stated that we recently hired Scott Welsch, as the Golf Superintendent at the Bill and Payne Stewart Golf Course. He started work on Monday, May 10. Mr. Fisher mentioned the CAPRA accreditation committee asked for

clarification on a list of standards pertaining to our re-accreditation application. We will work to address each of the items and send our response back within the two-week time frame allowed.

Mr. Mike Crocker, Assistant Director Mr. Crocker stated that Dickerson Park Zoo has experienced record-breaking attendance and revenue in April. There were several days where the daily attendance was from 2,500 to 3,000 visitors. The Friends of the Zoo (FOZ) memberships have also grown 55 percent, with a 60 percent growth in the last four months. As of last week, we now have over 6,000 FOZ members.

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks Mr. Belote stated that City Council will formally review the COVID-19 protocols for the community next Monday, May 17. It is likely the masking requirements will be amended, allowing several new options for hosting and attending events. Mr. Belote mentioned that the Springfield Sports Hall of Fame 2020 Induction Ceremony was postponed due to the pandemic, so a special ceremony was held on May 11, 2021, for those inductees. The 2021 inductees include Ms. Jean Larrick, who has been a tennis instructor for the Park Board for more than 40 years. She is also an accomplished player with over 400 titles, making her a legend in grass-roots tennis within our community. The 2021 Induction Ceremony will be October 27, 2021.

Mr. Belote also mentioned that Ms. Reser and Ms. Edwards are working with the Springfield-Greene County Health Department to offer joint vaccination events at park locations where we are hosting summer activities and events. Individuals that receive the vaccine at one of the events hosted at a park site will receive an incentive card with several special discounts for park related activities.

X. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Belote mentioned that Ms. Carolyn Gerdes has served as Chair for the last two-plus years. When Ms. Gerdes first started on the Board six years ago, we were just undergoing our first application for CAPRA accreditation, exploring offering alcohol-permitted park locations, and discussing the development of a master plan, along with identifying a long-term funding source. We have since received accreditation and are applying for re-accreditation, completed a successful Phase I Food and Beverage Options, and today, we approved Phase II, and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. We will continue working on identifying a long-term funding source, though it was noted we have recently received significant financial support from the City of Springfield for several projects.

Ms. Gerdes stated that sometimes we take certain things for granted, especially parks. The pandemic reintroduced many citizens to our parks and hopefully reminded everyone how important parks are in our community. Ms. Gerdes stated that it has been a joy and a pleasure to serve as both a Board member and Chair. She appreciates the assistance from the Park Board staff and the amazing way they look after our community, but also how they work with each other. Mr. Belote stated that Ms. Gerdes' resume is extensive with examples of numerous community leadership roles. We appreciate her time and effort during her tenure as Park Board Chair. Mr. Blackwood stated that it was a privilege to work with Ms. Gerdes. On behalf of the Park Board, Mr. Sidney Needem thanked Ms. Gerdes for her service to the Park Board and the City as a whole, and then, presented her with a plaque recognizing her term as Chair. Ms.

Gerdes will remain on the Board until a city representative has been selected and approved by the City Manager and City Council.

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

XIII. CALENDAR

The next regularly scheduled Park Board meeting is Friday, June 11, 2021, at 8:30 am. The meeting location will be determined.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Carolyn Gerdes made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Randy Blackwood. Motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Randy Blackwood made a motion to move to Closed Session after a short 10-minute break; seconded by Ms. Heather Noggle. Motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.