

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Friday, June 11, 2021**

**Cooper Tennis Complex, Lasers Hospitality/VIP Room, 2331 E. Pythian, Springfield, Missouri
Meeting also conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams Teleconferencing**

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Sidney Needem, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

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

Members Absent: Leslie Carrier, Curtis Jared

Park Board Staff Present: Bob Belote, Tim Carpenter, Matt Coats, Mike Crocker, Jeff Cumley, Devin Diaz, Jenny Filmer Edwards, Tim McCrea, Anne-Mary McGrath (via Teams), Karen Mellinger, Jerry Mitchell, Miles Park, Jeff Putnam, Kim Reser, Jason Shepherd, Jill Simmons, Kyle Wartick, Mallory Weber, Lana Woolsey

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Tammy Mast made a motion to approve the May 14, 2021, Park Board Meeting minutes; seconded by Mr. Randy Blackwood. Motion was approved unanimously. Ms. Carolyn Gerdes made a motion to approve the May 14, 2021, Park Board Meeting Closed Minutes; seconded by Ms. Susie Turner. Motion was approved unanimously.

III. INTRODUCTION OF COOPER TENNIS COMPLEX STAFF

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, welcomed everyone to Cooper Tennis Complex and introduced Jill Simmons, Community Athletic Administrator. She complimented the staff from Cooper Tennis, Special Facilities Division, Park Operations, and several Recreation Divisions, as they helped to dry courts and prep fields during the back-to-back weekends of Missouri State High School Activities Association State Championship tennis tournaments. We also held the MSHSAA State Softball Championships May 22 and 23. Ms. Mallory Weber, Community Recreation Coordinator at Cooper Tennis, introduced the Cooper Tennis Complex staff including Jeff Putnam, Devin Diaz, Kyle Wartick, and Jason Shepherd. Ms. Weber stated that everyone pitched in to help due to the inclement weather, and it was great that we had the indoor tennis courts as an option for play. Ms. Weber stated that because MSHSAA changed the high school sports classes, they now have two weekends of championships, which brings in additional guests and increased visitor spending. Mr. Belote stated that in spite of the weather, we were able to pull off the tournament, but the importance of having turf fields for softball and soccer becomes more significant when recovering from inclement weather. To remain competitive for the long-term in bidding to host National and State tournaments, upgrades such as turf fields will be needed.

Mr. Belote mentioned that the 2021 World TeamTennis season has been moved to November and all matches will be played in one location, Indian Wells, California. We are disappointed that we will not have a season locally, but we look forward to the possibility of home matches in 2022.

Mr. Belote mentioned that one of our key staff members, who was instrumental in our success in hosting the state championships, Ms. Kristi Bolli, Parks Caretaker, from our Killian Team, passed away on June 1. Mr. Belote mentioned that her co-workers described her as someone who was smart, with a great can-do attitude. He asked that we keep Kristi's family and co-workers in our prayers as we take a moment of silence recognizing Kristi and her contributions during her tenure with the Park Board. After the moment of silence, Mr. Belote stated that Kristi's family has planned a celebration of life ceremony at Lake Springfield Boathouse where several of her family members previously had worked. Kristi will be missed.

The Board discussed how much time is spent to prep fields, especially after significant rain fall, which Ms. Kim Reser, Assistant Director, indicated that it takes about three hours to make sure fields are ready for play. Mr. Randy Blackwood, Board member, mentioned that several tournaments such as the MSHSAA state championships are great economic impact events for our community. Ms. Susie Turner, Board member, inquired what would be needed to remain competitive and not miss out on hosting future tournaments. Mr. Belote stated that there are many entities within the community that would like to see enhanced sports infrastructure and new trail development. By prioritizing facility projects and partnering with like-minded groups, we can begin reinvesting in our sports infrastructure and move forward to making our facilities state of the art for both our local athletes and for hosting competitive events.

IV. RESOLUTION ADDRESSING PARK BOARD AUTHORITIES

Ms. Lana Woolsey, Assistant City Attorney, mentioned that the Park Board Bylaws state that the Vice Chair has authority to act in the absence of the Chair. The resolution presented today notes the expanded authority of the Vice Chair to act as needed for the daily operation of the park system and specifically designates and approves an individual for execution of specific contracts in case this authority should be needed on short notice in the future. Mr. Randy Blackwood made a motion to approve the adoption of the Resolution Addressing Authorities; seconded by Ms. Carolyn Gerdes. Motion passed unanimously.

V. COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Belote stated that the Park Board's Nominating Committee has been reviewing prospective Board member applications from the City and hope to conduct interviews with the top candidates in the next week.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities Mr. Coats mentioned that during the current fiscal year, there have been 3,000 canoe/kayak rentals. Lake Springfield Boathouse staff have hosted six private rentals including graduation parties and weddings during May. The Kids Fun Fishing Day event had over 100 participants at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park. Timmons Hall

Coordinator, Christine Peoples, will celebrate Timmons Hall Day on June 27, with a presentation from Mr. Bob Kendrick, the Executive Director of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City. He will share stories about local Springfield Negro League players who were members of the Kansas City Monarchs, including Doc Horn. The Valley Watermill Equestrian Center staff hosted a Dog Agility of the Ozarks competition in the arena with nine clubs represented. Mr. Belote mentioned that Matt has been without a maintenance facility at Lake Springfield Park since the fire demolished the building last year. We recently learned that we may be eligible to receive CARES act funding to help fund and rebuild the maintenance facility.

Mr. Jeff Cumley, Superintendent of Jordan Valley Park and CSDP Program Mr. Cumley mentioned that several new sculptures were recently added to the Sculpture Walk near Jordan Valley Park, including a trail-themed mural at the Jordan Valley Maintenance Building. Artists from around the country submit their work, which is jury selected, and then, placed on exhibition for nine months to a year. First Friday activities are now offered at Founders Park featuring live art and entertainment. Mr. Cumley thanked Kara Remington, our Parks Web Designer, for helping to coordinate this new fun element. Mr. Cumley mentioned that the Gold Wing riders will be in town June 29 – July 2, with an opening reception and live music by M-Dock on June 29. Mr. Belote commented that the Jordan Valley Creek daylighting project seems to be moving forward and Founders Park and West Meadows area are being included in that planning process. Tim Rosenbury, City's Director of Quality of Place Initiatives, is looking at our existing parks to see how they fit with the new development plans. Mr. Blackwood stated that the renderings for the daylighting project appear that this area will become a park. Mr. Belote stated that the new development is both an opportunity and a challenge. We would gladly take on the whole downtown park area as long as we have the resources to maintain it and do it the right way. Ms. Turner stated for more information or to provide feedback and suggestions about the new development visit www.renewjordancreek.com.

Mr. Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations Mr. Mitchell mentioned that the last four months of the fiscal year represent our largest revenue generating months. Sales tax revenue for June 2021 was up 26 percent from June 2020. Despite a cool and wet month in May, golf revenues continue to be significantly up over the prior year. Mr. Mitchell stated that Greene County contacted us to see if we had any expenditures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic that were not already reimbursed from the CARES Act funding administered by the County. We are working to determine those expenditures that may be eligible for reimbursement consideration, which would be within this current fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. After our preliminary review, we are hopeful to receive up to \$352,921 in reimbursement for expenditures from the CARES Act in this second round of funding. Mr. Mitchell reported that Dickerson Park Zoo revenues are also up over the same period as last year. With strong revenues, we are working to create a small financial cushion to help stabilize operating costs for the new fiscal year. Mr. Mike Chiles, Board member, asked if the growth in the number of rounds of golf is a short-term situation. Mr. Mitchell stated that it is more of a long-term situation as we have seen a growth in golf for the past five to ten years including an interest in junior golfers. Having the ability to offer alcohol at the courses has helped to secure some tournaments and increased rounds to a certain degree, but it has not been as significant as we originally thought. Mr. Belote stated that during the pandemic, there has definitely been an increase and growing interest in people playing golf. With the increased revenues, we will be

able to retire the Rivercut bridge loan nearly a year early, and hopefully, begin contemplating course improvements.

Ms. Jenny Edwards, Public Information Administrator

Ms. Edwards mentioned that the Communications team has been working on several groundbreaking and ribbon cutting events including the Lone Pine Bike Park opening and the Rose Garden rededication. Additionally, they have been coordinating with the Springfield-Greene County Health Department on promotion of vaccine clinics at park sites. Mr. Chiles inquired about any public concern that not all of the pools are opened this season. Ms. Edwards stated that most of the comments have been understanding, though disappointed, when it is explained that all pools are not open because of the lack of lifeguards. Mr. Belote commented that it has been challenging as the lifeguards hired do not necessarily want to work a full schedule. Our Aquatics staff are offering higher wages and employment incentives, along with complimentary lifeguard certification training classes.

Ms. Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation

Ms. McGrath stated that our Aquatics staff have been offering lifeguard certification and training classes all summer. Some of the participants are for parks, but some of the participants are for employees at private clubs. Ms. McGrath mentioned that Fassnigh and McGee-McGregor Pools opened on Memorial Day, and Grant Beach and Silver Springs will open on specific days beginning June 14. We are also offering Splash 'N Sizzle events, which allows swimmers to get in free with a donated canned food item from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm. We have seen a slight uptick in Family Center memberships this season, which is typically a slower time of year. On June 19, we will host the Daddy Daughter Night event, which historically has been held in February. It will be outside by the Doling Museum with a theme of Flip Flops and Flamingos. Go Skateboarding Day at the Skate Park is a free event from 3-9 pm on June 21. Ms. McGrath stated that we received confirmation from the Springfield-Greene County Health Department that we will be able to host Turkey Trot in person, with a virtual option available. Ms. Susie Turner asked if Recreation could provide a spreadsheet to show the trends of family center memberships, programs, and events, along with the narrative that is provided monthly. A quarterly report on Recreation revenues and analytics might be an option, as well.

Mr. Mike Crocker, Assistant Director

Mr. Crocker stated that the Dickerson Park Zoo recently installed new credit card readers at the Admissions Gate and in the Gift Shop, making the transactions more efficient. Security improvements are underway at the Zoo for the next several weeks. Mr. Crocker stated that it has been challenging to keep the Gift Shop stocked with merchandise as deliveries are taking weeks to receive, but this is not unique to just our Zoo. Mr. Crocker mentioned that he completed a new internship/externship structure for 35-40 interns that they have during the summer season. The popular Ball of the Wild event is July 9, and the Brew at the Zoo will be held in September. Mr. Crocker stated that the Zoo has updated their website including a new feature allowing online registrations for education classes and purchasing admission tickets.

Mr. Miles Park, Assistant Director

Mr. Park mentioned that Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services, was at a Missouri Park and Recreation Association meeting today as he serves as the MPRA Southwest Region Director. Mr. Park stated that the pools are operated on a staggered schedule due to limited staffing, which is a significant problem as warmer

temperatures usually mean more swimmers. Mr. Park mentioned that the City project coordinators have offered, and they have received, a lot of public comments and input regarding the Renew Jordan Creek project. Mr. Park mentioned that seven weddings were held in the Springfield Botanical Gardens last month. The Butterfly Festival is scheduled to be held at Nathanael-Greene/Close Memorial Park on June 19. Mr. Belote mentioned that we will host the annual MPRA conference in Springfield next March 1-4, 2022.

Ms. Kim Reser, Assistant Director Ms. Reser mentioned that Lake Country Soccer will host a 3 vs 3 tournament, with over 100 teams, on June 26. Tim McCrea, Business Systems Analyst, is wrapping up several safety and security installation projects at various park sites.

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks Mr. Belote mentioned that our CAPRA virtual site visit is scheduled for July 12-16. We are currently working on an introductory video for the site team. Mr. Belote stated that Park Rangers are exceptionally busy as they are the first responders to any situation in a park setting. The Lone Pine Bike Park event on June 1 was successful and is a great example of a lot of groups working together to provide additional youth opportunities. Mr. Belote mentioned that the Hatch Family Foundation donated \$255,000 to formalize the park including signage, expanding the trails, overlay and trail repair work. Mr. Belote stated that if we can complete the Burlington Northern rail-line expansion connecting Sequiota Park, the corridor will be a destination for tourists to visit.

Mr. Belote mentioned that at the City Council meeting on June 14, we will be requesting an end-of-year budget adjustment, which will also allow us to put additional money in our Parks Reserve Fund and get us closer to our adopted goal of 8-10 percent of our annual budget.

Ms. Turner mentioned that she appreciated the Safety Spotlight newsletter, which Mr. Belote stated was prepared by our Safety Coordinator, Linda Clark.

VII. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Sidney Needem, Chair, stated that two of our Board member's terms were not renewed by Greene County, so today is their last meeting. Mr. Belote reviewed the many accomplishments and the ways that Board members Tammy Mast and Mike Chiles have contributed to the Park Board during the last three years. Mr. Chiles stated that he appreciated the opportunity to get to know the Director and the staff, and he was impressed with the overall collegial group of people who are continually supportive of one another. Mr. Chiles stated that this type of support is a tribute to the joint leadership skills of the Administrative Team. Ms. Mast stated that when she earned her degree in Recreation and Leisure Studies, she thought it would be great to serve on the Park Board. Although she has served on many boards, the Park Board was the best one in her opinion. She has been impressed with the number of people's lives we touch while fulfilling so many needs of the community. The comradery, teamwork, and the way ideas are shared, make great things happen in our community. Mr. Belote stated he sincerely appreciated their service, as they both have been exceptional board members, and we look forward to working with both of them on future Park Board projects. Mr. Needem presented each of them with a plaque and thanked them for their service.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

X. CALENDAR

The next Park Board meeting is scheduled for Friday, July 9, 2021, at 8:30 am. The location will be determined.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Mast made the motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Chiles. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:14 am.

Ms. Mast made the motion to move into Closed Session after a 10-minute break; seconded by Mr. Chiles. Motion passed unanimously.