

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

Friday, October 8, 2021

Springfield-Greene County Botanical Center, 2400 S. Scenic, Springfield, Missouri

Meeting also conducted via Microsoft Teams platform

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Sidney Needem called the meeting to order at 8:31 am.

Present: Randy Blackwood, Leslie Carrier, Ann Compton, Curtis Jared (via Teams), Mark McNay, Sidney Needem, Heather Noggle, Royce Reding, Susie Turner

Absent: None

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

Guest: Branden Nolin, Houseal Lavigne (via Teams)

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Randy Blackwood made a motion to approve the September 10, 2021, Park Board Meeting minutes; seconded by Ms. Leslie Carrier. Motion was passed unanimously. Mr. Royce Reding made a motion to approve the September 10, 2021, Closed Meeting Minutes; seconded by Ms. Leslie Carrier. Motion was passed unanimously.

III. VALLEY WATER MILL EQUESTRIAN CENTER DONATION

Mr. Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities, stated that one of our adult equestrian students was interested in donating two horses to the Equestrian Center. Lynn Vandenberg, Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center Coordinator, recently inspected both horses on several occasions and supports the potential donation for use in our programs, events, and lessons. Mr. Coats stated that continued training will be conducted with the three-year old horse in preparation of introducing the horse into our programs. A memo with details regarding each horse was provided to the Board for review. Ms. Heather Noggle made the motion to accept the donation of the two horses with an estimated value of \$19,000; seconded by Mr. Randy Blackwood. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN OVERVIEW

Mr. Jim Fisher, Assistant Director, introduced Branden Nolin with Houseal Lavigne to conduct a virtual overview presentation of our recent Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Mr. Nolin explained how the gathering of information process began, which started with a series of workshops for Forward SGF, the City of Springfield's comprehensive plan process. He stated that the new Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides a guide for the Park Board and

partnering agencies for the next 20 years, but that it was built on prior planning efforts of the Recreation Programming Plan (2015), Field Guide 2030 (2014), and Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan (1998). Through the Forward SGF workshops, nearly 1,500 citizens participated by attending in-person workshops and over 6,100 responses were received from online surveys. Mr. Nolin stated that Park Board staff did a great job providing data, goals, and objectives, so that Houseal Lavigne could organize the information and tell our story. He commented that we have high quality existing facilities, but our difficulty remains in how to maintain them, while still working to address current recreation trends. Mr. Nolin reviewed several statistics measuring the growth of Greene County, inventory and supply of greenspace per 1000 people, and staffing and operational funding compared to other benchmark cities and agencies. He also reviewed the six Goals and Objectives to provide action steps to achieve the goals. Mr. Nolin stated that identifying a long-term capital funding mechanism is the number one goal to successfully address the community's ongoing needs and future expectations for the park system. The Board discussed several aspects with Mr. Nolin including the deficiency in number of full-time staff compared to other peer agencies and how to bring the community more of what they want in terms of parks and trails. Mr. Nolin stated that it is all related to how those agencies are funded, which in most cases means that those agencies have more operational funds at their disposal. The pandemic proved to many citizens how valuable parks and trails are in our community, and parks and trails continue to be a high-profile topic when discussed in community forums. Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, stated that it was imperative that we completed the Master Plan for many reasons including it being a requirement of our departmental reaccreditation process. Also, we felt it was important to partner with the Forward SGF process and make sure that our Master Plan was representative of the community's feedback. The Board stated their appreciation of the staff and Houseal Lavigne's extensive work to provide an important and detailed overview of our current park system facilities, along with goals and objectives to pursue in the future.

V. COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Belote stated that we will send out soon the Committee descriptions for Board members to review and rank the committees in order of their particular interest and involvement.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services Mr. Carney stated that he and his crew are excited that events are returning to our community. During the Japanese Fall Festival, an estimated 13,000 people visited the park during the 25th anniversary of this popular cultural event.

Ms. Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation Ms. McGrath mentioned that our Concessions and Catering Division offered authentic Japanese food during the Japanese Fall Festival, with the help of one of the Sister Cities Board Members, who is from Japan. Ms. McGrath reviewed the recent staff changes within the Recreation Division. We assumed operations of the Fieldhouse Sportscenter facility, and the last week has been busy converting computer and security systems to prepare for upcoming leagues and tournaments and hiring sports officials and other part-time staff. We will host the MSHSAA Tennis State Championships

at Cooper Tennis Complex the next two weekends. The Board complimented the staff for the smooth transition of the Fieldhouse facility operation.

Mr. Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities Mr. Coats stated that the Rutledge-Wilson Farm staff have scheduled 1,500 students from surrounding communities to attend animals and farm life educational programs during the month of October. The first disc golf tournament with 60 participants was held at the new course at Lake Springfield Park. A new program, Harvest Moon Float, with 15 participants, was held at the Boathouse in September. Christine Peoples, Timmons Hall Coordinator, will host an onsite heritage trail and area churches tour, and the Director of the Milly Project will join the tour, as well, during the Missouri Park and Recreation Association's annual state conference next March. The Special Facilities maintenance staff tackled a big project at the Equestrian Center by diverting stormwater and reducing erosion near the building. Mr. Coats mentioned that we do not breed horses on the property, but we do lease, feed, maintain, and board 26 horses.

Mr. Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations Mr. Mitchell reported that sales tax revenues were up compared to the same period one year ago. This includes an increase in September's sales tax revenue. Mr. Mitchell stated that his staff is reviewing the impact that the increase of the minimum wage to \$11.15 per hour on January 1, 2022, and \$12.00 per hour on January 1, 2023, will have on our annual operational budget. Attendance and revenues for the Dickerson Park Zoo continue to be strong. Golf revenues continue to be strong, as well, with the addition of hosting several golf tournaments during the month. Our Family Center numbers are trending upwards and are close to pre-pandemic attendance and revenue figures.

Mr. Jeff Cumley, Superintendent of Jordan Valley Park and CSDP Program Mr. Cumley mentioned that Jordan Valley Ice Park staff will host the Little Blues program for the first time. The program registration fee allows each participant to receive free equipment to help keep them in the program. The program caps with 50 participants and is currently full, with a waiting list. The CSDP Program recognized the 2020 and 2021 Athletes of the Year at the Davis House on October 3. Springfield Rotary North approved the \$17,000 grant for improvements to the Betty and Bobby Allison Miracle Field, which should be completed by the spring.

Ms. Jenny Edwards, Public Information Administrator Ms. Edwards mentioned that her staff has been working on Turkey Trot print and media promotional materials, along with setting up social media accounts for the newly acquired Fieldhouse Sportscenter. The Local Bevy, a boutique in the Rountree area, is currently selling Parks' apparel line of t-shirts in the store.

Mr. Miles Park, Assistant Director Mr. Park shared info about several events coming up including Gigs in the Garden each Sunday in October and the 1860's Lifestyle Expo event held at the Gray Campbell Farmstead located within Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park. Mr. Park mentioned that the many events we host would not happen without the assistance of volunteer organizations, such as Sister Cities and Friends of the Garden, who significantly assisted with the success of the Japanese Fall Festival. Mr. Park mentioned that they had received six quality vendor proposals for the Cooper Soccer field improvement project. We received some assistance from Springfield Cardinals and Expedia employees, who performed clean up and maintenance tasks in several parks.

Ms. Kim Reser, Assistant Director

Ms. Reser stated that she appreciated the assistance of the City's Information Systems Division who helped to install cable, along with security and information technology services at the Fieldhouse Sportscenter. On October 1-3, we hosted the US BMX Gold Cup with over 500 riders during the event. Ms. Reser thanked Daniel Villalobos, Skate Park Coordinator, who was the Event Director, and the many staff from several Park Divisions who assisted with the event, along with the Spokes BMX volunteer group and the Springfield Sports Commission. This event provided an estimated \$550,000 economic impact to our community.

Mr. Jim Fisher, Assistant Director

Mr. Fisher thanked Amie Davis, our Human Resources representative, who helped to facilitate 15 new hires this past month. We will host the Missouri State High School Athletic Association's State Golf Championship for Girls Class 4 this month at Rivercut Golf Course. Mr. Fisher thanked the Park Ranger Division for their assistance at all the special events we host throughout our park system. Mr. Mark McNay, Board member, inquired how our employees are managing with the consistent difficulties in hiring part-time staff. Mr. Fisher and Mr. Belote both stated that it is challenging, but they are both amazed at the can-do attitudes and the efforts made to continue providing the same services at a high level. We are working to review options that will allow us to be more competitive on the hiring front, and the coming budget process will focus on that aspect, as well.

Mr. Mike Crocker, Assistant Director

Mr. Crocker mentioned that the Zoo is partnering with Missouri State University's sports programs and offering some educational and animal interaction experiences during half-time at basketball games. It has been a positive and popular attraction with more than 400-500 children visiting the designated area at the games. Mr. Crocker stated that Zoo staff is working on various maintenance projects, which include refurbishing the train coaches and enhancing several interactive play areas.

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks

Mr. Belote provided a brief update on the Lone Pine Bike Park indicating that several Park Board and Ozark Greenways staff had met with the Southern Hills Neighborhood group who were concerned about the planned improvements. It was a productive discussion, and our staff will continue to move forward to achieve a workable solution for all parties involved. Mr. Belote mentioned the economic impact of the recent BMX Gold Cup event and commented that nearly 90 percent of the BMX riders were from out of town. Ms. Leslie Carrier, Board member, stated that she was amazed with the amount of diverse work that our staff performs on a regular basis such as hosting various special events, dealing with security issues, and recreational programming, and she feels this way every month when reading the divisional reports. She stated she is surprised that we do all of what we do with a smaller work group than many of our peer agencies, so perhaps the Board may need to review our staffing numbers and competitive salaries. Mr. Sidney Needem, Park Board Chair, stated that he has served three terms on the Park Board, and he continues to be proud of the work performed by staff and the many amenities our park system provides to the community.

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, November 12, 2021, at 8:30 am. The location will be determined.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Mark McNay made the motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ms. Ann Compton. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:18 am.