

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Friday, November 12, 2021
Jordan Valley Ice Park, 635 E. Trafficway, Springfield, Missouri
Meeting also conducted via Microsoft Teams platform

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Sidney Needem called the meeting to order at 8:36 am.

Present: Randy Blackwood, Leslie Carrier, Ann Compton (via Teams), Curtis Jared, 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

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, and Mr. Tim Carpenter, Park Ranger Administrator, provided a brief update regarding the shooting incident that seriously injured one of our park rangers, when he responded to a dispatched call from the Springfield Police Department requesting assistance. Our Park Rangers are fully commissioned by Greene County as law enforcement officers and wear a bullet-proof vest as part of their issued uniform, which definitely aided in providing protection to our ranger. Mr. Sidney Needem, Park Board Chair, asked for a moment of silence and prayer for the injured Park Ranger and the other Springfield Police Department officers who were involved in the incident.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Randy Blackwood made a motion to approve the October 8, 2021, Park Board Meeting minutes; seconded by Ms. Susie Turner. Motion was passed unanimously.

III. MDC COMMUNITY CONSERVATION GRANT FOR LAKE SPRINGFIELD PARK

Mr. Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities, reported that the Park Board has been offered another opportunity to partner with the Missouri Department of Conservation for the removal of non-native and/or invasive plant species in a designated 16.8-acre area of Lake Springfield Park. The project funding includes a \$20,000 grant from MDC and the Park Board's match of \$20,199 cash or in-kind assistance, which may include staff, equipment, volunteer time, training new employees, supplies and equipment, and maintenance. Although some of the past grants we have received include funds for replanting, this particular grant does not have an allocation for new plants. Ms. Heather Noggle made the motion to accept the Missouri Department of Conservation grant in the amount of \$20,000; seconded by Mr. Mark McNay. The motion was passed unanimously.

IV. FIELDHOUSE SPORTSCENTER UPDATE

Ms. Anne-Mary McGrath introduced Ms. Jill Simmons, Community Athletics Administrator, who oversees adult and youth sports, Cooper Park Sports Complex, and now the Fieldhouse Sportscenter. Ms. Simmons reviewed the many tasks that needed to take place before we could begin our Parks league play at the facility, which included installing computers, new servers, and upgrades to the security system and security cameras, transfer of internet, cable, phone services, and a revamp of the concessions menu, and build a new facility web page. Currently, we are accommodating about 1,200 people daily at the Fieldhouse Monday through Friday, with scheduled tournaments on many weekends. We have 202 basketball teams and 29 volleyball teams registered for league play. We are already accepting tournaments and event requests for 2022 and 2023. We have hired our initial full-time facility staff and continue to hire for temporary staff and game officials. Mr. Belote reviewed the property exhibit distributed to the Board which shows the 2.23 acres the City recently purchased as potential future parking should we expand the number of courts at the adjacent Fieldhouse site. Discussion continued about the potential increase of sports tourism and economic impact the current Fieldhouse operation and any proposed expansion could generate for the community. There was also discussion about the possibility of receiving ARPA funding through both the City and Greene County for park projects, though no details have been decided to date. Mr. Belote thanked the Fieldhouse staff, along with Recreation, Sports, Park Operations, Public Information, Information Systems staff, and a several others for their assistance throughout the transition.

V. COMMITTEE REPORT

a. **Park Board Committees/Assignments for 2022** Mr. Belote stated that as the Board had suggested, we will soon assemble the following committees once we receive Board member preferences: Fees & Charges/Budget Assessment, Parks Development/Property Assessment, and Parks Network/Community Engagement. We should have that information back to the Board at the December meeting, with necessary Committee work to follow in 2022.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities Mr. Coats indicated that the 14th annual Harvest Fest event was a great success and 5,400 pumpkins and 2,000 gourds were purchased at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park. The RWF Park staff welcomed three new pigs to the property. We received over 500 canoe/kayak reservations via the new online system at Lake Springfield Boathouse, which was part of the over 4,000 rentals during the 2021 season. Mr. Coats shared a brief report about the various activities at Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center, Timmons Hall, and projects completed by the Special Facilities Maintenance Staff.

Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services Mr. Carney stated that three days of rain made it very challenging to host the Missouri State High School Athletic Association Championship Softball and Tennis events, but with good communication, planning, and the expert work of our park operations crews and our event partners, we were able to host virtually all of the games and matches. Mr. Carney mentioned that Richard Dutcher, Park Operations Supervisor of the turf area, retired after 35 years of service with the Park Board. We appreciate Richard's many years with the Park Board facilitating our many sports events and championships, and he will be missed.

Jeff Cumley, Superintendent of Jordan Valley Park and CSDP

Mr. Cumley welcomed the Board to the Jordan Valley Ice Park. Mr. Cumley mentioned that we hosted the Missouri State University's "Pack the Rink with Pink" event on October 22-23. The ice is turned pink and the MSU Ice Bear players wear pink jerseys, which are then auctioned off, and the proceeds benefit the Breast Cancer Foundation of the Ozarks. Mr. Cumley stated that the Little Blues program is underway with a maximum of 50 registered participants. The registration fee covers free equipment for the players. The CSDP Athlete of the Year reception was held on October 3, and the keynote speaker was Cameron Wright, 1996 Olympian high jumper and newly-inducted member of the CSDP Board. The annual lighting of the Mayor's Christmas Tree will take place in downtown Springfield on Park Central Square November 20.

Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations

Mr. Mitchell compared the golf fund revenue and rounds of golf played for 2020 and 2021, and both revenue and rounds are up from last year. Food and beverage sales at the golf courses have also increased in 2021. Dickerson Park Zoo's revenue and attendance are also up compared to 2020. Mr. Belote mentioned that the impact of the increase in minimum wage will be one of the topics for the Fees and Charges/Budget Assessment Committee to review.

Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation

Ms. McGrath mentioned that concession options had been previously reduced at the Fieldhouse at the beginning of the pandemic by the former facility operators, but we have now restored and enhanced menu options including offering boxed lunches for tournament players. Ms. McGrath mentioned that the 70 participants celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Miracle League with a home run derby event. We hosted a Trick or Treat Trail event at Rutledge-Wilson Farm. With staff dressed in costume, we provided treats to over 1300 children in the 725 cars that drove through the park enjoying the many lights and decorations. World TeamTennis season starts Sunday, November 14, and information with the match schedule and viewing options was distributed to the Board. Ms. McGrath also provided an update on the virtual Turkey Trot, including possible race options and packet pickup details.

Jenny Edwards, Public Information Administrator

Ms. Edwards stated that Diana Tyndall, Marketing and Sponsorship Coordinator, has submitted her resignation in order to work her new private marketing business full-time and her last day is December 17. The position description is being updated and should be posted next week. We wish Diana much success in her new endeavor. She will be missed by her Parks colleagues and friends.

Mike Crocker, Assistant Director

Mr. Crocker reported that new studies show that COVID can also affect animals, and he listed some examples, particularly with the big cat population. The Zoo is still open during the winter months even though some of the animals slow down their activity in colder weather.

Miles Park, Assistant Director

Mr. Park stated that several of the Nathanael-Greene/Close Memorial Park features are closed for the winter. He also reported that the Rosten Butterfly House welcomed 38,000 visitors during the 2021 season, which is more than double the number of visitors from 2020. Mr. Park mentioned that Gardens Aglow is open for

19 dates, which some of those evening dates offering craft activities for kids to enjoy. A flyer with the details about Gardens Aglow was distributed to the Board.

Jim Fisher, Assistant Director

Mr. Fisher stated that Amie Davis, our Human Resources representative, has been working to convert contract employees to full-time equivalent positions in order to be consistent with the City Charter provisions. The City Manager, City Attorney, and Human Resources Director are also reviewing re-employment options at the City after a City employee retires. The Golf Division is offering a special Black Friday sale to start or add funds to our Golf Patron Plan.

Kim Reser, Assistant Director

Ms. Reser thanked staff who assisted with parking needs, security, concessions and managing the recent Gold Cup BMX event at Spokes BMX Track. With the new requirement of 10-digit code changing for phone numbers, alarms and elevators are being reprogrammed. The Lake Country Soccer annual meeting will be at 6 pm on November 18. Park Board members are welcome to attend.

Bob Belote, Director of Parks

Mr. Belote stated that Jean Larrick, a tennis instructor in our community, including at Cooper Tennis Complex, for over 40 years, was inducted into the Springfield Sports Hall of Fame, at their recent banquet October 27. Mr. Belote thanked several staff members who assisted in providing a tour of Dan Kinney Family Center for several Aurora city officials, Park Board members, and citizens, who are interested in building a similar community-based recreational facility. Mr. Belote stated that several internal staff are working to address the concerns of some of the Southern Hills neighbors and develop a compromise plan that will work for the youth bike enthusiasts and the neighbors who live near the Lone Pine Bike Park. Ms. Suzy Turner, Board member, stated that it was truly remarkable how many activities take place daily, along with special events, within the park system. She expressed her appreciation for staff and the Park Rangers.

VII. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Sidney Needem, Chair stated that he appreciates our staff's ability to work together as a team.

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, December 10, 2021, at 8:30 am. The location will be at the Davis House and Property.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Mark McNay made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Curtis Jared. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:06 am.