

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Friday, October 9, 2020**

Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center, 4007 N. Farm Road 171, Springfield, Missouri

I. ROLL CALL

Ms. Carolyn Gerdes, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

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

Members Absent: Scott Bailes

Park Board Staff Present: Bob Belote, Jon Carney, Tim Carpenter, Matt Coats, Mike Crocker, Jeff Cumley, Jenny Filmer Edwards, Jim Fisher, Trevor Gaylon, Tim McCrea, Anne-Mary McGrath, Emma McKinnon, Karen Mellinger, Jerry Mitchell, Miles Park, Kim Reser, Jeff Smith, Diana Tyndall, Lynn Vandenberg, Lana Woolsey (via Microsoft Teams)

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Sidney Needem made a motion to approve the September 16, 2020, Park Board Meeting minutes; seconded by Mr. Randy Blackwood. Motion was approved unanimously.

III. INTRODUCTIONS AND VALLEY WATER MILL EQUESTRIAN CENTER OVERVIEW

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, welcomed everyone to the Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center. He thanked Tim McCrea, Parks Business Systems Analyst, and the City of Springfield's Public Information Office team for working through our unique technical challenges at various park locations to virtually offer the Park Board Meeting. Ms. Lynn Vandenberg, Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center Coordinator, introduced her key staff who assist with the daily operations, including Emma McKinnon, Equine Coordinator, and Trevor Gaylon, Greene County Sheriff Posse liaison. Emma and Trevor both teach beginning to advanced level horse classes to interested riders from young children to senior citizens. Currently, staff is providing 90 private and semi-private lessons each week. Lynn stated that along with lessons and classes, staff also host horse shows, birthday parties, and dog agility classes. Lynn mentioned that we are different from private facilities, because we not only provide lessons to beginning riders, but we also provide the appropriate horse for that class level. At most private boarding facilities, an individual taking lessons would need to provide their own horse.

Lynn introduced several instructional devices that her staff has designed and built including Kick Buddy, Mr. Bucky, and Muc-Mare. This equipment helps to teach rider safety and balancing techniques. During the pandemic, Lynn described the various cleaning protocols her staff follows, which includes sanitizing every piece of equipment a student touches during a lesson or class. All instructors and riders also wear masks during the lesson or class. Lynn stated that they have had to cancel six weekend events due to the pandemic. Lynn mentioned that the EC has

been very fortunate to receive a number of benevolent gifts including horses, saddles, and other riding and training equipment. Lynn explained how they evaluate donated horses and the process followed to determine if the horse remains on site and used in our programs. Lynn thanked the Board for their support of the Equestrian Center and its staff.

IV. PARK BOARD CAPRA ACCREDITATION RENEWAL UPDATE

Mr. Jim Fisher, Assistant Director, mentioned that an overview document of the Commission of Accreditation for Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) is included in the Board Member's packet for review. The accreditation process reviews how we do our business compared to the industry's best practices. Seeking accreditation allows our agency to formalize many of the practices and policies that we are already doing, which offers validation and assurance to our citizens, patrons, and staff that we are striving to provide the very best services for our community. Accreditation is granted when an agency meets the criteria for the 10 standards of compliance, which includes providing supporting evidence. Five years ago, our evidence of compliance report included over 1,200 electronically linked documents. For the renewal process, there are two new required policies: Concussion Policy and Social Media Policy, which will be reviewed at our November meeting. Mr. Belote mentioned that the Dickerson Park Zoo has been accredited for over 35 years, undergoing the reaccreditation process seven times.

V. DEPARTMENTAL COVID-19 UPDATE

Mr. Belote stated that City Council extended the mask ordinance until January 9, 2021. Park Board staff continues to review each facility to ensure patron and staff safety, while still offering quality services. We are reviewing the process of conducting temperature checks at family centers and offering day care for family center patrons using a reservation system. We will also evaluate conducting temperature checks at other Park Board facilities. Our Athletics staff is working through protocols with Missouri State High School Athletic Association in preparation for the upcoming State Championship tennis and softball events. New safety partition glass has been installed at our Front Desk reception area in the Parks Administration building. We continue to conduct most meetings virtually as often as possible. The Springfield-Greene County Health Department and Human Resources Department have offered several training sessions and provide frequent updates for our staff and City employees regarding the pandemic situation. Mr. Belote mentioned that the Health Department and Human Resources have done a great job managing COVID-19 situations for us and helping our departmental staff mitigate the proper process and procedures.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Belote stated that we have several quality applicants for the two open City representative seats on the Park Board. The Nominating Committee has reviewed the applications, and interviews are being scheduled with the top applicants. After the interviews are completed, the Nominating Committee will forward their recommendations to the City Manager for his review and subsequent formal consideration by the Mayor and City Council.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities

Mr. Coats stated that we have sold 48 pallets of pumpkins. Although we are not hosting a formal Harvest Fest event this year due to COVID-19, visitors have been following social distance protocols and wearing masks while experiencing an informal trip through the corn maze and pond fishing at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park. Mr. Coats mentioned that we set a record of canoe/kayak rentals this year at Lake Springfield Boathouse. Three new buoy markers have been placed in Lake Springfield to help alert patrons that they are approaching the dam. Christine Peoples, Timmons Hall Coordinator, hosted a book signing event for author Dr. Sabrina Brinson, and children in attendance received a free copy of her book, "Meet the Philadelphia Dolly Vardens." The Special Facilities Maintenance crew over seeded 40 acres in September, which will help with the quality of hay harvested next year. Mr. Belote mentioned that a new hay storage facility was one of the smaller, but badly needed, projects discussed with the Darr Family Foundation last month.

Jenny Filmer Edwards, Public Information Administrator

Ms. Edwards stated that as part of the CAPRA process, her division is developing a Social Media Policy. They have reviewed policies from other agencies, as well. Ms. Edwards stated that with fewer special events and programs to promote this fall, her staff has been providing suggestions of activities that citizens can do on their own including visiting various parks. Ms. Edwards mentioned that she and her staff are also discussing a possible revamp of the Park Bench, which is the brochure of our programs and events. Several new Parks Pick-Me-Up testimony videos have been completed by Diana Tyndall and feature local professionals telling their story of why they love our parks.

Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services

Mr. Carney stated that the weather has been warmer and much dryer than the average for September, which means a lot more mowing than normal. Operations crews have been improving the baseball field, renovating the back stop, and updating sidewalks bleachers, and dugouts at Grant Beach Park. Mr. Carney responded to Board Member, Mike Chiles', inquiry about trail maintenance and indicated that we have three staff assigned to Ozark Greenways' trails. We recently borrowed a large machine from the City's Public Works Department to help trim back vegetation growth on the Frisco Highline Trail, which allowed us to cover a larger area more efficiently.

Jeff Cumley, Superintendent of Jordan Valley Park and CSDP

Mr. Cumley mentioned that a new computer system was added to the ice pant chiller that was rebuilt last year. This new system will send messages in a quicker more efficient manner and correct some minor problems within the system. The Jordan Valley Park and Founders Park fountains have been turned off for the season. Decorating these parks for the Festival of Lights celebration has begun and will take several weeks to complete. Mr. Cumley mentioned that we had three students from our CSDP Archery Program recently win national championships. Our Head Archery Coach, Amy Francka, took second place in the national competition.

Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation

Ms. McGrath mentioned that our Outdoor Initiatives' staff hosted a special "Night in the Parks" event that included reading a cave book while at Sequiota Park, and as if the bats were listening, the bats flew out of the cave at dusk to the delight of the participants. Drive-in Bingo has been very successful for our senior patrons at Northview Center. During our Splash 'n Sizzle events this summer, we collected over

1,094 pounds of food for Ozarks Food Harvest. Turkey Trot will be a virtual event this year and proceeds will again benefit our partners, Developmental Center of the Ozarks and Ozark Food Harvest, along with our own Park Board Youth Recreation Scholarship Fund. Ms. McGrath displayed this year's Turkey Trot t-shirt which all registered participants will receive. Promotion of the virtual event and details on how to participate will be included in the City Utilities' bill stuffer, on the box tops of Little Caesar's and Domino's pizzas, along with additional advertisements in the News-Leader, billboards, and on the radio. Registered participants can drive through our packet pick up area the Wednesday before Thanksgiving or have their packet and t-shirt mailed to them.

Jim Fisher, Assistant Director Mr. Fisher stated that golf rounds are up significantly and continue to set record numbers. Mr. Fisher mentioned that the back 9 greens at Rivercut Golf Course will be sodded next week in hopes to repair any damaged areas. The Park Ranger Division recently hired a Park Ranger, Mr. Robert Bridges, who was most recently the Director of Safety at the College of Ozarks. Miles Park and Jeff Smith recently provided additional requested information and park mapping details to Houseal Lavigne consultants for the Parks Master Plan. We hope to have a draft for the Park Board to review soon.

Kim Reser, Assistant Director Ms. Reser stated that 75 percent of the Parks telephone land lines have been evaluated to determine if they need to remain or can be eliminated. As mentioned previously, this task was done as part of a cost saving measure since the price for land line service will triple in the next month.

Miles Park, Assistant Director Mr. Park mentioned that the Botanical Center staff will host eight weddings on 10/10/20. The Concert in the Park series at Nathanael Greene Close Memorial Park will be held on Sundays at 2pm in the month of October. Donations are accepted and will be designated for garden maintenance. Our trail maintenance staff performed some landscaping maintenance on the South Creek Greenway trail including removing litter from an area of a new trail section that is under construction near the new Barrington Avenue Bridge. Mary Kromrey, Director, Ozark Greenways, secured funding from the Greene County Highway Department for this new trail segment that will provide a connection from the neighborhood to the South Creek Trail. Recently, the Botanical Gardens Fountain Committee and design consultant met virtually to review a preliminary conceptual plan on the new Thomas J. Kachel Memorial Fountain. Mr. Park mentioned that a portion of the donated funds will be retained for ongoing maintenance of the fountain.

Mike Crocker, Assistant Director Mr. Crocker stated that the original United Way Day of Caring was cancelled during the summer due to COVID-19, but Dickerson Park Zoo chose to reschedule the volunteer group. Forty volunteers from T-Mobile painted, stained and sealed a privacy fence, and completed several other projects on September 30. Friends of the Zoo applied for funding through the Federal Cares Act managed by Greene County and was awarded approximately \$83,000 to help offset the losses due to the Zoo's closure in the spring and from the fund-raising events that were cancelled.

Bob Belote, Director of Parks Mr. Belote stated that City Council recently approved the rezoning proposal for the Galloway area development across from Sequiota Park that has been under heavy discussion in recent months. The Galloway Neighborhood Association has been

gathering within Sequiota Park to collect signatures for a petition to rescind the ruling. We will work with the group to appropriately utilize the park area they need to collect signatures without impeding park traffic and within city regulations. Mr. Randy Blackwood, Board Member, inquired whether any of our Park facilities were election polling places. Mr. Belote indicated that Cooper Tennis Complex and Oak Grove Community Center were designated locations, and Ms. McGrath has been in contact with election officials on how to operate the site especially during the pandemic.

VIII. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Sidney Needem, Vice Chair, stepped in for Ms. Gerdes, who had to leave the meeting, and he encouraged everyone to vote on November 3. He also thanked the Park Board staff for working together and continuing to do a great job every day. Mr. Needem stated he thought the Park Board was one of the most well-run organizations in the State of Missouri.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

X. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

XI. CALENDAR

The next Park Board meeting will be Friday, November 13, 2020. The location and time will be determined at a later date.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Randy Blackwood made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Curtis Jared. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:14 am.