

MINUTES
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Cooper Tennis Complex, 2331 E Pythian, Springfield, Missouri, and
Virtually via Microsoft Teams Platform
Friday, April 8, 2022

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Sidney Needem, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

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

Park Board Members 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, Jerry Mitchell, Miles Park, Kim Reser, Jennifer Shepherd, Jessie Stewart, Justin Wilson, Lana Woolsey.

Guests Present: Robert Bridges and Carter Bridges

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Mark McNay made a motion to approve the March 11, 2022, Park Board minutes; seconded by Randy Blackwood. Motion passed unanimously.

III. PARK LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION'S VALOR AWARD

Mr. Tim Carpenter, Park Ranger Administrator, introduced Jessie Stewart, our new Park Ranger, and shared information about her previous law enforcement experience. Mr. Carpenter also explained the lengthy hiring process to successfully become a Park Ranger.

Mr. Carpenter presented the Park Law Enforcement Association's Valor Award to Park Ranger, Robert Bridges. This award recognizes an act of gallantry or courage performed by a park law enforcement officer. Ranger Bridges was extensively injured while on duty providing back-up support for the Springfield Police Department on November 11, 2021.

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, thanked the Ranger Division and Mr. Jim Fisher for their dedication and hard work in striving to make our parks and facilities a safe place for patrons.

IV. MUSGRAVE FOUNDATION GRANT FOR SCHOOL-PARK PROGRAM

Mrs. Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation, stated that the School-Park Division was selected as a recipient of the Jeanette L. Musgrave Foundation Discretionary Grant in the amount of \$5,000.00. Staff is seeking approval from the Board to accept the grant, which will be used for the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) program including

supplies and high-tech equipment to enhance our existing programs and add new program offerings. Mr. Randy Blackwood made a motion to accept the Jeanette L. Musgrave Foundation's Discretionary Grant in the amount of \$5,000.00 for the SPARC Before and After School programs; seconded by Ms. Susie Turner. Motion passed unanimously.

V. PARK BOARD MODIFIED CASH RESERVE STATEMENT

Mr. Bob Belote stated that at the March 11, 2022, Park Board meeting, the FY 2022-23 Parks budget was adopted, and the Board proposed a policy change to the Cash Reserve Statement. The Board discussed changing the policy to annually commit one percent of the Parks budget to the Parks Reserve Fund until it reached the 8-10% level. The Business Operations staff prepared a report estimating that it may take approximately five years to achieve eight percent and approximately 10 years to achieve 10 percent of our operating budget in the Parks Reserve Fund.

Mr. Jerry Mitchell stated that the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) standard was consulted in determining the appropriate range for the Reserve Fund. Mr. Belote stated that using this range gives us flexibility at the Board level. A survey was conducted with 14-15 other park departments regarding their Reserve Fund, which ranged from most departments reporting that they had zero or very close to zero percent of their budget dedicated to a departmental Reserve Fund. Most Park departments polled used their municipalities for reserve fund purposes; however, some park departments had Reserve Funds that were up to 10-12 percent of their departmental budget such as Lee's Summit, Missouri.

Mr. Curtis Jared made a motion to approve the modified cash reserve statement; seconded by Ms. Leslie Carrier. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Bob Belote stated that the Park Development/Property Assessment Committee is the next Board Committee to begin meeting, hopefully before the next Park Board meeting. The Committee members include Mr. Curtis Jared, Ms. Susie Turner, and Mr. Mark McNay. This committee will meet to discuss current Park property issues and long-term property needs of our park system. Mr. Miles Park, Assistant Director, and Mr. Jeff Smith, Senior Parks Planner, have made a detailed inventory of all the properties in the Parks system which will be used in the upcoming committee meetings.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mike Crocker, Assistant Director Mr. Crocker stated that the Zoo has switched to their summer hours, which are 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., until October. The weather greatly impacts attendance at the Zoo, so with the recent warm weather, attendance has been strong. Mr. Crocker is conducting interviews in conjunction with the recent release of his book.

Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities Mr. Coats reported that the canoe and kayak rental season will begin at Lake Springfield Boathouse on April 15. The Watershed Committee is working to remove the invasive plant life at Lake Springfield Park. At Rutledge-

Wilson Farm Park, staff has scheduled field trips for 2,400 area elementary children this spring. On Saturday, April 9, Easter at the Farm will be held at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park with an Easter egg hunt that includes 20,000 eggs. At Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center, summer camps are full, and staff is conducting over 100 horse lessons per week. At Timmons Hall, Ms. Christine Peoples is working on preparations for the Juneteenth event that will be held over two days. The Special Facilities maintenance crews are currently working on hay season preparations.

Jeff Cumley, Superintendent of Jordan Valley Park and CSDP Program Mr. Cumley discussed his involvement with the Southeast Rotary Club and the grant they provided for improvements to the Miracle League field. Lights are being added to the dugouts, lines are being repainted, a new sound system is being installed, and a shade structure is being built behind home plate. Many CSDP athletes are signing letters of intent to play for college teams. Mr. Cumley reported that Ms. Lori Vandersnick's, CSDP Director and Volleyball Coach, volleyball players have been awarded offers to play at the collegiate level.

Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services Mr. Carney stated that long-time staff member Mr. Warren Bagwell will be retiring. Mr. Bagwell has been with Parks for almost 50 years between full-time and part-time employment. Mr. Bagwell played a critical role as a playground equipment safety inspector. On April 1, the water was turned back on in the pavilion restrooms after being winterized for the winter. Mr. Belote shared memories of Mr. Warren Bagwell and his appreciation for all Mr. Bagwell has done during his tenure with the Park Board.

Jenny Edwards, Public Information Administrator Ms. Edwards stated that a hiring campaign is underway with large banners displayed at various park locations, as well as ads placed on billboards, flyers distributed, and social media posts. The Communications Team has completed the Summer Camp brochure, which has been printed and distributed. The Community Focus Report has been very popular in March and can be viewed online at <https://springfieldcommunityfocus.org/>.

Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations Mr. Mitchell stated that there was a slight sales tax decrease in March, but sales tax revenue was still up from last year's numbers. The projected sales tax numbers in April are expected to be elevated due to many events happening in the community. Business Operations staff are conducting revenue audits at various parks locations in preparation for the City's internal audit.

Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation Mrs. McGrath discussed several highlights in her division including SPARC Spring Break and Summer Camps. The National Christian Homeschool Championship Tournament took place March 12-17 at multiple locations throughout Springfield and at our facilities, including The Fieldhouse and O'Reilly Tefft Gym. Miracle League season will return on April 18. The program hasn't been offered since 2019 due to the pandemic situation. We are currently recruiting buddies for the season. April is Volunteer Month, and the Park Board has had an increase in the number of volunteers this past year. Staff will host a Floating Easter Egg Hunt at the Chesterfield Family Center indoor aquatics center on April 16.

Kim Reser, Assistant Director Ms. Reser stated that the Ozarks Coca-Cola/Dr. Pepper Cup will be taking place at Lake Country Soccer Complex April 8-10. Many out-of-town teams are registered for this tournament, which should bring positive economic impact to the community.

Miles Park, Assistant Director Mr. Park reported that two volunteer groups at the Botanical Center, Youth Core and the Central High School Environmental Club, have been incredibly helpful with maintenance and gardening tasks. There were around 42,000 visitors at Nathanael Greene Park in March. The Cherry Blossom Kite and Pinata Festival was held on April 2 and approximately 9,200 people attended. Garden Day will take place on April 14 at the Botanical Center. On April 18, weather permitting, work will begin on the human sundial project. Mr. Park indicated that we use a vehicle counter and a formula, which estimates the number of people in the vehicle, to provide approximate attendance totals for special events.

Jim Fisher, Assistant Director Mr. Fisher stated that the 60th Anniversary Horton Smith Celebration has been postponed twice due to weather. There are discussions about combining the celebration with the 75th Anniversary of the Bill and Payne Stewart Golf Course in the summer. IBEW labor contract negotiations have recently begun for our CTL employees.

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks Mr. Belote reviewed the following information from several recent sports tourism events in Springfield. Missouri State University hosted the MSHSAA Basketball State Championships with over 40,000 attendees and 6,000 hotel room nights. The National Christian Homeschool Championship took place at ten locations with over 10,000 attendees and 8,000 room nights. Mr. Belote reported that the Missouri State High School Championship formal bid for the next five years is being developed with the Springfield Sports Commission. In May, we are hosting State Championships in golf, tennis, and softball. Also, we are hosting the Missouri Valley Conference Softball Championships at Killian Sports Complex in conjunction with Missouri State University. Discussions continue with several local universities regarding reinvesting in Park Board sports complexes.

Mr. Park stated that there have been several weather delays and that the ground is still too wet to continue work on the new scoreboard at Killian, which is being funded by Missouri State University as part of the Missouri State Women's Softball Programs continued use of the facility.

VIII. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair did not have a report.

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 is scheduled for May 13, 2022, at 8:30 am. The meeting location will be determined.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Randy Blackwood made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Curtis Jared. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 am.

XIII. CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Susie Turner made a motion to go into Closed Session; seconded by Mr. Curtis Jared. The motion passed unanimously.