

MINUTES
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Lake Springfield Boathouse, 2312 Lake Springfield Park Road, Springfield, Missouri
Friday, January 12, 2024

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Randy Blackwood, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

Park Board Members Present: Randy Blackwood, Leslie Carrier, Don Chenevert, Jr., Curtis Jared, Mark McNay, Dr. Dianna Parker, Susie Turner

Park Board Members Absent: Ann Compton, Royce Reding

Park Board Staff Present: Lisa Bakerink, Zak Blanchard, Bob Belote, Jon Carney, Waylon Cavender, Tim Carpenter, Matt Coats, Jenny Edwards, Jim Fisher, Caleb Hollis, Chris Kirby, Leigha May, Anne-Mary McGrath, Karen Mellinger, Trey Metzelthin, Adam Miller, Jerry Mitchell, Miles Park, Kim Reser, Jill Simmons, Jackson Thompson, Lana Woolsey

Guests: Brigitte Marrs, Nancy Hoeman, Kimberly Riggs, Alexandra Saner, Springfield Sister Cities Association; Marissa DeClue and Robin Helsel, Development Center of the Ozarks; Sarah Green and Ali Pool, Ozarks Food Harvest; Steve Prange, Project Consultant; Danny Perches, Assistant Director of Vitality; Chris Coulter, Greene County Administrator

II. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Mark McNay, Park Board Secretary, presented and made the motion to approve the minutes from the December 8, 2023, Park Board Meeting; seconded by Mr. Don Chenevert, Jr. The motion was approved unanimously. Mr. McNay presented and made the motion to approve the minutes from the December 8, 2023, Closed Park Board meeting; seconded by Mr. Don Chenevert, Jr. The motion was approved unanimously.

III. REPORT OF THE OFFICERS

a. Upcoming Meetings with City and County Officials Mr. Blackwood stated at last month's Park Board meeting, the members agreed and requested a meeting with City and County officials to discuss a long-term funding source for Parks, including a possible feasibility inquiry of the development of a Park District. More information will be shared as it is known.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Japanese Fall Festival Check Presentation Ms. Lisa Bakerink, Sister Cities Coordinator, stated that part of the Sister Cities' mission is to celebrate culture, and build relationships and diversity within our community through artwork exchanges, travel, and educational events. Our two Sister Cities are Isesaki, Japan and Tlaquapaque, Mexico. Sister Cities provides support to the Mizumoto Stroll Garden with proceeds from various events throughout the year. The Japanese Fall Festival held in September has grown substantially

the last few years. Visitors are drawn to the event due to the authenticity of the performers, the food, the merchandise, and overall atmosphere for this family-friendly cultural event. The featured performers at the Japanese Fall Festival come from all over the world and appreciate the kindness and genuine hospitality shown to them during their visit to Springfield. Ms. Bakerink shared more information about the variety of activities scheduled throughout the weekend event, along with special performances involving the Springfield Public Schools including the parade in which over 500 elementary school students and parents took part in to begin the festival celebration. Ms. Bakerink and Ms. Riggs, Sister City Board Member, presented a check to the Park Board in the amount of \$58,523.80, representing 50 percent of the proceeds from the Japanese Fall Festival. The proceeds are reinvested into the Stroll Garden for continued development and maintenance of the garden. The next Japanese Fall Festival will be held September 6-8, 2024.

- b. Turkey Trot Check Presentation** Ms. Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation, provided a recap of the 29th Annual Turkey Trot 5K run/walk event that took place on Thanksgiving morning. Planning for this event involves a committee of staff from Development Center of the Ozarks, Ozarks Food Harvest, Ozark Mountain Ridge Runners, Park Board, and several City of Springfield departments, who begin meeting each year in February for the event. Ms. McGrath thanked the event sponsors which includes presenting sponsor Dr. Brad Bradshaw, Cox Health, Davis Properties, Penmac Staffing, Great Southern Bank, Mercy, Ozarks Coca-Cola, Tier One, Pet Supply, Esterly Schneider and Associates, and Old Missouri Bank. Additionally, there is promotional and in-kind support from KY3/KSPR-TV, Midwest Family Broadcasting, O'Reilly Auto Parts, Sumner One, and Watkins Outdoor Advertising. Refreshments were donated from Starbucks, Hiland Dairy, Coca-Cola, Pyramid Food, HyVee, and Associated Wholesale Grocers.

Ms. Ali Pool, Special Events Coordinator, Ozarks Food Harvest (OFH), stated that OFH appreciates the continued partnership with the Park Board. Turkey Trot is still the largest single day collection event, which includes the 5,112 pounds of food collected at this year's event. We also partner with OFH for our Splash 'n Sizzle events at our pools during the summer. Over 5,000 pounds was collected this season, bringing the total to over 143,000 pounds since we began partnering with them for this event. Over the last 29 years, 316,456 pounds of food has been collected, with 170,000 pounds just from Turkey Trot event.

Ms. Marissa DeClue, Executive Director, Development Center of the Ozarks (DCO), thanked the Board for allowing them to partner with the Park Board since the very first Turkey Trot event. The proceeds from the Turkey Trot event help to provide services to more than 800 children, and over 1,000 people receive services from DCO annually. Many of the children and families receiving DCO services are introduced to Park Board programs for the first time and DCO staff works to frequent many of our park facilities for enrichment activities. Ms. DeClue accepted a check in the amount of \$29,053.55 representing 50 percent of the proceeds from the Turkey Trot event.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Lake Springfield Plan Initiative** Mr. Steve Prange, Project Consultant, with Crawford, Murphy Tilly, Inc., the engineering/design firm hired by the City of Springfield to head up the planning process for the Lake Springfield Plan,

provided an overview of the plan, which is funded by a substantial grant from the federal government's Economic Development Administration. The proposed Plan includes options for the decommissioned Power Station and a plan for the Lake Springfield area encompassing approximately 1,000 acres of land owned by City Utilities. Although the plan is not currently funded, it is projected to be complete by summer of 2024, and will be a promoter for new economic development and recreational opportunities. As the summary document provided in the packets today stated, the plan includes the following components of recreational expansion opportunities: adaptive reuse planning for the decommissioned power station; hydrological studies; water quality and ecological preservation planning; economic development and workforce development opportunities; transportation, access and wayfinding; and land use recommendations. Mr. Prange reviewed the timeline in the development of the Plan, which started in 2021 with the Forward SGF initiative. His firm worked to develop how this area would fit and benefit the community, region, and serve as a national destination. He also discussed the various planning goals, public input information, the hydrology study, potential modification alternatives for the dam, land-use concepts, north and south access and connectivity, park and lake activities, power plant area redevelopment as an entertainment district and adventure hub of activities. Mr. Prange also reviewed several concepts, the potential impact from the development of these concepts, including estimation of the number of jobs, direct visitor spending, room nights, and taxes generated, along with the cost of the development concepts, which totals over one billion dollars. Mr. Prange stated this was an excellent project for private and public collaboration. The next step is to present the finalized plan and seek adoption from the City Council and City Utilities Board; however, Mr. Prange is continuing to share information about the plan and seek additional federal funds when possible. Several Park Board members thanked Mr. Prange for his firm's creativity, big picture thinking, and dedication to preserving the land, while also providing a wide variety of activities to the region.

- b. **Director of Parks Report and Comments** Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks mentioned that we would forgo verbal staff reports today. He encouraged Park Board members to review the written reports as there is a significant amount of information about our programs, activities, and events included in the reports. Mr. Belote reported that our new Special Facilities maintenance facility is completed. The former building was destroyed in a fire three years ago. On Monday, December 11, we will present necessary documents to City Council for approval to enter into a contractual agreement with Olsson to provide professional services for the Kilian/Cooper Youth Baseball Improvements, Phase II. Mr. Belote reported that the Ozark's Empire Fairgrounds dedication of the new Wilson's Logistics Arena was yesterday. The new facility will be the home of the Lunkers, Springfield's Arena Football team.

Mr. Belote reviewed the Park Board Youth Recreation Scholarship Fund report prepared by Ms. McGrath that was distributed in the packets. In 2023, we awarded 631 scholarships for youth to participate in 12 different Parks Board

programs or activities. We continue to award more scholarships as additional money becomes available. Mr. Belote provided a recap of the Parks Department contribution to the City of Springfield's United Way Campaign this year, as prepared by Ms. Karen Mellinger, Senior Executive Secretary, who also serves as the Campaign Coordinator for Parks. Parks employees have generously contributed more than \$10,000 towards the annual campaign eleven years in a row, with this year's contribution surpassing \$20,000. Mr. Belote mentioned that we will host our annual Parks Employee Holiday Luncheon next week, which is coordinated by Ms. Mellinger, and welcomed Park Boards to attend.

Mr. Belote mentioned that this will be his last Park Board meeting as the Director of Parks. Having an opportunity to grow up in Springfield, move away, and then return to Springfield, to raise his family in our community, and work for the Parks Department for the last 20 years has been an honor and privilege. He appreciates the engagement and participation of our Parks employees, and the work we have accomplished has truly been team effort. It was a pleasure to work with many Park Board members with a conscientious and caring nature over the last 12 years. Former Directors, Dan Kinney and Jodie Adams, provided wisdom, encouragement, and support, along with a history of the Parks Department, which enhanced his experience as the Director of Parks. Mr. Belote stated he plans to remain in the area, and manage a little less, and recreate a little more.

On behalf of the Park Board, Mr. Blackwood presented a retirement plaque to Mr. Belote, which stated: *With Sincere Gratitude for Your 20 Years of Compassion, Guidance, and Outstanding Leadership. We Congratulate You On Your Well-Deserved Retirement! Congratulations, Bob.*

VI. CALENDAR

- a. We will host at Retirement Reception for Bob Belote, Director of Parks, on Thursday, January 18, 2024, from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m., at Cooper Tennis Complex.
- b. The next Park Board meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 9, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. The location is to be determined.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Mark McNay made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Dr. Dianna Parker. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:12 a.m.