

MINUTES
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center, 4007 N. Farm Road 171, Springfield, Missouri
Friday, May 12, 2023

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Randy Blackwood, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

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

Park Board Members Absent: None

Park Board Staff Present: Bob Belote, Craig Bright, Jon Carney, Tim Carpenter, Matt Coats, Mike Crocker, Jenny Edwards, Jim Fisher, Chuck Howard, Ben Kellner, Tim McCrea, Anne-Mary McGrath, Jerry Mitchell, Miles Park, Kim Reser, Jennifer Shepherd, Jeff Smith, Jackson Thompson, Lynn Vandenberg, Lana Woolsey.

Guests Present: None

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Susie Turner, Secretary, presented the open session minutes from the April 14, 2023, meeting, Ms. Turner made a motion to approve the April 14, 2023, Park Board open session minutes; seconded by Ms. Heather Noggle. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Turner also presented the closed session minutes from the April 14, 2023, meeting, Mr. Mark McNay made a motion to approve the April 14, 2023, Park Board closed session minutes, seconded by Mr. Curtis Jared. The motion passed unanimously.

III. CITY OF SPRINGFIELD NEIGHBORHOOD WORKS PROGRAM – UPDATE ON PARKS PROJECTS

Mr. Miles Park, Assistant Director of Operations, gave an update about the various park projects funded through the City's Neighborhood Works Program. He stated that this program is intended to fund small-scale capital improvements within officially registered neighborhoods. The program gives residents the opportunity to identify projects they believe will offer the greatest benefit to their area and that Individual projects are limited to \$100,000 or less and must take place on city-owned property or right-of-way. Since the program began, it has funded neighborhood park projects totaling more than \$1.5 million. Mr. Park provided examples of some of the projects that have been funded such as: a universal playground at Kirkwood Park, parking improvements at Phelps Grove Park, and a pavilion and disc golf course renovations for Tom Watkins Park.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORT – PARK DEVELOPMENT/PROPERTY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Mr. Jeff Smith stated that the Park Board has three potential trail improvement projects, with opportunities for grant funding through the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) for each project, including Lost Hill Park, Smith Park, and Meador Park. Parks staff is requesting Park Board approval to seek and accept these prospective project grant funds.

The first project is for a new bridge to be constructed on the Fulbright Spring Greenway Trail at Lost Hill Park. There are two existing low water crossings in Lost Hill Park that are frequently flooded, and the proposed new bridge would provide safer and more consistent access/usage for trail and park users. The plan would be to keep both existing low water crossings for the time being, while constructing a new bridge that will provide an elevated stream crossing for the trail through the park. The project cost is estimated at \$150,000 and the grant requires that Park Board pay a 20% match, which would be up to \$30,000, for qualification of the grant.

The second project is for a trail connection in Smith Park in conjunction with the City of Springfield. Two separate sections of 10'-wide concrete trail will be added to the existing Jordan Creek Greenway Trail to connect it with the newly constructed multi-use side-path along Division Street. This trail project will be included in the City's larger Division Street Project when the City applies for a TAP Grant for use on its project. The estimated cost for the trail portion of this project is \$65,000 and will require the Park Board to fund a 20% match of the \$65,000 cost, for a total cost to the Park Board of up to \$13,000. Because of project's size, the City is including this park improvement with its larger project, instead of Parks applying independently for these funds. The City's project will include a HAWK crossing signal at the intersection of Weller Avenue and Division Street.

The third and final trail project is also a prospective project with the City of Springfield. The City is potentially applying for a TAP Grant for completion of the South Creek Greenway Trail extension project along the perimeter of Meador Park. This project would entail a 10' wide concrete trail, running along the north side of Meador Park from Fremont to the signalized intersection at the east end of the park. Eventually, it is hoped that the trail will extend all the way to Glenstone, but additional right-of-way is needed from the owners of the Battlefield Mall property before this additional extension can be completed. As such, the immediate grant application would cover only those expenses associated with the trail extension to the end of the park property. If the City can successfully gather all supporting documents for the grant application, the application will be submitted and the City will fund the grant match for this project - i.e., Park Board will not be required to submit any funds towards obtaining and using the TAP grant funds for completion of this project.

Ms. Susie Turner made the motion that the Board approve the Lost Hill Park Project Sponsor Resolution, authorizing staff to apply for and accept a \$150,000 TAP Grant for construction of a bridge for the Fulbright Spring Greenway in Lost Hill Park, which will require the Board to pay the minimum local match of 20% of total project costs, estimated at \$30,000, seconded by Mr. Curtis Jared. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Turner made the motion that the Board approve the Smith Park Resolution of Support, noting the Board's support with the City applying for and accepting a TAP Grant for its Division Street Project, which will include \$65,000 in grant funds for construction of trail connection pieces between Jordan Creek Greenway and the newly constructed multi-use side path along Division Street, which will require the Board to pay the minimum local match of 20% of the project costs for the trail connection, estimated at \$13,000, seconded by Mr. Royce Reding. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Turner made the motion that the Board approve the Meador Park Resolution of Support, noting the Board's support with the City applying for and accepting a TAP Grant for constructing a trail extension of the South Creek Greenway in and along Meador Park, with the understanding that the City will pay the requisite 20% minimum local match for whatever grant funds the City may receive under this application, seconded by Ms. Leslie Carrier. The motion passed unanimously.

V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities

Mr. Coats stated that Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park is hosting a free event on May 20th, Heroes at the Farm, where kids can come out and meet with First Responders. A new native plant species was located at Lake Springfield Park. The common name of the plant is Thicket Parsley. This species is the first known location in Greene County. An estimated 1,000 plants were found thriving in the newly restored glade in the park. The Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center has a hundred lessons a week and all their summer camps are full. Ms. Christine Peoples, Timmons Hall Coordinator, has been working with the local NAACP chapter on the 3-day Juneteenth event, June 16, 17 & 18. The event will take place at multiple locations that includes the Art Museum, Riff, and the Expo Center.

Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation

Ms. McGrath stated that registration is open for SPARC Summer Day Camps. SPARC has added specialty camps such as: cooking, park tours, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) themed camps. Senior Games started in April and continues in May and June, there are 228 seniors registered for the games. Outdoor pools are currently being filled in preparation for opening on Saturday, May 27th. The Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) will be having tennis and softball tournaments at our Cooper Tennis and Killian facilities next week. Pickleball is popular in the parks with classes, programs, and clinics ongoing at multiple parks locations.

Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services

Mr. Carney said that last month's Cherry Blossom and Kite Festival was well attended. His staff is currently working on making sure the pools are operating properly for opening day on May 27th. He stated that the Missouri State Women's Softball Team had their 15th consecutive home win

at the Killian Softball Complex. He said that there has been a rise in parks vandalism and that his staff is doing everything they can to combat it.

Jenny Edwards, Public Information Administrator

Ms. Edwards said that the Pool Connection safety program has been revised to be voluntary instead of being required due to some patrons' concerns regarding their personal information. There are currently 500+ individuals already registered. She stated that the summer edition of the Park Bench will arrive soon. A new mural project has begun with student artists being able to paint murals at Park Board locations, the first mural was done at Oak Grove Community Center. The communications team has been working on flyers for all of our upcoming summer events and programs. Garrison Pendergrass, Marketing & Sponsorship Coordinator, recently secured a multi-year sponsor for the sign on the back side of The Fieldhouse Sportscenter.

Ben Kellner, Superintendent of Jordan Valley Park and CSDP Programs

Mr. Kellner stated that the Jordan Valley Ice Park has hockey and skating summer camps starting soon. There is a high demand for volleyball with 280 players registered for CSDP Volleyball Clinics. The Earth Day event was impacted by the unusually cold weather and moved indoors to the Ice Park; the event was still successful with around 1,500 attendees. There are several events at Founders Park this summer such as Wednesday Concerts at Noon, First Fridays at Founders, and Movies in the Park.

Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations

Mr. Mitchell reported that there has been an increase in the Parks Property Mil Tax which will help us cover unexpected repairs and maintenance. The actual revenue received from Park Property Mil Tax revenue also helps support the growth proposed for the FY2023-24 Budget. Golf revenues are up and are on track to have a record high year. Sales tax revenues continue to be strong as we head into the new year. Recreation revenues are also up this year, particularly Family Center revenue.

Jim Fisher, Assistant Director

Mr. Fisher said that MSHSAA has its Boys' Golf Championship at Rivercut on May 15-16. The 25th Anniversary Celebration of Rivercut is being held on May 13th. On May 22nd we are celebrating Horton Smith's birthday at the Horton Smith Golf Course.

Mr. Tim Carpenter, Park Ranger Administrator, went over the hiring process of becoming a Park Ranger and introduced two new Park Rangers, Craig Bright and Chuck Howard.

Miles Park, Assistant Director

Mr. Park said that Garden Day on May 11th was successful at the Botanical Gardens. There were eight weddings held at the gardens last month. Interviews with the second consultant will be happening soon for Phase II Cooper Park improvement projects. The second public meeting for the Lake Springfield Master Plan was held on May 1st at the Boathouse. There was lots of

interest in touring the decommissioned power plant. The consultants will take the information provided by the attendees as well as any online input to help them with their planning.

Kim Reser, Assistant Director

Ms. Reser said that on June 23-25 the Queen City Open Pickleball tournament will be held at Cooper Tennis Complex, the player dinner will be on the 23rd and the Board is invited to attend. National Night Out will be held at Meador Park on August 1st, this is an annual event that is in support of Law Enforcement and emergency responders. Ms. Reser also stated that if there are a number of City boards and commissions that need volunteer applicants.

Mike Crocker, Assistant Director

Mr. Crocker stated that attendance at the Zoo was high in April and May particularly with school field trips. In June, the AZA Accreditation review team will be at the Zoo, but we will not know the results until the AZA annual conference in September. The Missouri Division of Tourism is doing a tour of Springfield and they started at the Zoo. Mr. Crocker shared his appreciation for everyone who came out to the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau event where he was awarded the Tracy Kimberlin Pinnacle Award.

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Randy Blackwood wanted to thank the Properties Committee for being engaged and flexible in their roles regarding various property-related discussions that have been ongoing. He wanted to thank Ms. Susie Turner for her role as Chair of the Nominating Committee going forward. He also wanted to congratulate Mr. Mike Crocker for receiving the Tracy Kimberlin Pinnacle Award awarded by the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

IX. CALENDAR

- a. Park Board Meeting: Friday, June 9th, 2023, at 8:30 a.m, at Timmons Hall, 1055 E. Webster St.

X. CLOSED SESSION

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Curtis Jared made a motion to adjourn the meeting and go into closed session; seconded by Ms. Heather Noggle. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:03 a.m.