

MINUTES
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Lake Springfield Park Boathouse, 5324 S. Kissick Avenue, Springfield, Missouri
Friday, July 14, 2023

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Randy Blackwood, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

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

Park Board Members Absent: Royce Reding

Park Board Staff Present: Bob Belote, Jon Carney, Tim Carpenter, Matt Coats, Jenny Edwards, Jim Fisher, Tim McCrea, Anne-Mary McGrath, Karen Mellinger, Jerry Mitchell, Miles Park, Kim Reser, Jackson Thompson, Lana Woolsey

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Susie Turner, Secretary, presented the open session minutes from the June 9, 2023, Park Board meeting. Ms. Heather Noggle made a motion to approve the June 9, 2023, Park Board open session minutes; seconded by Ms. Leslie Carrier. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Turner also presented the closed session minutes from the June 9, 2023, Park Board meeting. Ms. Leslie Carrier made a motion to approve the June 9, 2023, Park Board closed session minutes, seconded by Mr. Mark McNay. The motion passed unanimously.

III. PARK BOARD GOLF DIVISION UPDATE

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, stated that during the pandemic, many golf courses throughout the country temporarily closed, but our Park Board golf courses remained open with appropriate protocols, allowing families to continue playing golf. We are pleased that the trend has continued at our golf courses.

Mr. Jim Fisher, Assistant Director, introduced several key staff who manage our three courses and whom collectively have over 100 years of experience: Alan Cummins, Horton Smith Golf Pro Shop Manager (30 years), Shawn Freeman, Bill and Payne Stewart Golf Pro Shop Manager (21 years), Steve King, Rivercut Golf Pro Shop Manager (25 years), and Mike Irvine, Golf Facilities Supervisor (27 years). Mr. Fisher stated that each golf course has a full-service pro shop and hosts a wide number of tournaments and events. Our oldest golf course was built in 1947, formally known as Grandview, then renamed the Bill and Payne Stewart Golf Course. Scott Welsh is the Golf Maintenance Superintendent. Horton Smith Golf Course opened in 1962 and is named after a Greene County native and the Hall of Fame golfer who won the first and third Masters Golf Championship tournament. This course is popular for our senior population, but also has a strong junior program. The Golf Maintenance Superintendent is Mel Waldron. The newest golf course, Rivercut, opened in 1998, and was designed by golf course architect Ken

Dye. Within the golf course grounds, reside the Connie Morris Learning Center and Rick Grayson Golf School. There is a 4-hole free course for kids to play. In 2022, it was named to GolfWeek's Top 10 Missouri Public Golf Courses and rated Golf Digest's No. 1 Missouri Municipal Golf Course in 2009. Dan Kersting is the Golf Maintenance Superintendent. The Betty Allison at Oscar Blom Golf Course, located adjacent to Bill and Payne Stewart Golf Course, was developed in 1959, and then reimagined in 2008. It is a 9-hole, par 3, lighted golf course. Mr. Fisher reviewed several golf course improvement projects completed as funding has allowed since 2018. With the help from the City of Springfield, we secured funding to replace the bridges on the Rivercut front 9 that would be washed out during water events. We still have water on the course after a significant rainstorm, but the bridges remain intact and play resumes more quickly. We enhanced food and beverage options at all the courses, which has seen significant growth to more than \$450,000 in revenue. All three of our courses are averaging about 30,000 rounds per year. Our pro shops sell golf merchandise, including custom club fittings for patrons. Bill and Payne Stewart Golf Course staff lead in the amount of revenue from merchandising sales, and in fact, Mr. Freeman has received recognition as the merchandiser of the year a few years ago by the PGA's Midwest Section.

Mr. Fisher stated that the main future consideration is identifying a capital project funding source for golf as it does not receive any tax support since it is an enterprise fund. As funding becomes available, we do invest it back into the courses. Some of the large projects desired include completing the cart path system at Horton Smith Golf Course, reimagining the pond basin at Rivercut Golf Course, and replacing the back 9 restrooms at Bill and Payne Stewart Golf Course and Rivercut Golf Course. We would eventually like to expand the club houses at all three courses to provide additional hospitality and rental event space that would be available 12 months of the year.

Mr. Curtis Jared stated his appreciation that we are seeing increased interest and demand and encouraged us to remain competitive in our fees so we can maintain the quality of our courses. Mr. Mark McNay stated that he has received many positive comments about the maintenance at the courses during recent tournament play. The courses are open every day of the year except Christmas Day, and as long as the courses are not snow covered or significantly wet. On good weather days, we have golfers all year long.

IV. MISSOURI CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 3—FOLLOW UP ON PARK RULES

Ms. Lana Woolsey, Assistant City Attorney, stated that she re-reviewed the Missouri Constitutional Amendment 3 to determine, what, if any, additional restrictions may be placed above and beyond the City Code restrictions adopted by Springfield's City Council. Ms. Woolsey noted Amendment 3 is a constitutional right and not an activity that is merely allowed or restricted by State Statute or City Code, and our additional restrictions are very limited because adult individuals now have a constitutional right to possess and consume marijuana with limited exceptions and possess marijuana accessories in the State of Missouri. Ms. Woolsey reviewed aspects of Amendment 3 and what may be allowed or can be restricted by local governments. She also explained that adding additional restrictions in some cases may dilute prosecution of violations and may not be currently needed because our current practice and park rules restrict certain behavior. Mr. Tim Carpenter, Park Ranger Administrator, stated that our Rangers have had reported incidents, but right now, they have adequate tools to deal with these situations. Mr. Belote stated that ultimately, we want our parks to be safe, so we will continue to manage

our parks, comply with the law, provide good signage, and communicate to the public about what is allowed and not permissible in our parks. Ms. Woolsey stated that based upon the resources and options that currently exist to handle these types of matters, she does not recommend an additional amendment to our Park Rules at this time.

V. MUSGRAVE GRANT FOR SPARC PROGRAM

Ms. Anne-Mary McGrath stated that in 2021, our SPARC Division was awarded \$50,000 from the Jeannette L. Musgrave Foundation's Change for Children High-Impact Grant Program. In 2022, SPARC received a second year of grant funding in the amount of \$30,000. This year, after the Foundation Committee's evaluation of SPARC's implementation and usage of the funds issued to date, SPARC is again being awarded a third and final year of grant funds for 2023-2024 in the amount of \$15,000. The grant will continue to provide high quality, professional staff training to address the mental and social-emotional behavioral need of youth in Springfield through the SPARC Before and After School Programs. Mr. Blackwood stated that the continued support from the Musgrave Foundation is a testament to the quality and success of the SPARC program. Mr. McNay made a motion to approve the distributed Resolution to apply for and accept the third-year grant funding in the amount of \$15,000 from the Jeannette L. Musgrave Foundation; seconded by Dr. Dianna Parker. The motion was approved unanimously.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORT

Parks Development/Property Assessment Committee Mr. McNay stated that this Committee and Parks staff recently met with the Neighborhood Coalition group to further discuss plans to use the funds they were awarded by Greene County's ARPA funding process for improvements at Silver Springs Park. The Committee shared more information about what Parks staff had learned about the LWCF funds and the process to redevelop or change parks sites that had received this type of funding. The Neighborhood Coalition and Parks Administration both want to preserve and interpret the historical park, while still providing some additional amenities that can be completed in the timeframe required by Greene County's ARPA funding process. Members of the Committee and Parks staff also visited with Ozarks Technical College administration to discuss their long-range plans and possible partnership to work with parks in a collaborative way in the future. Mr. Belote mentioned that we should hear back from the Neighborhood Coalition soon to confirm their prioritized improvement projects within Silver Springs.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations Mr. Mitchell presented the budget update for the twelve months ending June 30, 2023, noting that revenue and expenditure amounts will not be fully closed until September or October, but the amounts should not change much. Mr. Mitchell stated that sales tax revenues for May, June, and July were down slightly, and he expects August sales tax revenues to be down, as well. Mr. Mitchell mentioned that our Reserve Fund totals \$1,573,051, with \$402,686 budgeted this year to be added, bringing the total to \$1,975,737 for the end of FY2024. Operating expenditures are slightly higher due to nearly all programs and facilities have returned to pre-pandemic standards. Mr. Mitchell discussed the projected expenditures for Fieldhouse were slightly higher than expected. With new programs and events, new fees and charges going into effect,

and new ATM machine contract, and the pursuit of additional advertising and sponsorship opportunities, we should be in a better position to balance this section's budget.

Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities

Mr. Coats mentioned that staff has finished the first cut of hay, with a total of 600 round bales and 1,000 square bales. Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park staff teamed up with Recreation staff and hosted the annual Kids Fishing Day, with 113 kid participants. At Lake Springfield Park, kayak/canoes were rented totaling 660, which is up 359 compared to last year. Summer camps were ongoing, and staff still averaged 80 lessons per week at Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center. Ms. Christine Peoples, Timmons Hall Coordinator, was heavily involved in the Juneteenth event last month, and she is now focusing on assisting with the activities for the annual Park Day Reunion event August 4-6, which will take place in Silver Springs Park. The Beer Prairie in Lake Springfield Park looks exceptionally good for its first year. This type of project usually takes three to five years to see the results of the plantings. The Maintenance staff installed a new hardwood rail fence at Valley Water Mill Park.

Jenny Edwards, Public Information Administrator

Ms. Edwards mentioned that the production of the Park Bench is a team project, and recently, the content was reorganized to hopefully make it a more user-friendly publication. We have also decided to produce the publication twice a year instead of three times a year. With the recent heat advisories, we have informed the public about extended pool hours and cooling centers.

Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services

Mr. Carney mentioned that staff is finishing their work on the new pergola at Living Memorial Park. June was a busy month in Parks including the Butterfly Festival, which was a very well attended event. The Human Sundial project is nearly complete, with a dedication anticipated for October.

Ben Kellner, Superintendent of Jordan Valley Park and Facilities

Mr. Kellner mentioned that JVP and the Ice Park experienced a very busy month in June including two separate Juneteenth celebrations—one in Jordan Valley Park and one in Founders Park. Mr. Kellner stated that the Jordan Valley Ice Park parking lot was recently sealed and striped. A local shooter placed 3rd in the U18 Female Compound Division at the USA Archery SoCal Showdown. She will be representing team USA at the Youth World Championship in Ireland later this summer.

Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation

Ms. McGrath mentioned that in June, the Community Foundation of the Ozarks awarded the Northview Center \$2,344 from the Herald Ambler Fund for Senior Centers. The money will be used to purchase two bottle filling stations and will replace the existing water fountains. The Skate Park staff hosted their first Volunteer event on June 16, and eight volunteer patrons helped to complete a landscaping project outside the front of the building. The volunteer patrons were awarded a free skate pass for their assistance. On June 21, we hosted the international holiday event, Go Skateboarding Day. We had 16 sponsors who provided prizes for the various contests. There were 216 attendees. Ms. McGrath mentioned that the Korn Ferry Tour PGA Event, Price Cutter Charity Championship, will be held for the 33rd year at Highland Springs Golf Course. The Park Board has provided volunteers for the event for over 20 years, and our Youth Recreation Scholarship Fund has been one of the charity recipients, as well. The PCCC has raised over 19 million dollars locally and provided funds to over 45 charities.

Mike Crocker, Assistant Director of the Zoo

Mr. Crocker mentioned that the 23rd Annual Ball of the Wild event was held on July 7, with over 700 people in attendance. For the first time, the entertainment had to be moved inside due to weather. Mr. Crocker stated that the accreditation inspection team cited a few items of minor concern during their recent site visit, and Zoo staff is currently working to resolve those items. We are hosting the Zoo's 100th Birthday celebration event, "Everyone's a Kid", on July 15, and all visitors will pay child admission rates. There are birthday treats and activities for the kids and zoo animals. There will be several City and County officials and state dignitaries presenting proclamations at the event.

Miles Park, Assistant Director, Park Operations

Mr. Park mentioned that concrete work for the newly redesigned Caterpillar Café, located adjacent to the Rosten Native Butterfly House, was recently completed. The Caterpillar Café will feature plantings in garden beds that will host plant types upon which butterfly caterpillars feed. In June, we had two separate groups participate in United Way Day of Caring projects at Smith Park and the Botanical Center. Bi-weekly meetings continue with the Cooper Soccer Complex/LCS Soccer Improvements consultant team. We are now preparing the RFP for consulting services to obtain a proposal from the successful consultant for the Killian Softball Complex/Cooper Youth Baseball Complex project. We recently started work to rebuild outdoor courts 9-16 at Cooper Tennis Complex. Recently, a Neighborhood Works project, submitted by the Brentwood Neighborhood Association, was completed at Kirkwood Park. This project added a new accessible playground including a pair of spiral slides and other features. The Westside Community Betterment Neighborhood is assisting with a project to augment the tennis courts with pickleball court markings at Westport Park.

Kim Reser, Assistant Director, Recreation

Ms. Reser reported that after a nationwide issue that effected Active's Point of Sale setups, staff worked with the City's Information Systems Department to update all the Park's computer settings that utilize Active POS and Credit Card setups, which was just under 50 setups. At the annual Lake Country Soccer General meeting on June 29, Ben McBride was voted in as President. Ms. Reser stated that the Ozark Pickleball Club and the Park Board hosted the 2023 SRS Queen City Open on June 23-25 at Cooper Tennis Complex. Over 400 players were registered for the tournament and played on 16 indoor pickleball courts. The Sponsorship Committee, led by former Park Board Chair, Bob Horton, raised about \$50,000 in support of the maintenance and future expansion of the Meador Park Pickleball Complex.

Jim Fisher, Assistant Director, Administration

Mr. Fisher stated that June golf rounds and revenues have been historically strong, but easily surpassed the previous rounds/revenues/record numbers from June 2022 by over \$113,000. Our new golf cart fleet was delivered last week as part of our replacement cycle. We have a new Park Ranger starting next week.

Bob Belote, Director of Parks

Mr. Belote mentioned that the Parks Development/Property Assessment Committee continues to review upcoming property issues including expanding our partnership with Drury University. We are working on a multi-year agreement and possible naming rights for the baseball field at Meador Park. Mr. Belote stated that Meador Park is a place where all local college teams have played, so Drury is interested in enhancing this location to make it their home field, similar to what MSU Softball has done at Killian Softball Complex.

VIII. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Blackwood thanked everyone for attending the meeting today. He also thanked the Park Board staff for the many events and activities that they do every day. Mr. Blackwood stated that he would be meeting with the City Manager's office to discuss upcoming staff hiring processes.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

X. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

XI. CALENDAR

The next regularly scheduled Park Board meeting will be at Dickerson Park Zoo, at 8:30 am, on Friday, August 11, 2023.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Curtis Jared made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ms. Susie Turner. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:16 am.