

MINUTES
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Dickerson Park Zoo, 1401 W. Norton Road, Train Depot Area, Springfield, Missouri
Friday, August 11, 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, Don Chenevert, Jr., Ann Compton (Teams), Curtis Jared, Mark McNay, Dr. Dianna Parker, Susie Turner

Park Board Members Absent: Royce Reding

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

Guests: Joey Powell, Dickerson Park Zoo Marketing Coordinator; Scott Nasby, Drury University Head Baseball Coach

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, welcomed our new Park Board Member, Mr. Don Chenevert, Jr, appointed by the Greene County Commission, replacing Ms. Heather Noggle.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Susie Turner, Secretary, presented the open session minutes from the July 14, 2023, Park Board meeting. Mr. Mark McNay made a motion to approve the July 14, 2023, Park Board open session minutes; seconded by Mr. Curtis Jared. The motion passed unanimously.

III. DICKERSON PARK ZOO'S 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AND WELCOME FROM ZOO STAFF

Mr. Belote thanked the Dickerson Park Zoo staff for hosting this month's Park Board meeting. Mr. Jackson Thompson, Superintendent of the Zoo, thanked the Park Board members who attended the Zoo's 100th birthday celebration on July 15. There were many activities for guests and the animals to celebrate the Zoo's birthday. Ms. Joey Powell, DPZ Marketing Coordinator, mentioned that in honor of the Zoo's birthday, they are posting 60-second videos highlighting the history each month throughout the year. Also, in recognition of the Zoo's birthday, a local artist painted a 100th Birthday tree, located in front of the giraffe building. Zoo supporters can sponsor a leaf to add to the tree. Ms. Powell also stated that Don Tillman, long-time Development Director for Friends of the Zoo, is retiring. We have dedicated the trunk of the tree as "The Tillman Trunk" in honor of his tireless work to grow and support the Zoo. The Friends of the Zoo's goal is to raise \$23,000, representing \$1,000 for each year Don served as the FOZ Development Director. So far, FOZ has received \$30,000 to be added to the Tillman Trunk. Ms. Powell mentioned that it is a great time to be a FOZ member as they have also received a gift each month as part of the Zoo's birthday celebration. Ms. Powell stated that the Zoo has begun offering sensory backpacks for adults and children to use while visiting the Zoo to

help enhance the patron's experience in a calming manner. In the backpacks are items such as headphones, sunglasses, fidget spinners, and emotional display cards. The next fundraising event will be Brew at the Zoo on September 16. This is an adult only event and will be held at the Zoo. Mr. Randy Blackwood, Park Board Chair, thanked the Zoo staff for their organization of a great birthday event. Mr. Belote recognized Mr. Tillman's extensive accomplishments and assistance with helping the Zoo throughout the years.

IV. LICENSE AGREEMENT FOR MEADOR BASEBALL COMPLEX

Mr. Belote stated that over the last two years, the Drury University Baseball Program and its Coach, Scott Nasby, have expressed interest in returning to Meador Park to make it the home field for the team. Coach Nasby has worked to fundraise and secure donors over the last year. To date, he has secured approximately \$1.5 million in funding necessary to help develop Phase 1 facility improvements, which includes conversion of the field to artificial turf, replacement of the outfield fence, dugout improvements and upgrades to the facility scoreboard. They would like to begin making improvements this fall starting first with the turf conversion to allow them to prospectively proceed with hosting their home baseball season at Meador Baseball Complex next spring. In exchange for the \$1.5 million in facility reinvestment for the Meador Baseball Complex, Drury would receive prioritized field use privileges for Panther baseball games/practices and field naming rights for a 15-year period, but as a public park, other teams may still use the field when available. Drury would also have opportunities to conduct additional camps, clinics, and events to generate additional revenue opportunities, with 50 percent of those revenues set aside for Meador field maintenance and repair needs and 50 percent going back to the Drury Baseball Program. This arrangement creates a shared revenue stream, which is important since we do not have the funds to provide enhanced field maintenance and upkeep for collegiate-level activities. Mr. Mark McNay made a motion to approve the License Agreement to enter into a partnership with Drury University for improvements, donation, dedication, and naming rights for the ballfield at Meador Park; seconded by both Ms. Leslie Carrier and Mr. Curtis Jared. The motion passed unanimously.

V. GREENE COUNTY REQUEST FOR PROPERTY EASEMENT

Ms. Lana Woolsey, Parks Assistant City Attorney, stated that Greene County's Right of Way Manager recently contacted Parks to request an easement from Parks totaling .13 acres, located at the southwest corner of Farm Road 190 and Farm Road 141, to allow the County to proceed with its project extending Kansas Expressway/Farm Road 145 at this general location. Ms. Woolsey stated she reviewed the history of the property, and it is not part of Park's Kreider property or Rivercut Golf Course. She also confirmed that providing the easement to the County will create no adverse effects on Park's use of the property. Ms. Woolsey reviewed the necessary form required for receipt of federal funds, the Waiver of Just Compensation, as the County is requesting that Parks provide this easement to them without compensation. Mr. Belote mentioned that we were supportive of the waiver as we partner with Greene County for the use of the Davis House and Property owned by Greene County. Mr. Mark McNay made a motion to approve this easement to Greene County without payment from the County and authorizes the Chair or Vice Chair of the Park Board to execute the approved easement; seconded by Ms. Susie Turner. The motion was approved unanimously. Ms. Leslie Carrier made the motion to approve the Chair or Vice Chair of the Park Board to execute approved Waiver of Compensation Form; seconded by Mr. Curtis Jared. The motion was approved unanimously.

VI. CITY OF SPRINGFIELD STRATEGIC PLAN EXERCISE

Mr. Belote stated that earlier this spring, the City Manager asked each City department to submit their most recent Strategic Plan. If a department did not have this type of document, he requested that one be initially developed and include how each department's strategic goals and priorities specifically matched up with City Council's established priorities. Our Parks department has many planning resources, but not a true Strategic Planning document. We use our adopted FY 2023-24 Parks Budget document as our planning tool each year, along with other budget support documents and our Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Parks staff pulled information from each of those resource documents that we typically use to then develop a five-year strategic plan that followed along the lines of those priorities already outlined in our other documents. We then used our anticipated budgetary action items and other measures we identified as a group into one year, two-three year, and four-five year intervals for prospective implementation. We worked to match up those areas and action items to City Council's Priorities where we could, as well. The City Manager has indicated that the City is looking at a universal template that the City and each of its departments can utilize for the long-term future, which will hopefully better match up each of our budgets to strategic outcomes for the community. A copy of the Park Board's Strategic Plan was included in the distributed packet materials for the Board's review.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. **Nominating Committee** Ms. Susie Turner, Nominating Committee Chair, congratulated Mr. Curtis Jared on his reappointment by the Greene County Commission for a second term of three years on the Park Board. Ms. Turner thanked Ms. Heather Noggle for her service, talent and experience with relationships and partnerships. Ms. Turner also welcomed Mr. Don Chenevert, who was appointed by the Greene County Commission, to our Park Board. Mr. Chenevert brings a wealth of legal knowledge and Board service expertise. Ms. Turner also mentioned that there will be an Election of Board Officers for the 2023-24 year in conjunction with the September meeting.
- B. **Park Development/Property Assessment Committee** Mr. Mark McNay stated that the committee discussed the license agreement for Drury Baseball at Meador Park and the Greene County Highway Departments request for the easement. Mr. McNay said that an organization has approached the committee about a pump track at McDaniel Park, there is interest in exploring this further. Mr. McNay said that the Neighborhood Coalition Group is working on ideas to improve Silver Springs Park and what those improvements might look like. Ms. Turner added that it is remarkable that the McDaniel Park Master Plan included a pump track and thinks it's a good reflection of the Parks Department listening to the community and having similar ideas.

VIII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jackson Thompson, Superintendent of Dickerson Park Zoo Mr. Jackson Thompson stated that they received their list of required improvements from the AZA and the three larger projects on the list have been completed. On September 10th, they will go before the commission at the AZA Annual conference, and they will go over the improvements list. There

will be a new Associate Veterinary position starting in early September, this was a new position added with the 2023-24 fiscal year budget. We are also working in house to improve the Lake Pavilion and hope that we can host a Board Meeting next year once it is completed.

Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations

Mr. Jerry Mitchell said that our fiscal year end for sales tax reporting is September through August. We have been down four months in a row for sales tax revenue, but May-August is still higher than average. Revenues have exceeded expenditures in previous years, but that gap is narrowing, and we must watch our expenditures in the coming months due to rising costs in things like utilities. Zoo revenue was up from last July, there has been a nice growth in attendance. Golf revenues have been historically high in July. Once the City auditors have finished their financial statement audit, we will present the final fiscal year numbers at the next meeting. Ms. Turner asked why the concessions revenue was not as high as the previous year, Mr. Mitchell stated that there was a rental at the Jordan Valley Ice Park last July that brought in around \$9,000 in revenue that we did not have in the current year. Mr. Blackwood asked about the Professional Services cost mentioned in the report and asked if a recent election result regarding this would allow us to navigate those service charges differently in the future. Mr. Mitchell said that was progressing and they are working with the City on towards necessary charter modifications and that the cost will not remain long term.

Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities

Mr. Matt Coats stated that Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park is getting prepared for Harvest Fest in October and today is the last day for their Summer Camp programs. At Lake Springfield, the tree damage is immense from storms at the end of July, crews are working diligently on getting debris cleaned up. At the Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center, there is one more week of summer camps and they have been averaging 80 lessons a week. The Park Days event at Silver Springs Park was well attended and Timmons Hall Coordinator, Christine Peoples, did a great job of assisting with that event and providing a viewing of a historical African American documentary at Timmons Hall. The Special Facilities Maintenance crew built a custom TV cabinet for the Lake Springfield Boathouse meeting space, this will allow patrons renting space to do slideshows and presentations. There has been an invasive species of plant at Horton Smith Golf Course that our Conservation team has been removing and replacing with native species to improve the landscape of the course.

Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services

Mr. Jon Carney said that weather greatly affects what the operations division does. The large storm at the end of July caused damage to our parks and trails system with a lot of downed trees and debris. We are still recovering and working on cleaning up any remaining debris. The Parks Administrative building had its main sewer line replaced, we worked with Environmental Services and Public Works to complete this project. The main front entryway sidewalk at Chesterfield Family Center has been replaced. This sidewalk is in a constant state of heavy use by our patrons which caused it to deteriorate over time.

Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation

Mrs. Anne-Mary McGrath said that the School Park section's last day of day camps is next week, the camps have been averaging around 350 kids a week. Staff are now transitioning to before and after school care that will start on September 22. This weekend is the last weekend of outdoor pools being open with the exception for Fasnigh Pool which will be open through Labor Day, and then the Dog Swim event will take place as our final Aquatics event. Our Accessible Recreation section held its 29th

Annual Float for Independence with 13 participants along with staff from Ozark Mountain Paddlers and our Outdoor Initiatives to float down the Niangua River. One participant, Morgan Montgomery has attended all 29 trips, her dad Monty Montgomery was one of the inspirations for Turkey Trot. The Harold Ambler fund for Senior Citizens funded bottle filling stations and those have arrived at the Northview Center and will be installed soon with a plaque acknowledging the funding. Online Turkey Trot registration opened on August 1st.

Jenny Edwards, Public Information Administrator Ms. Jenny Edwards was not in attendance, but Mr. Bob Belote stated that the new Park Bench magazine will be going to print soon and should be delivered shortly after.

Miles Park, Assistant Director Mr. Miles Park stated that Christine Peoples did a fantastic job working with the Reunion Club and adding new activities to the Park Days Event at Silver Springs. National Night Out went well at Meador Park on August 1, kids had a great time with the first responders. The Cooper Tennis Court project to refurbish outdoor courts 9-16 are ongoing, last year outdoor courts 1-8 were completed. The steel is up on the Lake Springfield maintenance building, they'll start enclosing the structure soon. The Chadwick Flyer trail initial kickoff planning meeting will be held next Tuesday, this will have a rollout like the Lake Springfield planning process. The City is redoing its Community Development Code, Jeff Smith is serving on technical advisory team and the purpose is to update restructure subdivision regulations that align with the newly adopted comprehensive plan, Forward SGF. The Japanese Fall Festival will take place September 8-10. This is the 27th year this festival has been held, this event is hosted by the Springfield Sister Cities Association and our Parks Department.

Ms. Turner spoke about a new event for Friends of the Garden, the Garden Gala that will take place on September 30th, the dress code is "garden cocktail", this is an outdoors event raising funds for a new sensory garden, surrounding Ambler fountain. The theme is Moonlight Metamorphosis due to the full moon the night of the event. Seats are available to Park Board members, please let Bob or Karen know if you want to attend.

Mr. Belote also said to please let us know if you would like to attend Brew at the Zoo as well.

Jim Fisher, Assistant Director Mr. Jim Fisher said that the current volume of hiring, interviewing, and onboarding new staff is very high and Parks staff along with Human Resources staff are doing a phenomenal job. The Park Rangers section are now fully staffed. We have been chosen for a CAPRA accreditation audit which will take place in the next month or so, and we have submitted all our evidence of compliance documents.

Kim Reser, Assistant Director Ms. Kim Reser thanked recreation staff for their hard work during the busy summer months. There has been an increase in citizens that rejoined our programs and we saw higher attendance number overall. Human Resources staff were helpful in acquiring more lifeguards which allowed us to have more hours for the outdoor pools. The City of Springfield Information Systems department has been helpful for our summer programs and activities, keeping software running and updated and assisting in any issues staff faced.

Bob Belote, Director Mr. Belote promoted the Ozark Greenways Fall Party that will happen on Tuesday, September 19 at Finley Farms, if Board Members would like to attend, please let us know. Mr. Belote thanked the City of Springfield, City Council, City Manager's

Office, and City Finance Department for all their work and support in helping us finalize the ARPA funding for Cooper Park and the restoration for the three sports complexes there. This will restore Cooper back to prominence, it will allow local kids play in national and state championships, and it will improve sports tourism for our Springfield community.

IX. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Randy Blackwood acknowledged the hard work staff has put in over the summer. He welcomed Don Chenevert, again as a new member to the Board and appreciate his willingness to be a part of it. He thanked Heather Noggle for her service on the Board and wished her all the best. He stated that he along with other Board members were able to attend the 100th Birthday Celebration for the Dickerson Park Zoo and was impressed that the City of Springfield and the Park Board have had a successful zoo facility of its quality and caliber for 100 years and is proud to be a part of it.

X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was unfinished business to discuss.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

XII. CALENDAR

- a. Park Board Meeting: Friday, September 8, 2023, at 8:30 a.m, at the Springfield Skate Park.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Susie Turner made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Mark McNay. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.