

MINUTES
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Springfield-Greene County Botanical Center, 2400 S. Scenic, Springfield, Missouri, and
Virtually via Microsoft Teams Platform
Friday, August 12, 2022

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Randy Blackwood, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

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

Park Board Members Absent: Royce Reding

Park Staff Present: Bob Belote, Jon Carney, Tim Carpenter, Mike Crocker, Jenny Edwards, Kennon Ellison, Tim McCrea, Karen Mellinger, Jerry Mitchell, Miles Park, Jennifer Penning, Kim Reser, Cyrus Taylor, Lana Woolsey

Guests: Matt Battaglia, President Ozark Pickleball Club; Kristin Norris, Vice President Ozark Pickleball Club; Bob Horton, Sponsor Chair, Queen City Open Tournament

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Sidney Needem made a motion to approve the July 8, 2022, Park Board minutes; seconded by Ms. Heather Noggle. The motion was passed unanimously.

III. RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING PARK BOARD CHAIR, MR. SIDNEY NEEDEM

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, stated that at our last Park Board meeting, the Board elected Mr. Randy Blackwood as Chair, and Ms. Heather Noggle as Vice Chair. Today we are honoring our outgoing Park Board Chair, Mr. Sidney Needem, for his leadership during a time when we were transitioning out of the pandemic and continuing to manage ongoing challenges. Mr. Randy Blackwood, Chair, presented the traditional gavel plaque to Mr. Needem for his service as Park Board Chair. Mr. Blackwood thanked Mr. Needem for his leadership efforts which helped the Park Board maintain our parks services and the ability to successfully collaborate with community partners. Mr. Needem mentioned he would not have been successful without the support of the Director and the Park Board staff. Mr. Needem will remain a Board member until his replacement is approved by City Council.

IV. OZARKS PICKLEBALL CLUB/QUEEN CITY OPEN RECAP

Ms. Kim Reser, Assistant Director, stated that pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the United States, with 4.8 million players. Ms. Reser introduced several Ozarks Pickleball Club members, including Matt Battaglia, President of the organization. Mr. Battaglia stated that the Club has been in existence for about eight years, but they became a formal 501-C3 organization just last year. In addition to Springfield, the Ozarks Pickleball Club is expanding into other communities

such as Republic, Monett, and Bolivar and hopes to bring new pickleball programs to other communities and help advocate for more facilities. Currently, the Club meets monthly at Meador Park and offers free instruction and use of equipment for interested participants. Mr. Battaglia stated that the event has on average 100 participants each month. Mr. Battaglia mentioned that pickleball was recently added as a new sport for the Senior Games, and they had over 50 participants in the 2022 competition held here in Springfield earlier this summer. The Queen City Open Tournament at Cooper Tennis Complex was held in June, and over \$43,000 was raised to expand Park Board facilities and available pickleball court space. Mr. Bob Horton, Queen City Open Tournament Sponsor Chair, stated that as a former Park Board Chair, he understands the importance of collaboration and appreciates the Board's support to help grow pickleball in our community. The Park Board, in conjunction with the Springfield Sports Commission, was recently awarded the USA Pickleball Middle States Regional Tournament scheduled for June 1-4, 2023, and May 30-June 2, 2024, at Cooper Tennis Complex.

V. ACCESSIBLE RECREATION PROGRAM UPDATE

Mr. Cyrus Taylor, Accessible Recreation Supervisor, stated that the COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted the ability to program with our Accessible Recreation participants. We adjusted and offered programs remotely, while staying connected to the participants. Staff created several new programs and activities such as Pavilion Projects, which were self-contained individual craft projects hosted at various park pavilions. Mr. Taylor also introduced accessible cycling and disc golf as they are both activities interested participants can do on their own time, as well. Recently, we formed the AR Cycling Club and now offer a Disc Golf Program due to the popularity of these two activities. Mr. Taylor stated that we have fully restored the Accessible Recreation Bowling Program, which is a 40-year tradition, with 100 bowlers registered for the summer 2022 session. The Miracle League celebrated the 10-year anniversary in the Fall 2021 with a Home Run Derby. This summer we returned to a regular league season at full capacity with 187 registered players. Mr. Taylor thanked the many supporters who funded the development of the Miracle League field including Mr. Bobby Allison and the Springfield Rotary Clubs, who recently provided additional funding for several facility amenities such as a permanent sound system, shade structure, lights in the dug outs, and newly painted lines. Recently, Mercy Midwest donated 50 gloves to the program. Mr. Taylor shared additional information about other programs such as the annual Float for Independence and the AR Holiday Party which includes a visit through the lighted display, Candy Cane Lane, at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park. Mr. Belote thanked the many community organizations who continue to support our Accessible Recreation programs. He encouraged everyone to participate as a Miracle league buddy and experience the pure joy of the program for all involved.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORT

- a. **Nominating Committee Report and Follow-Up** Ms. Susie Turner thanked the Committee members for attending the July 13, 2022, meeting. Her meeting summary was included in the packet for review. Ms. Turner stated that there was incredible interest in serving on the Park Board, which indicates that citizens want to be a part of what we are doing and help guide the future. The Committee reviewed applications, conducted interviews in early August, and recommended a candidate to the City Manager's office for approval. Upon approval from the City Manager, the recommended candidate's name will be forwarded to City Council for formal approval.

Ms. Turner mentioned that at the last Park Board meeting, there was discussion about the longstanding tradition of the Director serving as the Secretary of the Board. The Board requested additional discussion and a review of the bylaws about the division of duties of the Director and the Secretary of the Board. Ms. Lana Woolsey, Assistant City Attorney, attended the meeting to answer questions about the bylaws. The Committee recommended that the role of Secretary should be a voting member of the Board.

Mr. Randy Blackwood, Chair, requested nominations for the Secretary to the Board position. Mr. Mark McNay made a motion to nominate Ms. Susie Turner for the Secretary to the Board position; seconded by Ms. Leslie Carrier. Hearing no other nominations, a verbal vote was taken. The motion was unanimously approved, with Ms. Susie Turner abstaining from the vote. Ms. Turner stated that Ms. Karen Mellinger, Senior Executive Secretary, will continue to capture the minutes, and then, Ms. Turner will review them before distribution to the Board. Mr. Blackwood stated that this was just the first step of the discussion about whether the Board should institute an Executive Committee.

- b. **Park Development Committee Report** Mr. Curtis Jared stated that the Committee reviewed a handful of parks that seemed to be under-utilized. Many of the properties were remnants of residential subdivisions that included sink holes and undevelopable land. The properties are mainly accessible by walking to the area as there are no parking lots for these parks. With Ms. Woolsey's assistance, we are reviewing the deeds and restrictions of the parks to see how we can better utilize these areas including partnering with other organizations that will help better serve the community. Springfield Public Schools has recently approached Park Board Administration about two proposed partnership projects.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jenny Edwards, Public Information Administrator Ms. Edwards mentioned that the Park Day Reunion event in Silver Springs Park was enjoyed by many participants on August 4-7. A news release was issued by World TeamTennis regarding the status of the 2022 season, which was not scheduled due to a variety of reasons. In response to the five heat advisories that have happened recently, we have extended the outdoor pool hours and reduced the admission to \$1.00 or free with a canned food donation after 5:30 pm.

Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations Mr. Mitchell mentioned that in his report this month, he has provided revenue information from other cost centers as requested by the Board. The sales tax revenue for August is significantly higher than last year at this time. We are currently over our projected revenue, which will help us to allocate the one percent of our overall budget into the Reserve Fund. The final numbers for the Parks Property Mil Tax revenues are still in review, but they will be reported in a future report. Mr. Jared mentioned that he would like to see the budget numbers presented as actual versus budgeted, as well. Mr. Belote stated that the Fees and Charges Committee reviewed the budget numbers in great detail, but we can also expand the information presented monthly wherever needed.

Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services Mr. Carney invited everyone to join the dedication of the Kachel Fountain at 10:30 am today in the Springfield Botanical Gardens. The

new fountain will be a beautiful focal point in the park. We also had a dedication of park improvements at Sanford Park on July 23. The improvements were made possible by two funding cycles from the Neighborhood Works program on behalf of the Parkcrest Neighborhood Association.

Jennifer Penning, Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park Coordinator Ms. Penning stated that preparations are well underway for Harvest Fest, which will be held the first four weekends in October, at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park. We will hire approximately 30 part-time employees to help work the event. Today is the last day of day camps at the Farm, which were held for the past nine weeks. We had 516 canoe/kayak rentals at Lake Springfield Boathouse during July and a new turf pad was installed in front of the storage pads to help protect the boats when taking them in and out of the storage building. Although it was too hot for horse lessons in the afternoon, staff still averaged 90 lessons each week in July. Ms. Christine Peoples, Timmons Hall Coordinator, has scheduled three History Keeper Luncheons in the coming weeks. She spoke at a recent movie premier, The Inconceivable Journey, in Kansas City. The maintenance staff completed a retaining wall at Timmons Hall to help prevent erosion.

Kim Reser, Assistant Director Ms. Reser thanked Brooke Ash from the Community Partnership of the Ozarks for her coordination of the National Night Out celebration in Meador Park on August 6. The event included safety educational information, along with fun activities, music, and games. The Police vs Fire Departmental softball game had over 400 people in attendance. Pool season will be ending with the start of schools in the area, but Fasnigh Pool will be open weekends through Labor Day. Ms. Reser wanted to thank the Recreation staff for their continued high level of customer service and quality programming during the summer.

Mike Crocker, Assistant Director Mr. Crocker stated that Zoo attendance continues to be high except when the outside temperature is extremely hot. The Ball of the Wild event had the largest recorded attendance, with more than 700 people, on July 8, 2022. Mr. Belote mentioned that on July 22, 2022, we celebrated Mike's 46 years with the Zoo. It was a surprise event that included Mayor Ken McClure reading a proclamation and declaring it Mike Crocker Day.

Miles Park, Assistant Director Mr. Park provided several project updates. On October 18, we will host an open house for citizens to view the plans for the Chadwick Flyer Greenway at Lake Springfield Boathouse. Work is scheduled to resume in September for the new sundial amenity on the Lake Drummond peninsula. The Japanese Fall Festival is scheduled for September 9-11 in the Mizumoto Stroll Garden within Nathanael-Greene/Close Memorial Park. Mr. Belote thanked Miles for his involvement and coordination with estate trustee, Joshua Porter, to make the new Kachel Fountain possible.

Jim Fisher, Assistant Director Mr. Fisher mentioned that Mel Waldron, our Golf Superintendent at Horton Smith Golf Course, was recognized as a Certified Golf Course Superintendent by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Mel has maintained his certification for over 20 years. Park Ranger Robert Bridges has been selected to receive the Red, White and Blue Heart Award from the state of Missouri's Department of Public Safety. Governor Mike Parson will present the award to Robert at a formal ceremony in Jefferson City on September 7.

Bob Belote, Director of Parks Mr. Belote mentioned that the ARPA Funded Cooper Park Project design and engineering contract is on the City Council Agenda for August 22 and September 6, 2022. We plan to host an official kick off event once the process is started. Mr. Belote stated that last month Jeff Cumley, Superintendent of Jordan Valley Park and CSDP, resigned. Jeff was a great supporter of Jordan Valley Park and the downtown area in general, and he has played a significant role in the planning of many events during his 21 years with the City, including the coordination of many new park amenities funded through the Rotary Clubs of Springfield. We wish him well in his future endeavors. Mr. Belote thanked the Board members who recently attended the Sanford Park dedication on July 23 and the Springfield Cardinals' social on July 27.

VIII. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Blackwood stated that he has had a very busy time during his first month as Chair. He mentioned that he knew Jeff Cumley before he worked for the City and Parks and that Jeff would be an asset to any organization. Mr. Blackwood mentioned that Jeff's enthusiasm and professionalism will be missed.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

X. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

XI. CALENDAR

As mentioned before, the Kachel Fountain dedication is at 10:30 am today. The next regularly scheduled Park Board meeting is Friday, September 9, 2022, at 8:30 am. We will meet at Timmons Hall. The Park Board meeting scheduled for October 14, 2022, will be at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Sidney Needem made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ms. Leslie Carrier. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:01 a.m.