

MINUTES
Springfield-Greene County Park Board
Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park, 3825 W. Farm Road 146, Springfield, Missouri
Friday, October 14, 2022

Park Board Members Present: Randy Blackwood, Leslie Carrier, Ann Compton, 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, Mike Crocker, Jenny Edwards, Jim Fisher, Mary Kromrey, Tim McCrea, Anne-Mary McGrath, Karen Mellinger, Jerry Mitchell, Miles Park, Kim Reser, Jeff Smith, Lana Woolsey

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Mark McNay made a motion to accept the Park Board Meeting Minutes and Closed Session Meeting Minutes from September 9, 2022; seconded by Dr. Dianna Parker. Motion was approved unanimously.

III. RUTLEDGE-WILSON FARM PARK STAFF INTRODUCTIONS & HARVEST FEST OVERVIEW

Mr. Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities, welcomed everyone to Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park and the home of the popular annual Harvest Fest event. Mr. Coats introduced the key full-time staff and their important responsibilities for a variety of activities such as Harvest Fest, corporate rentals, weddings, cross country races, and year-round farm operations. Mr. Coats shared information about the success of the first two weekends of Harvest Fest including parking over 4,000 cars, selling 4,200 pumpkins, 8,600 people walking through the corn maze, and 3,800 cow train riders. Plus, we have 1,700 children scheduled for field trips this fall. A new feature at Harvest Fest this year is an accessible pumpkin patch, which has been well received by everyone. Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, noted that there was an informational flyer and special coupon to visit Harvest Fest included in the board packets.

IV. NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL STATUS TO FULBRIGHT SPRING GREENWAY TRAIL

Mr. Belote mentioned that the Fulbright Spring Greenway Trail was recently designated as a National Recreation Trail (NRT) by the Department of the Interior. The Fulbright Spring Greenway Trail is 6.98 miles long and connects four parks, an elementary school and housing subdivisions, featuring many unique outdoor spaces. Achieving this designation usually takes 5-10 years, but the Fulbright Spring Trail has been developed for just over three years. Ms. Mary Kromrey, Ozark Greenways, stated that the Fulbright Spring Greenway was the only trail in Missouri and one of nine trails nationally to receive the NRT status this year. Currently, we have five NRT designated trails in our inventory, which does draw trail tourists from other regions.

V. ACCEPTANCE OF SHINE GRANT FOR SPARC WRAP-AROUND PROGRAM

Ms. Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation, stated that at the August 2021, Park Board Meeting, the Park Board formally approved acceptance of \$294,450 in grant funds from Springfield Public Schools (SPS) as part of its expansion of Service for Wrap Around Care (SHINE Program) for youth attending elementary and middle schools. The purpose of the SHINE Program is to provide age-appropriate educational activities for school-age children to address learning loss among students disproportionately affected by the coronavirus and school closures, including low-income students, children with disabilities, English Learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care. Additional funds have been approved for this program during the 2022-23 school year, and SPS has again reached out to Park's School Parks Section for participation through Park's Before and After School Programs. SPS will provide funding for these programs up to \$324,975. Mr. Mark McNay made a motion that the Park Board approve the Resolution provided in the Park Board packet, authorizing the Park Board to enter into a contract with the Springfield School District R12 and accepting the grant funding from the school district to be used as part of Park Board's SPARC Before and After-School Program; seconded by Ms. Leslie Carrier. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. ACCEPTANCE OF FOG VEHICLE FOR BOTANICAL GARDENS

Mr. Miles Park, Assistant Director, stated that Friends of the Garden Inc., (FOG) is devoted to the continued growth, development and enhancement of the Springfield Botanical Gardens and continues to work closely with Park's staff to sharpen our vision of the future of the Botanical Gardens. As we continue to work in partnership to achieve the goals at Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park, FOG is offering to donate to the Park Board a 6-passenger golf cart and accessible 9-passenger trailer ("tram") that FOG recently purchased, for utilization as a tram vehicle at Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park. If approved by the Park Board, the tram will be operated by the Park Board and FOG staff to assist in providing guided tours and shuttle service to overflow parking areas during large events at the park site. The value of the donated pieces of equipment is \$36,700. Ms. Susie Turner made the motion to accept the donation of six-passenger golf cart and trailer valued at \$36,700 from Friends of the Garden for the benefit of the Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park; seconded by Ms. Heather Noggle. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee Reports to review and discuss.

VIII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities

Mr. Coats mentioned that the upcoming Zombie Run at Rutledge-Wilson Farm will have 500-600 kids participating. Canoe and kayak rentals will close for the season on October 15 at Lake Springfield Park. Ms. Christine Peoples, Timmons Hall Coordinator, recently hosted the Bears, Badges, and Kids event at Silver Springs Park, with MSU Basketball Coach, Dana Ford, serving as the guest speaker. Coach Ford also played basketball with the youth participants.

Anne-Mary McGrath, Superintendent of Recreation Ms. McGrath reported that we were fortunate not to have any rain during the recent Missouri State High School Athletic Association's Girls Tennis and Girls Softball Championship events the last few weekends. Ms. McGrath reminded everyone that Turkey Trot will be in person this year, with a virtual option. Packet and t-shirt pick up will be at the Expo. The race route will be same as it has been in the past. Participants are encouraged to bring five canned goods when they pick up their packet or on race day, and all the donated food items will be given to Ozarks Food Harvest. Proceeds from Turkey Trot will benefit the Park Board Youth Scholarship Fund and the Developmental Center of the Ozarks.

Jon Carney, Superintendent of General Services Mr. Carney stated that every year we close the two indoor family center pools, drain the water, conduct a deep clean, and make any necessary repairs. We recently completed the annual cleaning and painting project at Doling Aquatics Center, and it looks great. Due to the intricate air/water system, this annual project is important to keep equipment running efficiently.

Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations Mr. Mitchell reported that the fiscal year-end numbers will be available soon. Sales tax revenue for September was down slightly compared to the same period one year ago. The October sales tax revenue, however, was up 8 percent from October 2021. Mr. Mitchell stated the 12-month review of actual numbers for the Fieldhouse Sportscenter was included in the packets, with over \$22,000 allocated to the reserve account for future repairs such as the refinishing of the floors which occurs every two years. Mr. Belote indicated that staff has begun exploring other events to host at the Fieldhouse such as wrestling and jujitsu competitions, along with other community event opportunities.

Miles Park, Assistant Director Mr. Park stated that a Cooper Park master plan design meeting was held to kick off the planning process for the improvements for the soccer facility and future improvements for the softball/baseball facilities on October 5. An extensive court repair project is underway at Cooper Tennis Complex including overlay with asphalt, recoat, paint and line courts 1-8. Mr. Belote stated that Miles, and Jeff Smith, Senior Park Planner, are serving on the Lake Springfield Area Planning Committee, which officially began this past week with an open house at the Lake Springfield Boathouse. The meeting agenda was to provide area residents with an opportunity to learn about the planning process and its intended impacts.

Kim Reser, Assistant Director Ms. Reser reported that six pickleball courts were converted and added to the Meador Park Pickleball Complex, now giving us 12 courts total. Park Operations staff completed the work with funds raised by the Ozarks Pickleball Club. Ms. Susie Turner stated that she appreciated the Park Board communicating and responding to the community on how we can work together to address high demand requests for our facilities.

Jim Fisher, Assistant Director Mr. Fisher stated that golf rounds and revenues have remained very strong and nearly surpassed the previous record for the month of September that was previously achieved in 2021. All three of the golf course parking lots were sealed and striped during September. Our Park Rangers continue to provide a high level of service while

being short-handed due to recent vacancies. Horton Smith Golf Course will host a semi-national Speed Golf Open, a 2-day event, with competition categories of 18, 36, or 54 holes.

Mike Crocker, Assistant Director Mr. Crocker stated that due to the fall bird migration season, there have been documented cases of bird flu in Kansas, Arkansas, and Tennessee among waterfowls and raptors, so zoo staff have covered bird areas to help protect the birds as much as possible. The Dickerson Park Zoo is partnering with the Community Blood Center, in which more than 800 blood donors are expected to attend the Zoo, and participants will receive free admission and a tshirt. The Zoo will begin their winter hours on November 1, closing one hour earlier, which is 4:00 pm. Mr. Belote thanked the Zoo staff for the family bundle admission ticket designed for the Celebrate Springfield initiative. Sister Cities offered a similar promotion for the Japanese Fall Festival.

Bob Belote, Director of Parks Mr. Belote mentioned that yesterday we unveiled the new sculpture and water feature installation by Rodo Padilla called “Cultivating Love” at Springfield Botanical Gardens. This installation also honored long-time Sister Cities Director and retired Park Board employee, Cindy Jobe, who was instrumental in developing relationships with our Sister Cities.

Mr. Belote mentioned that after 27 years at the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame and managing the Price Cutter Charity Championship, Executive Director, Jerald Andrews is retiring. Throughout his career, he has helped to raise nearly 19 million dollars for area charities. He was inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame on October 11.

We will host a formal Groundbreaking Ceremony and ARPA Appreciation Lunch event inviting state and local officials who helped us throughout the application process that resulted in the Park being awarded \$22 million dollars for enhancements in the Cooper Park corridor. The event will take place on Thursday, November 3, at Lake Country Soccer, beginning at 12 noon.

Mr. Belote mentioned that we provided a Parks update presentation to Greene County Commissioners on September 22 at the Botanical Center. Our Park Board Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary attended, as well. It was an opportunity for both entities to share their future goals.

IX. CHAIR’S REPORT

Mr. Randy Blackwood, Chair, mentioned that he attended the Japanese Fall Festival last month, and he said it was an amazing event. He is very excited about the enthusiasm for pickleball in our community, and he is proud of how we are partnering with the local pickleball group.

X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

XII. CALENDAR

Mr. Belote stated that we will not have a November Park Board meeting due to the observance of Veteran's Day, Friday, November 11, which falls on the same day as our normally scheduled meeting date. The Park Board had indicated that they would like to host a Board Retreat in the month of November instead. Dates will be sent out with four-hour time blocks.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Mark McNay made a motion to adjourn the meeting, with a five-minute break before the Closed Session begins; seconded by Heather Noggle. Motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:47 a.m.