

MINUTES
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Cooper Tennis Complex, 2331 E. Pythian, Springfield, Missouri
Friday, September 13, 2024

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Curtis Jared, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

Park Board Members Present: Leslie Carrier, Cody Danastasio, Curtis Jared, Mark McNay (via Teams), Dr. Dale Moore, Dr Dianna Parker

Park Board Members Absent: Don Chenevert, Jr., Royce Reding, Susie Turner

Park Board Staff Present: Tim Carpenter, Matt Coats, Jenny Edwards, Karen Mellinger, Miles Park, Kim Reser, Ron Schneider, Jackson Thompson, Lana Woolsey

Guests: Police Chief Paul Williams; Chris Coulter, Greene County Administrator

II. READING & APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Mark McNay presented and made a motion to approve the August 9, 2024, Park Board Minutes; seconded by Dr. Dianna Parker. Motion passed unanimously.

III. REPORT OF THE OFFICERS

There were no reports from the officers.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Spring Forward SGF Sales Tax Presentation** Police Chief Paul Williams presented information regarding the Springfield, Missouri 3/4-cent sales tax that is set to expire on March 31, 2025. The tax has been in place for 15 years and generates \$45 million annually and is currently dedicated solely to funding the City's Police and Fire Pension Fund. The tax was deemed necessary at the time when the pension system was underfunded by about \$200 million. The City would still be obligated to meeting the fund needs of paying out the promised benefits, regardless of the existence or not of the sales tax, which would be an estimated \$3.5-\$6 million a year for about 10 years. Also, if the tax is not replaced, the City's use tax, which matches the overall sales tax rate, would be reduced, with an impact to the City's fund general of \$5.2 million annually. Another renewal of the tax would likely produce more revenue than is necessary to meet the goal of a fully funded Police-Fire Pension, so the Mayor appointed a 30-membere Citizens' Commission on Community Investment (CCCI), with representatives of a variety of backgrounds, sectors, and opinions.

The CCCC recommended a replacement tax with pension system contributions, public safety, and projects related to the Forward SGF Comprehensive Plan. "Spring Forward" is the framework identified by the CCCI representing their recommendation of Safety, Public Initiatives, Recreation, Investing in the Next Generation. The CCCI recommended allocating

the current $\frac{3}{4}$ cent amount with $\frac{1}{4}$ cent to public safety, and the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cent to comprehensive plan initiatives. The $\frac{1}{4}$ cent would produce approximately \$15 million a year initially, which would cover the required remaining contributions to the Police-Fire Pension system, and increase the police and fire pay to a level competitive with peer cities. This portion of the tax would have no sunset as it covers police and fire personnel expenses which are ongoing cost.

The $\frac{1}{2}$ cent would produce approximately \$30 million a year initially which would allow for investments in neighborhood and community initiatives consistent with the comprehensive plan. This portion would have a 10-year sunset and strong accountability measures recommend by the CCCI including defined project considerations and ongoing citizens' advisory committee to provide oversight and project recommendations. Should voters approve the new $\frac{3}{4}$ -cent sales tax to replace the expiring Police-Fire Pension Sales tax, Springfield's overall sales tax rate will not increase. This replacement sales tax will be on the November 2024 ballot, and if approved, would become effective April 1, 2025. The ballot language was distributed, and questions were answered.

- b. **Approval of a Land Conservation Partnership Grant Agreement with the Missouri Department of Conservation** Mr. Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities, presented information about the Park Board's opportunity to partner with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) to receive a matching Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Grant to be used for the construction of an ADA accessible environmental education and recreation pavilion at Lost Hill Park. This MDC grant will fund 50 percent of the cost for the engineering plans and specifications for the pavilion, stamped engineering plans, construction materials, and actual construction and installation of the pavilion, up to \$100,000, so the Park Board's match would be \$50,000.

Recently, the Park Board approved a \$25,000 donation from Bass Pro Shops, which will be used towards the construction of this pavilion and help to satisfy a portion of our match. The remaining \$25,000 of the Park Board's match is being funded through the sale of the walnut tree harvest at Lost Hill Park. We have already raised \$18,000 towards this goal, and we expect to raise the remaining \$7,000 through this fall's tree harvest. Upon completion of the Project, the Park Board will submit a request for reimbursement to MDC for 50 percent of the total project costs incurred. Mr. Cody Danastasio made a motion that the Board approve the Resolution authorizing application for and acceptance of the Missouri Department of Conservation Grant, in an amount up to \$100,000 to be used for the design and construction of the Lost Hill Pavilion; seconded by Dr. Dale Moore. The motion was passed unanimously.

- c. **Approval of a Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative Grant with the Missouri Department of Conservation** Mr. Matt Coats presented information about the Park Board's opportunity with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) to receive a matching Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative Community Conservation and Engagement Grant (MoBCI Grant), in the amount of \$15,274. The Park Board will provide its match through in-kind assistance and labor necessary for the completion of this project. The purpose of this Grant is to provide funding to allow Parks' staff to involve communities in conservation efforts through habitat enhancement projects, educational programs, and sustainable practices that address conservation goals/objectives as set forth in this grant Program. The grant funds will be used for improvements at our Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park Plant Nursery,

the purchase of high-quality reusable planting containers, soil, seed, and other planting infrastructure necessary for growing 25,000 native plants, which will be planted at Lake Springfield Park and the Springfield Art Museum, using Parks staff and volunteers. Ms. Leslie Carrier made the motion that the Board approve the Resolution authorizing the application for and acceptance of the \$15,274 Missouri Department of Conservation Grant, as part of the MDC's Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative; seconded by Dr. Dianna Parker. The motion passed unanimously.

- d. **Acceptance of Funds from the Missouri Department of Conservation to install Floating Wetlands and Shoreline Plants at the Dickerson Park Zoo** Mr. Jackson Thompson, Assistant Director, has an opportunity to enter into two cost-share agreements with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) for participation in MDC's Aquatic Habitat Improvement Program at Dickerson Park Zoo. One agreement will cover the installation of four state-of-the-art floating wetlands in the two bodies of water within the Zoo, and the second agreement will cover shoreline plantings along the northeast shore of Dickerson Lake. Both of the shoreline plantings and the floating wetlands will improve the aquatic habitat and water quality of these waters, the water downstream and throughout the Little Sac Priority Watershed, by reducing inputs from geese droppings, and other pollutants, and enhancing the pollinator habitat in this region. The floating wetlands will also add aesthetic value to the Zoo landscape and pond area, while demonstrating the Park Board's ecological stewardship of our public spaces and highlighting our education to the proper care and long-term viability and environmental sustainability of our municipal area. The total expected project cost is \$10,887, with the Park Board initially paying the costs and MDC reimbursing the Park Board for 90 percent of the costs incurred. Dr. Dale Moore made a motion that the Board approve applying for and accepting the cost-share grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation, as part of its Aquatic Habitat Improvement Program, and authorizing the Director of Parks, or their designee, to execute the two Cost Share request agreements, and all other documents on behalf of the Park Board, that are necessary to proceed with this Project; seconded by Dr. Dianna Parker. The motion was passed unanimously.
- e. **ARPA Funds Project Update – Cooper Park** Mr. Miles Park, Assistant Director, discussed and reviewed pictures of the progress made on the ARPA Project at Cooper Park. This project is most likely the largest funded project to date within the Parks system. Once completed, the first phase will include eight new soccer fields and a new entry to the fields, along with other amenities. There have been a few challenges including unsuitable soil at the site, so there have been unplanned costs for the project. The second phase will include new synthetic turf on the fields at Cooper Youth Complex, addressing ADA issues, and include 180 new parking spaces. Phase II bids open on October 10. The Board discussed the plan for maintenance and replacement of the new turf over the next 10-12 years. Additionally, it was discussed that the new fields should help us to bid competitively for future soccer and baseball events.
- f. **Director of Parks Report and Comments** Mr. Ron Schneider, Director of Parks, reviewed the success of the Japanese Fall Festival at Nathanael-Greene Park. Mr. Schneider has met with several partnering organizations discussing current and future agreements with these organizations. A report of current Park Board contracts was included in the Board member's packets for review. The Park Development/Property Assessment Committee recently met to discuss projects related to the Lost Hill Park pavilion, the proposed demolition of the hog

barn at Nathanael-Greene Park, a desire for a skate park in Grant Beach Park, a detention basin addition at Glenwood Park, and a proposed bicycle pump track at McDaniel Park. A thank you note from a Horton Smith golf patron was shared with the Board. Park Operations crews have worked to remove hazardous trees at Phelps Grove Park and Rivercut Golf Course. Recently, there were a few breaks in where property damage occurred and Park Operations staff has made appropriate repairs. Brew at the Zoo is on Saturday, September 14, and all tickets must be purchased in advance. Mr. Schneider encouraged the Board to review the staff's written reports detailing activities, programs, and events that were included in this month's packets.

V. CALENDAR

The next scheduled Park Board meeting is Friday, October 11, 2024, and will be held at the Park Board Administrative Offices.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Dale Moore made a motion to adjourn the open session; seconded by Ms. Leslie Carrier. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 9:53 a.m.