

MINUTES
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Park Board Administrative Offices, 1923 N. Weller, Springfield, Missouri
And via Microsoft Teams for Park Board Members
Friday, March 14, 2025

I. ROLL CALL

Ms. Susie Turner, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Park Board Members Present: Leslie Carrier, Don Chenevert, Jr, Cody Danastasio, Dr. Dale Moore, Dr. Dianna Parker, Susie Turner

Park Board Members Absent: Curtis Jared, Mark McNay, Royce Reding

Park Board Staff Members Present: Josh Curnutt, Jenny Edwards, Jim Fisher, Ben Kellner, Tim McCrea, Karen Mellinger, Miles Park, Kim Reser, Ron Schneider, Justin Wilson, Jackson Thompson, Lana Woolsey

Guests: Friends of the Garden Staff and Members: Gage Rudick, Christy Yoakum, Julie Holmes

II. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Dianna Parker made a motion to approve the February 14, 2025, Park Board Meeting minutes; seconded by Ms. Leslie Carrier. The motion was passed unanimously.

III. REPORT OF THE OFFICERS

- a. **Park Board Chair Report and Comments** Vice Chair Susie Turner encouraged everyone to get outside to enjoy the beautiful weather in one of the 105 parks and spend time with family and friends.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. **Park Board Meeting Schedule Discussion** At the last Park Board meeting, Board members discussed potentially changing the monthly meeting date to Wednesdays instead of Fridays. Board members continued the discussion this month and agreed that the monthly meeting date and time should remain the same, which is the second Friday of the month at 8:30 am. It was suggested that a policy be developed indicating the Board will review the monthly Board meeting dates annually to have an opportunity to propose a meeting date change due to a holiday or other potential conflicts.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Check Presentation from Friends of the Garden** Mr. Gage Rudick, Friends of the Garden Program Director, provided a recap of the 2024 Gardens Aglow event. This unique community event has become many residents' annual tradition. The success of the event is due to several sponsors including Simmons Bank, Mr. Electric, Rosalie Wooten, All About Trees, Renewal By Anderson, KY3, KOLR10, Springfield CVB, along with Friends of the Garden Board members and volunteers, and many Park Board staff and Park Operations crews. Over 1,000 service hours were provided by more than a 100 volunteers to help set up the 250,000 lights throughout the gardens. This year a new light maze and up lights showcasing the trees were added to the walk-through display. During the event, there were five local food vendors. The event was opened to the public on 19 evenings, with 2 private events, and one Friends of the Garden/Springfield Sister Cities Association members-only evening. Mr. Rudick presented a check to the Park Board in the amount of \$82,953.74, which represents 50 percent of the gate proceeds. Vice Chair Turner recognized FOG Board Members Christy Yoakum and Julie Holmes in attendance at today's meeting, along with Josh Curnutt, Parks Operations Supervisor, at the Stroll Garden.
- b. **Accept a Donation for a Sunshade Replacement at Jordan Valley Park** Superintendent of Jordan Valley Park and Facilities, Ben Kellner, presented information regarding the Rotary Club of Springfield Southeast's offer to donate a new sunshade for the K-park picnic area within Jordan Valley Park. The Rotary Club of Springfield Southeast provided the original sunshade in 2016, and now the fabric on the existing sunshade is in poor condition. The estimated value of the contribution by the Rotary Club is \$18,000. Mr. Cody Danastasio made a motion that the Park Board accept the Rotary Club of Springfield Southeast's donation of one sunshade, valued at approximately \$18,000, as set out in the Resolution presented to the Board today; seconded by Mr. Don Chenevert, Jr. The motion passed unanimously.
- c. **Approval of the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Parks Fees and Charges** At the Park Board's February 14, 2025, regular meeting, staff provided an overview of the finances, budget process, fiscal objectives, and the proposed FY 2025-2026 fees and charges. The proposed schedule of fees and charges administered by the Park Board is included in the budget document provided in the Board's packet of information. Since last month's meeting, staff adjusted the proposed fees for the 10-punch non-member indoor cycling fee, the Northview ballroom rental rate, and further increased the greens fee rate at the Bill and Payne Stewart Golf Course. Superintendent of Business Operations Mitchell presented the final fees and charges schedule, highlighting the recent changes, which were also included in a detailed memo provided in the Board's packet. Mr. Don Chenevert, Jr. made a motion that the Park Board approve the proposed Fees and Charges for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, and approve including these Fees and Charges with the Park Board's Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Budget, for submission to the City Manager and City Council for review, possible amendments, and final approval of the Park Board's Budget; seconded by Dr. Dale Moore. The motion passed unanimously.

- d. **Approval of the Proposed Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Parks Budget** The proposed Parks budget follows nearly six months of preparation by staff, two Park Board Fees & Charges Committee workshops, and the presentation at the February 14, 2025, regular meeting of the Park Board. Director of Parks Schneider and Superintendent of Business Operations Mitchell presented the proposed budget document noting any changes since last month's presentation, areas of concern, and its effect on services delivered. Due to the proposed deficit, changes are expected to occur prior to final approval by the City. Once the changes occur, staff will provide an update to the Park Board including a final budget document. Dr. Dianna Parker made a motion that the Park Board approve the proposed Parks Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Budget, and for presentation of said proposed budget to the City Manager and City Council for review, possible amendments, and final approval; seconded by Mr. Cody Danastasio. The motion passed unanimously.
- e. **Superintendent of Parks Business Operations Report and Comments** One of the Park Board's objectives is to improve financial stability. Staff has been working diligently to prepare enhanced reports with the goal of being more transparent and inform key stakeholders of the department's finances. Included in the Park Board member's packets are a subsidy analysis based on cost centers, a subsidy report for outdoor pools, the February 2025 Attendance and Revenue Report, and the February 2025 Revenue and Expenditure Report, along with a cover memo outlining revenue and expenditures from Parks Operating Funds, Golf Enterprise Fund, and Parks County-Wide Capital Projects Fund, from Superintendent of Business Operations Mitchell.
- f. **Director of Parks Report and Comments** Director of Parks Schneider indicated that staff developed a new subsidy analysis based on the major program areas that compares budget figures for the last three years. The report will help staff track changes from year-to-year and set goals per program area. Park Board members favorably commented on the new reports as it provides good accountability of the department's limited resources and will assist the Board in prioritizing to become a more self-sustaining department. At the Park Board's April 11, 2025, regular meeting, staff plans to provide the Board with an overview of the sponsorship program and present future initiatives. Habitat Communication and Culture, the organization that conducted the department's recent Board and staff retreats, will facilitate a comprehensive employee survey for the Parks Department to measure communication, leadership effectiveness, job satisfaction, and organizational culture. The first Objective Key Results report summarizing the progress made from the objectives identified in the Board's retreat will be provided to the Board at the April 11, 2025, meeting.

Recently, Parks staff was approached by the Woodland Heights Neighborhood Association and a representative from Springfield Public Schools about future improvements to Lafayette Park. Reed Academy, located across the street from Lafayette Park, frequently uses the western portion of the park for extracurricular sports activities. Reed Academy is currently being renovated and expected to reopen for the 2026-2027 school year. Therefore, SPS has an interest in improving the park site so that

it suitable for their school activities. An open house to provide information and receive public comment for the development of a master plan for Lafayette Park is scheduled for Thursday, April 3, 2025, at 4:00 pm, at the Springfield Dream Center, located at 829 W. Atlantic Street. Parks staff will be in attendance to gather feedback and participate in the meeting. A press release regarding the open house will be distributed soon.

Staff has been working with the Ozarks Pickleball Club to develop a conceptual plan and cost estimate for renovations and expansion of the Meador Park pickleball courts. The plan includes the construction of 18 new courts, pavilion, fencing, shade structure, site furnishings, and restrooms. The total estimated project cost is \$2.7 million. Staff will be likely talking with potential donors, sponsors, and other stakeholders to bring this project to fruition. A conceptual plan and cost estimate were included in the Board's packets for review.

A final inspection of the Cooper Soccer ARPA project was conducted on Thursday, March 6, 2025. The items noted during the inspection are being addressed. Play has already begun on certain fields. The grand opening celebration for the soccer complex is Saturday, March 29, 2025, at 11:00 am.

VI. CALENDAR

The next Park Board meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 11, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. at the Park Board Administrative Offices.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Dale Moore made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Cody Danastasio. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:44 a.m.