MINUTES
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Park Board Administrative Offices, 1923 N. Weller, Springfield, Missouri
And via Microsoft Teams for Park Board Members
Friday, August 8, 2025

I. ROLL CALL

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

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

Park Board Members Absent: Curtis Jared, Royce Reding

Park Board Staff Members Present: Tim Carpenter, Jenny Edwards, Diana Ellison, Jim Fisher, Tim McCrea, Karen Mellinger, Jerry Mitchell, Miles Park, Kara Remington, Ron Schneider, Jill Simmons, Jackson Thompson, Lana Woolsey

Guests: Ron Bradshaw, Ozarks Model Railroad Association

II. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Mr. Mark McNay made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 11, 2025, Park Board meeting; seconded by Dr. Dianna Parker. The motion was approved unanimously.

III. REPORT OF THE OFFICERS

On behalf of the Park Board, Chair Susie Turner expressed their gratitude to Karen Mellinger for her dedication and service, acknowledging her contributions to scheduling and organizing Board Meetings and preparing packets. Ms. Mellinger is retiring after 19 years of service on August 14, 2025. She will be missed by the Board.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

V. NEW BUSINESS

a. SPARC Program Presentation SPARC's Community Recreation Administrator, Diana Ellison, presented an overview of the SPARC program, detailing its history from when is was started in 1998 to its current operation. The program was initiated to create a "sense of place through shared resources". The SPARC program currently includes before and after school programs, clubs, camps, and sports, serving children aged 5-14 years old. It operates at 25 locations, each with different facilities and resources. Future strategies for the SPARC program include focusing on quality programming, responsible resource management, and strong community partnerships to ensure long-term sustainability and growth. The enrollment numbers and staffing for the SPARC program was discussed, highlighting the impact of funding changes on enrollment and the efforts to maintain quality programming and financial stability. The before and after school program enrollment numbers did not meet the projected number due to the end of the SHINE program funding; however, the clubs and camps exceeded their enrollment projections. The staffing structure was explained, which includes an administrator, coordinator, supervisors, and youth program specialists. During the school year, SPARC employes 30-50 variable hour employees, and in the summer, SPARC hires additional seasonal employees, bringing the total to 75-100. The end of the SHINE program funding led to a decrease in enrollment in before and after school programs, but SPARC staff continue to emphasize the importance of scholarships and other funding to support participants and maintain enrollment levels. Despite funding challenges, SPARC works to maintain quality programming, including full cost analyses, aligning program fees with operational realities, and prioritizing high-impact, mission-aligned programming.

b. **Presentation on Website Updates** Public Information Administrator Jenny Edwards and Parks Web Designer Kara Remington presented the new parkboard.org website, highlighting its updated design, and new features aimed at enhancing user experience and accessibility. The new design includes a simplified navigation structure, custom icons, and a refreshed color scheme to enhance the user experience. The new website features improved contact information visibility, icon navigation on every page, and promotional boxes for important seasonal events. The calendar widget was updated to provide enhancement to the user experience. Mobile accessibility is important as 80-90 percent of users access the website through mobile devices. The new design ensures that contact information and other key features are easily accessible on a mobile device. Future enhancements for the website include adding simple contact forms on main pages, exploring e-commerce options, and potentially incorporating video content to further engage users.

c. **Approval of Reimbursement Funding from the Missouri Department of Transportation for the Purchase of an Accessible Van** The Park Board approved a resolution to accept the Missouri Department of Transportation to purchase an accessible van on May 22, 2024. At the time of the award, the grant would fund 80 percent of the costs to purchase the vehicle. Staff recently learned that additional funding is now available to reimburse Parks for the remaining 20 percent or $20,798, which Parks has already paid. Dr. Dale Moore made a motion that the Park Board approve the Resolution presented today, which authorizes applying for and accepting a grant from the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDot) that will reimburse the Park Board the 20 percent it paid towards the purchase of a disability accessible van, and includes authority to enter into a contract with MoDot for this purpose; seconded by Mr. Mark McNay. The motion passed unanimously.

d. **Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding with Friends of the Garden (FOG)** Before discussion began, Park Board Chair Susie Turner, recused herself from the meeting due to potential conflict of interest. Vice Chair Mr. Cody Danastasio led the discussion topic. Director of Parks Ron Schneider mentioned the rich history of collaboration between the Springfield-Greene County Park Board and Friends of the

Garden to fund, develop, and maintain the gardens within Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park. FOG was established in 2000 and became a recognized 501 (c)3 organization with the mission of supporting the botanical gardens and the Park Board. After 25 years, the organization has expanded their offerings and are now stewards of 50 gardens and host several events. The existing MOU between FOG and the Park Board expires December 31, 2025. Although not outlined in the agreement, the Park Board had funded a full-time Friends of the Garden Coordinator position until May of 2024 when the position was vacated and remained vacant until FOG hired and funded their own Director just a few weeks ago. The FOG Coordinator position was primarily responsible for FOG business and event coordination. The new MOU clarifies that FOG will retain profits from events like Garden A-Glow to cover their operational costs, which now includes the salary of their executive director, which was previously funded by the Park Board. The MOU outlines that the Park Board will continue to provide in-kind support of Gardens A-Glow event, while any new events will require reimbursement for direct expenses incurred by the Park Board. The changes within the MOU aim to strengthen the partnership between the Park Board and FOG by clearly defining the roles and responsibilities, ensuring transparency, and supporting the shared mission of enhancing the gardens within the Park. Mr. Don Chenevert, Jr. made a motion that the Board approve the attached Resolution and authorize entering into an amended and restated Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends of the Garden; seconded by Dr. Dale Moore. The motion was approved unanimously.

e. **Approval of a Resolution Declaring the Hog Barn Structure at Nathanael Greene Park to be Removed** Director Schneider stated we received a letter on June 24, 2025, indicating the Missouri State Parks deemed the Hog Barn structure at Nathanael Greene Park obsolete due to is rapid deterioration and unreasonable cost to repair. Mr. Mark McNay made a motion that the Board find the facility known as the Hog Barn at Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park to be unsafe and order the removal of this structure as soon as reasonably possible; seconded by Ms. Leslie Carrier. The motion passed unanimously.

f. **Approval of a Resolution to Appoint a Representative to the Galloway Community Improvement District (CID) Board of Directors** Director Schneider was recently made aware that the Park Board has a permanent representative on the Galloway CID Board of Directors per petition to establish the CID within the City, as well as their Bylaws. When former Parks Director Bob Belote retired, he resigned from the CID Board, leaving the seat unfilled. The CID Board seat may be filled by a Park Board or staff member as long as the person is 18 years of age. Dr. Dale Moore volunteered to serve on the Galloway CID Board as he has chaired the Downtown CID two times and served two terms as a Board member. The Board term is for four years, and final approval of the appointee is determined by City Council. Dr. Dianna Parker made a motion that the Board approve the attached Resolution and appoint and approve Dr. Dale Moore to be the Park Board's Authorized Representative on the Board of Directors for the Galloway Community Improvement District; seconded by Ms. Leslie Carrier. The motion passed unanimously.

g. **Establishment and Appointment of Committees** Park Board Chair Susie Turner stated that the current Bylaws indicate the Chair may appoint Committee Members. The Park Board members decided to maintain the current committee memberships for the current year to ensure continuity on the work is completed. It was noted that adjustments to committee memberships may be made following the approval of the Bylaw revisions. Additionally, committee meeting dates may be set in advance to be more efficient with members' schedules.

h. **Superintendent of Parks Business Operations Report and Comments**
Superintendent of Business Operations Jerry Mitchell provided an update on the financial status of the Parks Department, noting improvements in projected net loss and positive trends in golf fund revenues.

i. **Director of Parks Report and Comments** Director Schneider welcomed Jill Simmons, who was recently promoted to the Assistant Director of Recreation position.

Director Schneider attended the third meeting of the Citizens Advisory Board on July 30, in which the agenda was centered on funding consideration for the downtown convention center project, as well as public works and park projects. He provided a brief presentation on Parks finances and an overview of costs for park facilities, amenities, and other improvements, but not specific projects. The Advisory Board voted to allocate $10,000,000 towards Park projects over the initial two years.

A Request for Proposal to provide professional services to design and develop construction contract documents to replace the roof structure on the Grant Beach Pool Bath House was sent out July 28. Parks staff continues to work with the City's Risk Management Department on potential insurance funding and/or reimbursement from FEMA.

Director Schneider presented information on the Springfield-Greene County Park Board to several organizations recently including the Springfield Hotel Association, the Heart of the Ozarks Sertoma Club, and the Greene County Huddle Group. The presentations included a review of the mission statement, governance structure, financial overview, programs and services, current projects, and other initiatives. The presentations were well received and a great opportunity to inform community stakeholders of the great work being done by the Park Board.

Three full-time Parks Department employees were recognized in July for service milestones. Justin Smith celebrated 10 years of service; Shane Lumley celebrated 15 years of service; and Lana Woolsey celebrated 20 years of service.

Recent summer program highlights include positive membership trends at the family centers; a Worldwide BMX Day event held at Springfield Skate Park; added summer camp programming at Cooper Tennis Complex; expanded outdoor pool hours during the recent heat wave.

A Request for Proposal to send qualified contractors to perform an assessment of our outdoor pool facilities. The RFP will be advertised and released to potential consultants this week, with proposals due on or before September 4.

A private security company was secured in an effort to curb after-hours use and camping at Grant Beach Park. This will be a continued practice until we are fully staffed with Park Rangers in order to increase security at certain park properties.

Due to a recent incident, discussion has led staff to discuss existing Park rules and if updates are needed. Certain rules such as dog leash rules, camping in parks, and loitering at certain facilities are being reviewed. The goal is to receive a legal review of these areas and present them to the Park Board with potential updates to Chapter 82 of the City's Code of Ordinances for Parks and Recreation.

Progress continues with the turf project at the Killian Complex. The project is on track to be completed in November, and it is currently within budget.

The Dickerson Park Zoo boardwalk has been demolished, and new footings were staked out and drilled. The project is on track to be completed by the end of the calendar year.

As announced previously, Karen Mellinger will be retiring after 19 years of service to the Springfield-Greene County Park Board. Her exceptional customer service, positive attitude, and support of Parks staff and the Board should be commended. A retirement reception will be held to celebrate Karen's career at Cooper Tennis Complex, on Thursday, August 14, from 3:00 to 5:00 pm.

VI. CALENDAR

The next regularly scheduled Park Board meeting is Friday, September 12, 2025, at 8:30 am, at the Park Board Administrative Office.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Dianna Parker made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Don Chenevert, Jr. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 10:15 a.m.