

**MINUTES**  
**SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD**  
**Park Board Administrative Offices, 1923 N. Weller Ave., Springfield, Missouri**  
**And via Microsoft Teams for Park Board Members**  
**Friday, December 12, 2025**

**I. ROLL CALL**

Ms. Susie Turner, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

**Park Board Members Present:** Leslie Carrier, Don Chenevert, Jr., Curtis Jared, Mark McNay, Dr. Dale Moore, Dr. Dianna Parker, Royce Reding, Susie Turner

**Park Board Members Absent:** Cody Danastasio

**Park Board Staff Members Present:** Tim Carpenter, Matt Coats, Jenny Edwards, Jim Fisher, Leigha May, Tim McCrea, Jerry Mitchell, Miles Park, Ron Schneider, Jill Simmons, Jeff Smith, Jackson Thompson, Lana Woolsey

**Guests:** Dan Dawson, Railroad Historical Museum, Tim Robbins, Springfield Sister Cities Association, Louise Knauer, Springfield Sister Cities Association, Rachel Love-Jones Springfield Sister Cities Association, Rhonda Christopher, Springfield Sister Cities Association, Nancy Hoeman, Sister Cities Association.

**II. READING & APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. Mark McNay made a motion to approve the minutes from November 7, 2025, Park Board Meeting; seconded by Don Chenevert, Jr. The motion was approved unanimously.
- b. Mark McNay made a motion to approve the closed minutes from November 7, 2025, Park Board Closed Session; seconded by Don Chenevert, Jr. The Motion was approved unanimously.

**III. REPORT OF THE OFFICERS**

- a. None was provided.

**IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **Presentation by Sister Cities Association of Springfield and 2025 Japanese Fall Festival** Lisa Bakerink provided an overview of ongoing collaborations with the Park Board, highlighting shared efforts at the Botanical Center and several jointly supported events, including Sushi & Sake, the Isesaki Student Art Exhibit, Gigs in the Garden, and the Japanese Fall Festival.

Attendance for Gigs in the Garden reached approximately 1,400 over six Sundays, with \$1,500 in donations supporting accessibility projects. The 2025 Japanese Fall Festival saw record participation and a strong vendor turnout, more than 750 volunteer hours, and successful partnerships across Sister Cities and Parks, 2025 admission revenue was at its highest level to date, with \$64,581.33 shared with the Mizumoto Japanese Stroll Garden,

and nearly \$500,000 contributed over the last few years.

Lisa previewed 2026 initiatives: the 30th Japanese Fall Festival, the 40th anniversary of the Sister City agreement with Ilesaki, and additional milestone celebrations for Sister Cities and the Stroll Garden. Key priorities for 2026 include addressing growth challenges related to traffic, parking, and emergency services, as well as welcoming the return of Ilesaki gardeners for continued collaboration.

Lisa Bakerink, along with Springfield Sister Cities Association Board Members presented a \$64,581.33 check to the Park Board.

- b. **Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding with Sister Cities Association of Springfield** Director Schneider presented the proposed three-year Memorandum of Understanding between the Park Board and Sister Cities. The prior agreement expired on October 31, 2025. The Sister Cities board reviewed and verbally agreed to the proposal and Director Schneider requested approval from the Park Board. Curtis Jared made a motion to enter into an amended and restated agreement with Sister Cities, seconded by Royce Reding. The motion passed unanimously.

- c. **Friends of the Zoo Presentation** Jackson Thompson, Assistant Director/Zoo Director, and Allison Tuckness, Executive Director of the Friends of the Zoo, provided an overview of current operations, history, collaboration, and recent developments at Dickerson Park Zoo. The presentation highlighted the longstanding partnership between the Park Board and Friends of the Zoo, which operate together as a unified team.

Dickerson Park Zoo is the only AZA-accredited facility operated by a city-county park system, with most comparable zoos run either municipally or by nonprofit organizations. The Board expressed appreciation for the zoo's continued AZA accreditation, collaboration with Friends of the Zoo, and the overall quality of facilities and guest experience. Staff emphasized their commitment to maintaining an equitable, unified culture between city and Friends of the Zoo employees.

- d. **Approval of a Cost Sharing Agreement with Missouri Department of Conservation for Purchase of Floating Wetlands and a Digital Sign at the Zoo** Jackson Thompson, Assistant Director/Zoo Director presented a funding opportunity related to the Missouri Department of Conservation Habitat Improvement Program for three floating wetlands, and a digital sign that will support zoo mission messaging and allow for parks-related communications and public information about upcoming events.

Don Chenevert, Jr., made the motion to approve Parks' staff applying for and accepting the cost-share grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation, as part of its Aquatic Habitat Improvement Program, seconded by Dr. Dale Moore. The motion passed unanimously.

- e. **Approval of Bass Pro Outdoor Local Impact Grant to Fund Native Plantings** Matt Coats, Superintendent of Special Facilities, presented a funding opportunity from the Bass Pro and Cabela's Outdoor Fund for \$20,000 to support equipment needs for the Conservation Team. If approved, the funds would be used to purchase a UTV, small

tractor trailer, or utility sprayer, significantly improving the team's ability to complete time-sensitive fieldwork. The grant includes five natural resource enhancement projects across five parks: David C. Murray, Lost Hill, Lake Springfield, Doling, and Route 66 Roadside Park. Royce Reding made a motion that the Park Board accept Bass Pro Shop's and Cabela's \$20,000 grant to be used towards the purchase of conservation equipment for the creation and maintenance of approximately 33.4 acres of native prairie at various park sites, seconded by Curtis Jared. The motion passed unanimously.

- f. **Approval of Updates to the Food and Beverage Operating Procedures** Director Schneider introduced the agenda item, noting the success of last summer's "Pops in the Park" concert at Phelps Grove Park, hosted by the Springfield Art Museum. The Museum is requesting permission again this year to serve alcohol, limited to a small VIP area for premier sponsors. This prompted staff to review the Park Board's Food and Beverage Operating Procedures and updates are now needed. Jim Fisher, Assistant Director, presented the proposed updates. Staff recommended adding Phelps Grove Park as an approved site with future alcohol requests for this location going through the same review process required at other locations. The request does not authorize open park-wide alcohol use, and each event will continue to be evaluated individually. Dr. Dale Moore made a motion that the Park Board adopt the updated Food and Beverage Policy and Procedure presented, seconded by Leslie Carrier. The motion passed unanimously.

- g. **Superintendent of Parks Business Report and Comments** Jerry Mitchell, Superintendent of Business Operations, presented the financial report and highlighted overall positive performance across Park operating funds, enterprise funds, and capital project funds.

Through November 30, 2025, Park operating funds showed an improvement of \$703,878 compared to the prior year. This was attributed to strong revenues and continued cost controls, particularly in salaries and variable hourly staffing, despite a minimum wage increase implemented earlier in the year. Several notable expenditures were reported, including replacement of a boiler at the Park Operations Garage, demolition of tennis courts and related infrastructure at Glenwood Park, and the Parks' matching contribution for a trail project at Smith Park. Turf maintenance savings were noted as expected and planned. Zoo expenditures were reported as generally consistent with the prior year, with a payment to Friends of the Zoo appearing higher year-to-date due to earlier timing, not increased cost.

The Golf Enterprise Fund continued to perform strongly, with year-to-date revenues up \$486,428, reflecting both sustained participation and fee increases approved by the Board and effective March 1.

The Parks Countywide Projects Fund reflected higher expenditures due to ongoing capital projects funded by prior-year balances, including ARPA funding. These costs are fully covered by existing fund balance. Revenues from shared event proceeds, including funds received from Springfield Sister Cities, were deposited into this fund and applied to related project expenses as incurred.

- h. **Director of Parks Report and Comments** Director Schneider provided an

update from the Citizens Advisory Board that approved \$500,000, for development of site master plans at five parks. This was one of the projects approved by Park Board Resolution and includes Fassnight, Sequiota, Silver Springs, Nathanael Greene, and Grant Beach Parks. The recommendation by CAB now goes to Springfield City Council for consideration at their December 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. The other park projects could still be considered; however, the Advisory Board wanted more time to review and select projects for funding.

Staff has been working diligently on the 2026-27 Parks Fiscal Year Budget, with a more intense focus on operational cost recovery for programs and facilities, as well as more discussion on capital replacement needs. Budget workshops (Fees & Charges Committee) are scheduled for January 16 & 30, and a budget presentation is anticipated for the regular Park Board meeting on February 13, with final approval likely at the March 13 meeting.

Director Schneider recognized several staff for service milestones: Benjamin White at a 5-year service milestone in November; Steven King, Shawn Freeman, Garrett Holt, Daniel Daily, Megan Adams, and John Pleasant each celebrated 5 years of service as of December.

United States Tennis Association of Missouri held its annual awards ceremony at Cooper Tennis Complex in November. Cooper Tennis netted three awards from that event:

- Parrish Simmons, Cooper Tennis Contract Pro, was awarded Outstanding Contributor to High Performance.
- Outstanding Diversity Achievement - The Springfield-Greene County Park Board and Special Olympics of Missouri for the State Outdoor Games hosted at Cooper Tennis Complex. And,
- Member Organization of the Year – Cooper Tennis Complex.

The 7th Annual Gardens Aglow Event is ongoing at the Mizumoto Stroll Garden at Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park. Featuring more than 300,000 lights at this traditional, seasonal event.

Director Schneider closed his report recognizing the upcoming retirement event for Assistant Director Miles Park next week at the Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park.

## VI. **CALENDAR**

Park Board Meeting: Friday, January 9, 2026, at 8:30 a.m., at the Park Board Administrative Office, 1923 N. Weller Ave., Springfield, Missouri

## VII. **ADJOURNMENT**

Royce Reding made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Curtis Jared. The motion passed unanimously. Chair Susie Turner announced the open meeting concluded at 9:56 a.m. and the Board would take a brief recess to go into closed session based upon the Missouri Revised Statute Section 610.021 (3).