

Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
23 April 2015

Attendance Report

Commissioners Present: Phil Bartlett, Jan Stamps, Lloyd Liles, Jim Smith, Alana Williams

Commissioners Absent: Mary Howard, Bud Tibshrany

Staff Present: Satch Krantz, Tommy Stringfellow, Steve Hatchell

Call to Order

Chairman Bartlett called the meeting to order.

Chief Financial Officer's Report

CFO Hatchell reported that we completed the month of March 2015 with a year-to-date surplus of \$371,611. This amount reflects a positive variance of \$457,147 compared to the current fiscal year's budget. Highlights of the report are:

Attendance

- Total attendance for the year continues to remain at just under budget by \$9,800 due exclusively to the inclement weather.
- Likewise, paid attendance continues to be below budget through March by 22,774 guests.
- Membership attendance continues to help offset the deficit of paid attendance and free admissions by producing nearly 31,000 more guests than budgeted through March.

Balance Sheet

- Cash is higher through March, as compared to last year. This is primarily due to the timing of reimbursement of bond funds (See "Due from Bond Fund" line item under Assets), as well as the timing of reimbursements back to Society (See "Due to Society" line item under Liabilities).

Revenue vs Expense

Revenue

- Total Revenue is \$190,000 over budget through March and \$434,000 over as compared to the same month last year. This is primarily due to admissions revenue and other revenue surpassing last year's amounts.
- Admissions revenue for the year continues to be below budget by \$53,000, but above the same period last year by \$179,000. For the month of March, admissions revenue was \$430,000, which is \$40,000 above budget for the month.
- Attractions/Rides revenue is \$25,000 over budget through March. This indicates that even though attendance is slightly below budget, our guests are utilizing the attractions and rides.

- Other Revenues continue to be \$176,000 over budget and \$162,000 over the same time period last year. As mentioned before, this is mainly due to the property tax reduction and refund for some of the Rivermont properties, as well as continued rental income from the remaining two rental properties (which were budgeted at zero dollars). Donations and Sponsorships continue to be over budget through February by \$28,000 and \$30,000 respectively.
- Governmental support from Richland County is under budget by \$17,000. This is due to the timing of the funds allocation from the county in relation to when we budgeted the allocations.

Expenses

- Total Expenses are \$267,000 under budget. All departments continue to be under budget at this point in the fiscal year, with the exception of Guest Services, Facilities Management, and Utilities. As mentioned last month, Guest Services and Facilities worked very hard preparing for the AZA Mid-Year meeting and the upcoming AZA Accreditation inspections. Guest Services also incurred some up-front costs associated with the Zoo now managing both grounds and housekeeping (formerly contracted with Aramark). Utilities are up, mostly due to the extended cold weather.

Destination Riverbanks Update

Krantz presented the following report on the Destination Riverbanks projects:

Entry/Grizzly/Otter (EGO) -- The parking lot restroom, guest services building, gift shop, grizzly bear and otter exhibits, and life support building are rapidly moving towards final completion. Almost all of the Trespa panels have been installed on the exterior of the restroom, guest services, and gift shop buildings, and the results are amazing. As noted last month, most of the work being done on these three buildings is now occurring on the interior. The HVAC units have been activated in guest services and the gift shop; both buildings have their prime coats of paint; and the light fixtures have been installed in guest services. In general terms, the restroom will be completed by the end of this week, the guest services building is perhaps 90% complete, and the gift shop is also 90% complete. The grizzly and otter exhibits' subcontractor, OTL, has basically completed fabricating all of the artificial rock at the two exhibits, with only minor painting and staining remaining to be done. OTL is actually scheduled to vacate the site on April 20. As a result, we began discussions on Tuesday of this week with Rodgers Builders about moving the otters into their exhibit later this month. On April 7 Rodgers began the process of installing all of the new concrete sidewalks and plaza associated with EGO. On Monday April 13 we removed the temporary boardwalk along the birdhouse, and on Monday of this week we moved our guests onto the new sidewalk in front of grizzly/otter.

Sea Lion -- Rodgers continues to make tremendous progress on the sea lion exhibit. All of the foundation work on both the sea lion holding building and the public viewing building is now complete, and they have begun to pour exterior

walls. We are surprised and pleased we have only encountered a small number of problems so far with this massive project.

Children's Garden -- Construction at all levels of this project continues to progress. The water play feature and dino dig are both about 75% complete. The treehouses are coming up out of the ground, and the education center has a roof. Both contractors (Tyler and Cost of Wisconsin) remain confident they can finish in early fall of 2015. In spite of the issues that have plagued this project, it is still on-budget and mostly on time.

Rivermont Parking Lot -- Just as CR Jackson was starting to recover from the March rains we entered the spring break season. Since we desperately needed this area for parking, CR Jackson agreed to allow us to use approximately 60% of the lot during the two weeks of spring break. This was accomplished by applying a layer of gravel over the unpaved ground. Guests utilized the area as a temporary parking lot (approximately 300 spaces) during the two weeks of spring break. CR Jackson has now closed off the entire area and is again mobilizing in an attempt to complete the project by the end of April/early May. Krantz thanked CR Jackson for understanding the importance of having this space available for parking and for accommodating the needs of our guests.

CSX Pedestrian Bridge -- Riverbanks received permission to construct the pedestrian bridge from CSX on March 17. Recently, a meeting was held with Rogers and JCS about the logistics involved with building the south tower of the bridge. The south tower will literally be located within the boundaries of the new Zoo entrance plaza. This will be logistically complicated and will create a number of challenges for our staff and guests. The biggest challenge will be maintaining a roadway connecting the east and west ends of the main Zoo parking lot. This roadway will be sandwiched between the bridge tower and the railroad. Staff are still actively negotiating with Rodgers Builders and JCS about the final cost of the bridge so that we can satisfy the purchasing policy/strategy of Richland County Council and its Transportation Penny staff. The Transportation Penny staff has offered several differing strategies for securing Council approval.

Chief Operating Officer's Report

COO Stringfellow presented the following report:

- **Spring Break 2015** -- In spite of two inclement weather days and the lack of parking, Spring Break was very successful. Over 116,400 people visited the Zoo and Garden for the two-week period. The highest attended day produced 11,500 guests. Stringfellow noted that there was one day that the City of Columbia Police Department closed Greystone Blvd. to traffic, thus turning away potential guests. The Commission and staff entered into a long discussion about parking and access, both at the Zoo and Garden entrances. It was noted that when the new Rivermont lot is complete we will be able to better assess the situation.
- **Explorer Membership Differential** -- The Explorer membership continues to perform as anticipated. In March 2015 the Explorer membership produced an additional \$77,900 in revenue. Since the inception of the Explorer option in September 2010, membership revenues are up nearly \$350,000.

- **Wine Tasting** – The 12th annual Wine Tasting in the Garden will be held tomorrow night. The event actually sold out three weeks ago, an all-time record.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

President and CEO presented the following:

- **Lexington County Term Limits** – Krantz noted that he recently received a call from the Lexington County Clerk of Council verifying the fact that Riverbanks Park Commissioners serve six-year terms. According to the Clerk, the length of Riverbanks Park Commission terms came up in a general discussion about the lack of conformity in the lengths of terms of the County's various boards and commissions. At six years, Riverbanks Commissioners serve the longest terms. Krantz explained to the Clerk that the Zoo's enabling legislation (1969) set the length of Commissions at six years and that this could only be changed by the General Assembly. This answer was deemed acceptable by the Clerk. During the discussion Krantz asked about the County's term limit policy. The Clerk confirmed that appointees to Lexington County's board and commission are restricted to three (3) terms. As such, Lexington County appointees to the Riverbanks Park Commission could serve 18 years.
 - **Saluda Shoals Park Improvements** – The staff has learned that the new expansion of Saluda Shoals Park will include a zip line and ropes course. These amenities are scheduled to open in the summer of 2015 and could have an impact on the Zoo's attractions, especially the zip line.
 - **Riverbanks Volunteers** -- In honor of National Volunteer Appreciation Week, Krantz reported that in 2014 Riverbanks' volunteers worked more than 35,000 hours (a Riverbanks record). The Zoo and Garden currently have 130 active weekly volunteers as well as hundreds of Special Event Volunteers (Boo at the Zoo, Wine Tasting, etc.).
 - **Gorilla Transfers** – Riverbanks' Mammal Department has transferred seven gorillas since February 17. To achieve this, Riverbanks' staff drove a total of 2,500 miles and flew an additional 1,000 miles. A total of 48 hours was spent by staff members driving non-stop. Riverbanks now has five gorillas, a new family group consisting of one male and three females and a single bachelor male.
 - **AZA Mid-Year Meeting** – The Commission was provided with a brief update on the 2015 AZA Mid-Year Meeting. The meeting concluded with 835 official registrants, an all-time record and surpassed last year's meeting by approximately 200 people. In responding to an AZA survey, attendees rated the overall Columbia Mid-Year experience a 4.5 out of a 5, with 5 being outstanding. The highest scores were given to the Icebreaker and Zoo Day experiences. Lowest scores were given to a number of unfortunate hotel-related issues.
- AZA Accreditation** – Krantz reminded the Commission that Riverbanks' AZA accreditation expires at the end of September 2015. The Zoo staff, under the leadership of Ed Diebold, began the process of assembling and submitting its accreditation application last summer. The application process will involve a three-day, on-site inspection by a team of zoo professionals. The inspection is scheduled for June 22 – 24. The team is composed of chair, Dwight Lawson, PhD, Director, Oklahoma City Zoo. Dwight will be accompanied by Amy

Roberts, Curator of Mammals, Brookfield Zoo, Mike Quick, Curator of Mammals, Sedgwick County Zoo, and Rob Coke, DVM, San Antonio Zoo. The inspection will also require a face-to-face interview with members of the Commission.

Tour – The Commission was taken on an extended tour of the new project sites.

The Meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 21 day of May 2015.

, Secretary