

Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
15 January 2015

Attendance Report

Commissioners Present: Jan Stamps, Lloyd Liles, Mary Howard, Jim Smith, Bud Tibshrary, Alana Williams
Commissioners Absent: Phil Bartlett (Sick)
Staff Present: Satch Krantz, Tommy Stringfellow, Steve Hatchell
Guests Present: Michael Slapnick representing Scott and Company

Call to Order

Vice Chairman Howard called the meeting to order and expressed her wishes for Chairman Bartlett's speedy recovery.

Approval of the Minutes

The November 2014 meeting minutes were approved as distributed. *For the record, there was no December 2014 meeting.*

2013 – 2014 Audit

Michael Slapnick with Scott and Company, LLC presented the Commission's audited financial statements for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2014. Mr. Slapnick reviewed the major components of the audit and stated that the District's financials were in good order and that in the opinion of Scott and Company the financial statements referred to in the audit, present fairly the financial position of the District. There was one material weakness identified in the audit. The District recorded the bond premium associated with the 2013 GO Bond Issuance improperly as revenue in the statement of activities. This transaction should have been posted as a debt and amortized over the life of the bond. The District will submit a management response to the corrective action. Tibshrary moved, Stamps seconded, m/c unanimous, to accept the audit as presented.

Chief Financial Officers Report

Hatchell reported that the December statement reflects a year-to-date deficit of \$164,096. However, this amount reflects a positive variance of \$272,000 compared to the current fiscal year's budget. Highlights of the statement include:

Attendance

- Total attendance for the year is under budget by 16,000 through December.
- However, due to continued inclement weather, paid attendance is down by 17,000. This deficit is offset by membership attendance being up by 15,000 and free attendance down by 14,000.

Balance Sheet

- Capital funding is \$805,000. This amount was increased due to an unanticipated increase in the cost of the ARC renovation project.

Revenue vs Expense

Revenue

- Total Revenue is \$175,000 over budget and \$340,000 over prior year's total revenue for the same period. This is primarily due to \$200,000 of capital support from Society that was not budgeted.
- Admissions revenue for the year is below budget \$74,000, due to continued inclement weather conditions during normal operating hours in the months of November and December.
- Classes and Attractions still continue to outperform budget through December.
- Events Revenue (net of expenses) is under budget by \$52,000. Weather played a significant role in attendance at Lights.
- We did receive a refund on the 2013 property tax payment that was made for the 500 Rivermont properties. Richland County has also adjusted our 2014 taxes on this property. This netted us a refund check of approximately \$35,000 from Richland County.

Expenses

- Total Expenses are \$297,000 under current year's budget. All departments are under budget, with the exception of Guest Services, Facilities Management, and Utilities.

Destination Riverbanks

Krantz noted that all of the Destination Riverbanks projects have been negatively impacted by the recent rains. He then gave the following report on the various projects:

- Entry/Grizzly/Otter – The three EGO projects are progressing well, in spite of the inclement weather. All three projects are “out of the ground” and approaching the “dry in” phase. Of particular note, OTL, the exhibits’ fabricator, is now on-site and has begun the artificial rockwork in grizzly bear and otter. In addition, all of the glass panels for grizzly bear and otter have been installed. Krantz noted that it is now possible to appreciate the scale of the new entrance projects.
- Sea Lion – Because the sea lion exhibit is still in the site phase of construction, it has been severely impacted by the recent rains. He noted that over the past three weeks Rodgers has been able to work less than three days on the sea lion site.
- Children’s Garden – Work is progressing relatively well on this somewhat complex project. Work has been hindered by inclement weather. The education building is coming out of the ground, most of the site work related to the water play feature is complete and work has just begun on the treehouses.

- Rivermont Parking – CR Jackson has begun work on the Rivermont parking lot. This project includes the demolition of the Spectra building and the construction of a 500-car parking lot. This particular project is 100% dependent on favorable weather.
- CSX Bridge – Rodgers Builders is in the process of developing a price for the pedestrian bridge, a process that is expected to take another three weeks. The Richland County Transportation Penny staff has verbally agreed to allow Rodgers to construct the bridge as a change order to their existing contracts, if the total price is less than 10% of the total contracted amount. We are also still awaiting final approval from CSX. Based upon the current status of this project it is clear that the new entrance will be completed before the bridge, perhaps several months. This will create certain logistical issues for the staff and guests.

Destination Riverbanks Capital Campaign

- **SCE&G** -- SCANA/SCE&G has pledged \$100,000 to the Destination Riverbanks capital campaign. These funds were pledged from SCANA's 2014 community service budget, and we hope that additional funds may be available in ensuing years.
- **Arnold Contribution** – Riverbanks has received \$150,000 of the \$250,000 pledge by Norman and Gerry Sue Arnold for the Children's Garden education building. The balance of the funds will be received in the first quarter of 2015.
- **Campaign Planning** – On January 7th a meeting was held at the Zoo with members of the Riverbanks Society board of directors to solicit their input on the upcoming campaign. A number of good ideas and suggestions were discussed and the staff is now working on refining their plan.
- **Annual Appeal** – On a related note, Krantz reported that the Society's 2014 annual appeal produced record results. Members have so far contributed over \$66,500, breaking last year's record of \$60,000.

Chief Operating Officer's Report

- **Lights Before Christmas** – Stringfellow reported that attendance for Lights 2014 was the second lowest in the last 10 years. Lights was plagued this year with inclement weather (rain and cold) including the most critical nights between the beginning of the school holiday and Christmas Eve. In spite of these conditions, revenue was only \$25,000 down to budget. Additionally, in-park spending was up slightly over last year mainly due to having Tuskers open.
- **Ropes Course** – The recent tragic incident in Orlando, Florida involving the death of a participant on a Ropes Course, Inc. installation was discussed in detail.
- **Guest Services Reorganization** – Stringfellow explained that he has divided the Guest Services division into two separate departments due to growth over the last few years (attendance and fee-added attractions) as well as the expected growth related to the Destination Riverbanks projects. In addition, we will soon terminate the custodial and grounds contract with Aramark and bring those functions in-house. The two new departments will be Guest Services and Public Safety. Public Safety will be responsible for guest safety, parking, first aid and

tram operations. Guest Services will manage admissions, attractions and grounds/housekeeping.

President & CEO Report

- **ARC Renovation** – The renovation of the ARC is now complete. The building’s public spaces have new paint and floor covering as well as all new graphics. In addition, all of the original plastic laminate was replaced with new, “solid surface” material. The bulk of the work was performed by Mashburn Construction, but the graphics were produced in-house by Zoo staff. This is the first major renovation of the ARC since it opened in 1989.
- **Ape Island Replacement** – The replacement of the last remaining original guest services structure, the Ape Island Snack Bar, is now well underway. The new stand will be branded as “Solo’s Market,” after one of the Zoo’s longest living siamangs. The new stand is expected to be completed in mid-March and will serve a menu similar to the old Ape Island Snack Bar – chicken tenders, tater tots and snacks. The new building will feature an Asian market theme.
- **Aviary Replacement** – Construction has also begun on the first “replacement” aviary, immediately adjacent to the new Solo’s Market snack bar. This exhibit is being used by the staff as a prototype for future aviaries.
- **City Sewer Replacement Plans** – The City of Columbia has decided to bypass the bulk of the Zoo’s property in their plan to replace the sewer main serving most of the Greystone Boulevard corridor. This line is currently shared with the Zoo. Instead, the City plans to bore under the river and tie into the line in West Columbia. This is good news in that the alternate plan was to dig alongside the entire length of the CSX tracks, thus creating major interruptions in the Zoo’s parking lot. On a related note, Krantz reported that the City has just completed a major sewer replacement project along Rivermont Drive. What started out as a relatively minor issue turned into a huge project that basically led to the demolition of large portions of Rivermont Drive as well as the parking lots of the remaining businesses.
- **AZA Mid-Year Meeting Update** – Plans are now well underway for the 2015 AZA Mid-Year Meeting (March 21 – 27). Highlights of the meeting include the Icebreaker on Monday, March 23rd and Zoo Day on March 24th. The Icebreaker will be held at the State Museum due to the anticipated size of the meeting, 800 to 1,000. Krantz encouraged members of the Commission to attend as much of the meeting as possible.
- **Gorilla Transfers** – A number of gorillas will be moved in and out of Riverbanks Zoo. Over the course of a few weeks: Riverbanks’ group of three male gorillas will be transferred to the Houston Zoo; a new male gorilla will arrive from the Birmingham Zoo; two females will arrive from Zoo Atlanta; and a single male will arrive from the North Carolina Zoo. As a result of these moves, Riverbanks will finally have a breeding group of one male and three female gorillas. The single male, Patrick, will remain at Riverbanks. These moves were made as part of the AZA Great Ape TAG breeding and transfer plan.
- **February Meeting** – Krantz noted that it has been some time since the Commission was updated on the Zoo’s animal collection. With that in mind, he

and the Zoo's Senior Animal Staff would like to dedicate the February meeting to an overall review of collection planning and management.

Site Tour

- The Commission was taken on a tour of the various renovation and construction projects.

Approved and adopted on the 19 day of February, March
2015. [Signature], Secretary