

Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
20 July 2023

Attendance Report

Commissioners Present: Jan Stamps, Jeff Reeves, Deneen Shockley, Bob Davidson, Alana Williams

Commissioners Absent: Cliff Bourke, Mike Velasco

Staff Present: Tommy Stringfellow, Lochlan Wooten, Ashley Harris, Christie Vondrak, Katie Eaton

Call to Order

Chairwoman Stamps called the meeting to order.

Reading of the Minutes

The June 17, 2023 Commission Meeting minutes were approved, with the correction of noting Commissioner Bourke as present for the Executive Session at the June 15, 2023 meeting.

Davidson motioned to approve the minutes, Shockley seconded, m/c unanimous.

Chairman's Remarks

- Chairwoman Stamps commended the staff for their hard work with the impressive strategic planning process, and looks forward to seeing the report and next steps.

VP of Finance Report:

VP of Finance Ashley Harris provided the following report:

- Harris reviewed the June financial statements:
 - We closed FY23 falling short of projected attendance, however landed strong in earned revenue, generating \$2.8M over anticipated earned revenue. Primary drivers were the increased admission ticket price that went into effect on 3/1/23, concession and retail commissions, events, rides & attractions and interest income.
 - As a reminder we have settled the intercompany balance between District & Society periodically this fiscal year, therefore it would appear we have less cash in District in the current fiscal year, only because the intercompany due to Society liability account was settled in FY23.
 - The average earning interest rate in LGIP was 5.35% in LGIP for the month of June
 - Admission revenues came in \$486K over budgeted collections in FY23. Concession and retail commissions generated \$732K over anticipated revenues. Rides and attractions finished \$395K over budgeted revenue and events finished \$425K over budgeted revenue. These revenue lines were brought up in the approved FY24 Commission budget.
 - Reeves motion to approve the financials, Davidson seconded, m/c unanimous.

President & CEO Report:

President & CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- Bond Update- this evening Stringfellow and Best will be meeting with the two County Council Chairs to discuss the status of the bond on both sides. Currently, he and Best are under the impression that Lexington County Council is ready to proceed with the request, and that Richland County is still considering.
- Stringfellow has brought on Damon Jeter for consulting services.
- Longtime donor Jane Friedman has left a generous bequest to Riverbanks. Her donation will be used to fund a much-needed education center.

Chief Administrative Officer Report:

Chief Administrative Officer Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- Monday afternoon there was an active shooter on Greystone Blvd. Riverbanks was under no threat, but the interstate did close and there was a large police presence nearby. Riverbanks staff handled the event very well and thoroughly.
- Launched out second inclusion and belonging survey. Rachael will be analyzing the results, but initially is seeing positive trends. The Employee Resource Groups have been hard at work hosting, lunch and learn, food trucks, and several other staff engagement events. We are very proud of the work those groups are doing.
- National Zookeeper Week is this week. Greg Peccie has planned so many great activities for keepers this week to ensure they feel appreciated.
- Brew at the Zoo is August 4
- Hosted an in person Town Hall celebration on June 29. This year we asked each department to pick a designated representative to share something they were proud of and something they were looking forward to. We had 26 speakers and were blown away by the response. The teams were represented so well and it was inspiring and encouraging to hear all of their reports.


Chief Operating Officer Report:

Chief Operating Officer Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- Excited to share the news of the new baby harbor seal. We will be launching a naming opportunity online to choose the baby seal's name. There will also be a live cam available online as well.
- Its flamingo chick season. There are a few eggs on exhibit, and the first hatched last week. At night they will go to the bird center, and in the morning they are walked back to their exhibit. Bird team also hatched four penguin chicks as well. Will discuss naming opportunities for both the flamingo and penguin chicks.
- Wooten shared a rendering for the Jane Friedman Conservation Learning Center. There would be a guest facing building and a classroom space with outdoor learning and play spaces as well. The team is very much looking forward to the opportunities this new addition will provide.
- Komodo Dragon bids are due in the next 10 days. Will break ground after Brew at the Zoo.
- Wooten shared an update on the SNAP benefit at Riverbanks. Over 16,000 people have utilized this benefit since its launch in March.
- Membership revenue is pacing along nicely right now.
- Brew at the Zoo will be on August 4
- First gopher frog release was last week in a partnership with SCDNR

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 17 day of August 2023.

 _____, Secretary