

Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
21 May 2015

Attendance Report

Commissioners Present: Phil Bartlett, Jan Stamps, Lloyd Liles, Jim Smith, Alana Williams, Bud Tibshrary, Mary Howard

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Satch Krantz, Tommy Stringfellow, Steve Hatchell, Eric Helms

Employee of the Quarter

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Commission had lunch with Riverbanks' first-ever Employees of the Quarter, maintenance technicians Ronnie Higingbottom, Tex McCraw and John Guertin. These three employees were nominated for helping to prepare Riverbanks' three male gorillas (Chaka, Mike, and Ajari) for transfer to the Houston Zoo. Without the help of these gentlemen, the transfer would not have gone as smoothly as it did. Tex and John were able to create two crates that fit into the gorilla barn's lower transfer area. This allowed keepers to crate-train gorillas daily, which led to the successful transfer. They also helped load and unload all the gorillas and even accompanied the animal staff to other zoos to help with the gorilla transfers.

Call to Order

Chairman Bartlett called the meeting to order.

Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Bartlett thanked the Commissioners for their attendance and noted that Commissioner Tibshrary and his wife will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary this coming weekend.

Special Presentation – Facilities Management

Riverbanks' Director of Facilities & Risk Management, Eric Helms, presented an overview of the Zoo and Garden's facilities/maintenance function. Eric reported that the Riverbanks' "campus" is now comprised of 183 acres, including the 13 acres along Rivermont Drive. The Facilities Management Department maintains 427 pieces of "major" equipment including: pumps, heat pumps, chillers, boilers, ozone generators, a carousel, ropes course, and a raw water pump station, that pumps 600 gpm of water, 24 hours per day, for animal exhibit cleaning and Zoo and Garden irrigation.

The Maintenance Department is managed by a maintenance manager, Joe Christofoli, who has 38 years of service with Riverbanks along with 9 full-time and 2 part-time technicians. In the last 12 months the department completed over 3,000 work orders with a value of \$1,400,000.

Helms concluded his report by stating that this year his department added a Life Support Specialist, Bill Fike, who will be responsible for managing the aquatic habitats for otters, grizzly bears and sea lions as well as the existing ARC and penguin systems, and the new children's garden water feature. Bill is also assuming responsibility for Riverbanks' dive program.

Chief Finance Officer's Report

CFO Hatchell provided the following report: We completed the month of April 2015 with a year-to-date *surplus* of \$756,357. This amount reflects a *positive* variance of \$451,571 compared to the current fiscal year's budget. Highlights of the report include:

Attendance

- Total attendance for the fiscal year continues to remain slightly under budget by 1,612 guests. However, the month of April was particularly strong with approximately 8,000 more guests than budgeted for the month.
- Paid attendance for the fiscal year continues to be below budget through April, by just under 21,000 guests. However, we were about 2,000 over budget in the month of April.
- Membership, as a percentage of total attendance, continues to outperform the fiscal year. As mentioned before, this is helping to offset the deficit of paid attendance and free admissions by producing nearly 38,000 guests more than budgeted through April.

Balance Sheet

- Compared to last fiscal year, cash is lower through April. This is primarily due to the timing of reimbursement of bond funds (See "Due from Bond Fund" line item under Assets).

Revenue vs Expense

Revenue

- Total Revenue is \$201,000 over budget through April and \$495,000 over compared to the same month last year. This is primarily due to admissions revenue and other revenue surpassing last fiscal year's amounts.
- Admissions revenue for the year continues to be slightly below budget by \$29,000, but above the same period last year by \$264,000. For the month of April, admissions revenue was \$856,000, which is \$24,000 above budget for the month and \$85,000 over April 2014.
- Attractions/Rides revenue is \$65,000 over budget for the current fiscal year due to a very strong month of April, where all attractions recorded surpluses for the month.
- Other Revenues continue to be \$185,000 over budget and \$160,000 over the same time period last year. As mentioned previously, this is mostly due to the property tax reduction and refund for some 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 April by \$28,000 and \$14,000 respectively.

- Governmental support from Richland County is under budget by \$51,000. This is due to the timing of the funds allocation from the county in relation to when we budget the allocations.

Expenses

- Total Expenses are \$250,000 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.
- Marketing and Public Relations is under budget through April by \$224,000 due to the timing of advertising placement in relation to when we budgeted for the expense.

Destination Riverbanks Update

Krantz presented the following report on the Destination Riverbanks projects:

Entry/Grizzly/Otter (EGO) – As previously reported, the new restroom, guest services building, gift shop, grizzly bear and otter exhibits are basically finished. As of the date of this meeting, the Riverbanks staff, architects and engineers are in the process of “punching out” the various structures and facilities. The grizzly bear and otter exhibits are to the point that the otters will move into their backup facilities today and be released into the exhibit next Tuesday. Our two grizzlies will arrive in Columbia from Tulsa on May 30 and could be released into their exhibit within 48 hours of that. The only significant items remaining are the completion of the entry gate and signage in the plaza outside the gate.

Sea Lion -- Rodgers continues to make tremendous progress on the sea lion exhibit. All of the foundation work and exterior walls on both the sea lion holding building and the public viewing building is now complete, and they have begun to pour the slab-on-grade floors. This project is now at a point where it is possible to interpret the actual exhibit from the public’s perspective.

Children’s Garden -- Construction at all levels of this project continues to progress. All of the treehouse vertical poles are installed and work has begun on the decks. Both contractors (Tyler and Cost of Wisconsin) remain confident they can finish in early fall of 2015. The Riverbanks staff remains less confident. In spite of the issues that have plagued this project, it is still on-budget and mostly on time.

Rivermont Parking Lot -- CR Jackson “completed” the new Rivermont parking lot at 3:00pm on Friday, May 15 and we began parking cars in it at 9:00am the following morning. There is still some minor clean-up work to be done as well as the installation of the light poles and irrigation system, however; these items do not prevent use of the lot itself. Krantz reported that the Zoo staff, architects, and engineers, along with input from CR Jackson, agreed not to have CR Jackson lay the final one-and-a-half-inch layer of asphalt on the new lot until after the CSX bridge is complete. This decision was based on damage to the lot that is certain to occur during construction of the pedestrian bridge. We will only be responsible to CR Jackson for minor mobilization costs and any significant increase in the cost of oil/asphalt.

CSX Pedestrian Bridge – On Tuesday, May 19 Riverbanks received permission from Richland County Council to pursue construction of the CSX pedestrian

bridge through a Change Order to our existing Rodgers Builders contract. Specifically, County Council authorized the County's transportation and procurement offices to coordinate with the Zoo staff in developing an appropriate and acceptable contract. Krantz noted that it is his goal to have a drafted contract by the time County Council meets in two weeks.

Destination Riverbanks Capital Campaign

Krantz reported that he has been very pleased with the reaction of perspective donors to the Destination Riverbanks capital campaign. To date, we have contributions and signed pledges totaling just over \$600,000. Even more encouraging is the fact that there are several potential major corporate donors who have met with the staff and Society Board members who have indicated their confidence in a major gift but are awaiting corporate approval. One of these donors has asked for a proposal that includes gifts of \$250,000, \$500,000 and \$1 million.

Chief Operating Officer's Report

COO Stringfellow reported that his staff has begun to plan for the opening of the various EGO facilities and exhibits. He noted that the Zoo's ad agency, CNG, recently visited the site and is now making plans for filming the new exhibits. He noted that according to Rodgers Builders they are still on-schedule for a late July opening.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

- **Central Midlands Council of Governments** -- Krantz reported that he has been asked to make a presentation before the Central Midlands Council of Governments at noon on May 28 regarding Destination Riverbanks.
- **High-Path Avian Flu** -- Krantz reported that a High-Path Avian Influenza (also known as a "foreign animal disease") is slowly making its way across the United States. The HPAI virus does not affect people, just poultry-type birds: chicken, turkey, guinea, quail, pheasant, etc. The disease is carried by wild ducks and geese and is transmitted to domestic poultry farms. Interestingly, wild birds are not getting sick or dying from the disease but domestic turkeys, chickens, guineas, and game birds are. It is feared that the U.S. could be dealing with this disease threat for years. If the disease makes its way to South Carolina, the following will most likely occur:

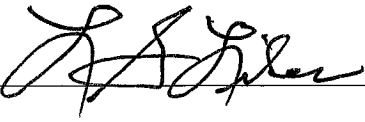
1. Infected facilities will be quarantined and depopulated.
2. A 10 km (6.2 mile) quarantine zone will be placed around the infected facility and all avian movement into and out of this zone will be halted.

Riverbanks has a well-written Avian Influenza Response Plan and animal care plan, and our veterinary staff is monitoring appropriate sources of information on the spread of, and response to, the disease. While it is unlikely that a worst-case scenario will develop (i.e., that this highly pathogenic strain of AI is diagnosed near or inside of the Zoo), it is important for all of us to clearly understand the full range of actions that may be triggered by such an incident.

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

The Meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the ____ day of June 2015.

 _____, Secretary