

**Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
21 April 2016**

Attendance Report

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

Commissioners Absent: Lloyd Liles (attending funeral)

Staff Present: Satch Krantz, Tommy Stringfellow, Breta Rheney

Call to Order

Chairman Bartlett called the meeting to order. Chairman Bartlett noted that he will be traveling out of the country for most of the next two months and, as such, will miss the remaining two months of his chairmanship. He thanked the Commission for their support over the past two years and looks forward to Mary Howard's leadership.

Reading of the Minutes

The February 2016 minutes were approved as distributed.

For the record there was no March 2016 meeting of the Commission.

Report of the Nominating Committee

The Commission's Nominating Committee (Stamps, Smith, and Williams) met prior to the Commission meeting. As a result of that meeting, Stamps moved, Smith seconded, m/c unanimous, to approve the following slate of officers for 2016 – 2018:

Chair	Mary Howard
Vice Chair	Bud Tibshrary
Treasurer	Lloyd Liles
Secretary	Jan Stamps

Special Presentation -- SSA

SSA General Manager Laura Caster presented a PowerPoint highlighting SSA's 2015 performance. Included in the highlights were:

- Per capita sales in Tuskers have increased by 19 cents since the renovation.
- SSA experienced per-capita sales in Concessions of \$3.05 (\$3,428,785). In 2012, Aramark's last year of operation, they produced per-cap sales of \$2.08.
- Catering sales for the year totaled \$810,889 compared to Aramark's 2012 sales of \$478,267.
- Retail sales for the year were \$1,882,357 (\$1.68 per cap).
- Total sales for the year were \$6,582,439 producing commissions of \$1,537,149.
- Riverbanks' SSA team secured a \$30,000 grant from Palmetto Pride to purchase recycling stations throughout the Zoo.

- Tuskers was named the “greenest” restaurant in South Carolina.

The Commission was highly complementary of SSA, Laura, and her team for their successful financial year and in advancing the quality of goods and services for all of our guests.

Chief Finance Officer’s Report

The Commission welcomed back CFO Breta Rheney. She reported that as of March 31, 2016, the Commission is showing an excess of revenue over expenses of \$690,798. Other highlights of the month include:

Attendance

- 137,864 people visited the Zoo and Garden during the month of March. This amount exceeds the budget for the month by almost 12,000 guests.
- Through March, actual attendance exceeded budget by 57,674 guests.

Balance Sheet

Assets

- Cash flow is good. All bond proceeds were drawn down from Richland County prior to Steve Hatchell’s departure. We are now focusing on the process of working with the Richland County Penny for Progress staff to begin draws for the Pedestrian Bridge.

Liabilities

- Accounts Payable is slightly up as compared to last fiscal year. This is due to the timing of when checks were cut as compared to the end of the month.
- The amount Due to Society will be settled prior to year-end.

Revenue vs Expense

Revenue

- Total Revenue is \$926,376 ahead of budget, with approximately half of this from general admission.

Expenses

- Total Expenses are almost in-line with budget. Some departments have incurred fewer expenses, while others have incurred more.

Destination Riverbanks Update

Krantz presented the following report on the Destination Riverbanks projects:

- **Sea Lion** – The sea lion exhibit is now complete, with the official turn-over date occurring on March 30th. Krantz noted that although the exhibit is now finished, the life support system is still in the official “shakedown” period. This will continue until after the sea lions arrive and the system undergoes “real time” conditions. The first three sea lions are scheduled to arrive in Charlotte from San Diego via FedEx at 7:00 PM tomorrow. A San Diego Zoo veterinarian and three keepers will accompany the animals. The remaining two animals will arrive over the next two to three weeks. Krantz reminded the Commission that a VIP/donor

party is scheduled for the evening of May 10th, with the official opening scheduled for June 9th.

- **Waterfall Junction** – Waterfall Junction opened to the public on Thursday, April 7th. As anticipated, daily attendance equaled approximately 10% of the Zoo and Garden's total attendance. Other than the expected wear and tear things are going well; however; there are still issues with the splash pad and stream.
- **CSX Pedestrian Bridge** – As previously noted Rodgers Builders began construction of the CSX pedestrian bridge on Monday, February 8th. Within days, Rodgers' personnel encountered a large area of unsuitable soils under the north tower footings. Approximately two weeks were spent trying to determine the best and most cost efficient way to address the problem. Ultimately, it was decided to drive micro-piles into the soil. The cost of the micro-piles resulted in \$80,000 in additional expenses. This was well below the cost estimate associated with the other option, digging out the unsuitable soil and replacing it. The work has been completed and construction of the north tower has resumed. It is anticipated that the bridge will be erected sometime in early to mid-May. Rodgers still anticipates an August/September 2016 completion date.

Chief Operating Officer's Report

COO Stringfellow provided the following report:

- For the 10 days of the 2016 spring break (Good Friday, March 25th through Sunday, April 3rd) 76,287 people visited Riverbanks Zoo and Garden. The highest attended day was Wednesday, March 30th, with 11,844 guests. The lowest attended day was Sunday, March 27th, with 1,409 guests (all day rain). Attendance on Thursday, March 31st and Friday, April 1st was negatively impacted by threatening and inclement weather. The bad weather on Thursday and Friday probably cost us another 10,000 guests. SSA earned a total of \$401,000 in food (\$254,000) and retail (\$147,000) sales. Record single-day sales in food and retail occurred on Wednesday, March 30th with \$55,000 and \$31,000, respectively. Tuskers averaged a \$1.45 per cap for the week. During Aramark's last year they rarely had a \$1.00 daily per cap in the Kenya Café.
- Waterfall Junction (WJ) opened to the public on Thursday, April 7th. To date, approximately 30% to 40% of all Riverbanks visitors are touring WJ with an average length-of-stay of well over two hours.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

CEO Krantz provided the following report:

- **Parking and Access** – Krantz noted that the recent crowds have once again resulted in parking and access problems. Over 20,000 people visited Riverbanks this past weekend creating about two-hours of backed up traffic on I-126 in both directions. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that the average length-of-stay is well over three hours, meaning that the parking lot does not turn over as quickly. On a related note, Krantz mentioned that AZA zoos with an annual attendance in excess of one million annual visitors are located on sites averaging 85 acres while Riverbanks is located on 32 acres. He noted that the staff is keenly

focused on the problem and will present a range of options for increasing parking at a future meeting.

- Zoo Hospital Radiography – Krantz reported that Riverbanks' animal hospital radiography (X-ray) equipment is in dire need of replacement. The existing equipment was purchased at the time the hospital was constructed and opened, 21 years ago. As such, the technology, which utilizes x-ray film that has to be developed with chemicals, is no longer manufactured or supported by the supplier. All radiography equipment today (human and veterinary) is digital. He noted that the new equipment will be purchased with Society funds.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 19 day of May 2016.


_____, Secretary