

Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
19 May 2016

Attendance Report

Commissioners Present: Mary Howard, Alana Williams, Bud Tibshrary, Lloyd Liles
Commissioners Absent: Phil Bartlett (out of country), Jim Smith (out of country), Jan Stamps (medical)
Staff Present: Satch Krantz, Tommy Stringfellow

Call to Order

Vice Chair Howard called the meeting to order. She reminded Commissioners that Chairman Bartlett and Commissioner Smith are both traveling out of the country.

Reading of the Minutes

The April 2016 minutes were approved as distributed.

Chief Finance Officer's Report

In the absence of CFO Breta Rheney, CEO Krantz provided the following report:
As of April 30, 2015, the Commission is showing an excess of revenue over expenses of \$926,998. We are running a little over \$170,000 ahead of last year's excess through April.

Attendance

- Attendance remains strong with 48% of total attendance derived from Memberships.
- April's attendance exceeded budget by 34,235 guests, resulting in an YTD excess attendance of 91,782.
- At one week into May we reached and exceeded the 1,000,000 attendance mark. This is the earliest we have ever reached the one million mark.

Balance Sheet

Assets

- Cash flow remains good even with the amount due to Society that will be settled in June.

Liabilities

- The amount Due to Society will be settled prior to year-end.
- Other liabilities are timing differences, which vary from month to month.

Revenue vs Expense

Revenue

- Total Revenue is \$1,215,542 ahead of budget, and as stated last month, approximately half of this is from general admission.
- Due to the increased attendance, SSA Commissions continue to track above budget and prior year's actual.
- Attractions' revenue (net of direct expenses) is strong and helps offset the other Guest Services expenses needed to run other non-revenue operations.

Expenses

- Overall Department Expense increases are:
 - Consulting Fees
 - Credit Card Processing Fees
 - AZA Accreditation Expenses
 - Facilities Contracted Services and Repairs
 - Personnel overages for Public Safety and Grounds
- Marketing & Public Relations savings are expected to be due to timing differences.

Destination Riverbanks Update

Krantz submitted the following report on the Destination Riverbanks projects as well as the CSX pedestrian bridge:

- Waterfall Junction (WFJ) – WFJ continues to draw big crowds. Over 80,000 people have visited the new children's garden since it opened on April 7. While no formal studies have been conducted, it is obvious that the average length-of-stay is quite long. While the new garden has performed well, there have been three ongoing issues. In spite of the fact that the colored concrete surrounding the various water features contains a non-skid coating, we are experiencing an unacceptable number of slip and falls (as children exit the water). We have engaged a company to remove the existing coating and apply a more aggressive non-slip coating. The large crowds have put tremendous pressure on much of the "soft" programming items (hula-hoops, plastic boats, toys, etc.), which are currently being re-evaluated. Lastly, we have experienced water quality issues with the lower pond. On Tuesday, May 10, a meeting was held with all parties involved regarding the water features. A number of items were discussed for improving water quality and these are now being vetted.
- Sea Lion Landing (SLL) – Sea Lion Landing is basically complete and the Zoo has formally accepted/occupied the exhibit. Most importantly, all four sea lions and one seal have arrived and are doing very well. Unfortunately, two inches of rain fell at the Zoo in less than an hour during the afternoon of Sunday, May 1. Rainwater from that storm overwhelmed the storm sewers surrounding the north public entrance doors and ran into the building and down into the underwater viewing area. Within minutes there was approximately 5 inches of standing water in the indoor amphitheater area. The Zoo's grounds and maintenance departments immediately mobilized and were able to pump the water out of the building within two hours, keeping damage to a minimum. Project architect Jumper Carter Sease has accepted responsibility for lack of adequate drainage and is in the process of developing a plan to address the issue. This could involve removing

some sections of the sidewalk and installing new, bigger drains. *Update: During the time of the Commission meeting it was discovered that there is a large blockage in one of the storm sewer pipes. This was almost certainly the cause of the flood. Remediation is now ongoing.*

- CSX Pedestrian Bridge – The pedestrian bridge is progressing well. Plans were to lift and erect the bridge itself at 6:00pm on Wednesday, May 10. Regrettably, at noon on Tuesday required tests revealed that concrete in the north tower pier (Rivermont side) had not reached the required strength. As a result the lift was cancelled. Fortunately, over the next five days the concrete reached the required strength and the bridge was lifted into place at 4:00pm on Wednesday, May 18 without incident. Rodgers Builders will continue to work on the stairs and bridge deck over the next few weeks, with elevator installation scheduled for July 1. Completion date is scheduled for August 22.

Chief Operating Officer's Report

COO Stringfellow provided the following report:

- Attendance Update – The Zoo and Garden is experiencing an incredible increase in attendance. As of this past weekend, Riverbanks is on-pace to finish the fiscal year with 1,200,000 guests, compared to the fiscal year attendance budget of 1,100,000. It was noted that this places Riverbanks among the largest zoos in the United States in terms of attendance.
- Sea Lion Landing Opening – A successful VIP preview party was held at Sea Lion Landing (SLL) on Tuesday, May 10. During this entire week, the Zoo is hosting a preview opportunity for members of the Riverbanks Society from 3:00pm to 8:00pm. The public opening is still scheduled for Thursday, June 9. Stringfellow noted that the exhibit will open at 9:00am that morning, without a great deal of fanfare; however, several local TV stations have expressed interest in broadcasting live from the site.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

CEO Krantz provided the following report:

- Parking and Access – Krantz noted that the recent large weekend crowds have finally abated. Over the past three weekends, Saturday attendance has declined by approximately 2,500 guests, producing a total attendance of approximately 10,000 people each Saturday. However, even this is approximately 2,000 guests more than the historical Saturday average. Sunday attendance has also declined to approximately 6,000 guests (down from 9,000). Sunday's historical average is around 4,000. While the slight attendance decline has helped alleviate traffic back-ups on I-126, parking is still an issue. The parking problem is exacerbated by the fact that the average length-of-stay is now 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 have challenged our architects and planners with developing a range of options for increasing parking.

- Potential Solar Installation – On May 4 Krantz met with representatives of SCE&G, Gregory Electric and BlueWave Capital to discuss the potential of installing a major solar array on Zoo property. BlueWave Capital, LLC is a Boston-based renewable energy project development company with a focus on solar photovoltaic (PV) development. BlueWave has approximately 45 solar projects in the United States and is looking to expand into South Carolina. Krantz noted that the proposed arrangement is quite complex, but in simple terms BlueWave would totally fund the construction of the solar farm on Commission property; over the following 10 years BlueWave would benefit from the available federal tax credits, and at the end of the 10-year period the installation would be donated to the Commission. Krantz noted that a major factor in moving forward would be the restrictions to such an arrangement caused by the Commission’s government status. Krantz has asked our attorneys to research this issue, which apparently can be quite complex.
- Three Rivers Greenway – It now appears that construction will soon begin on the “Zoo portion” of the Three Rivers Greenway. Krantz reminded the Commission that this section of the Greenway is being funded by Richland County Council through the Transportation Penny Tax fund but will be operated by the City of Columbia. The Zoo greenway will be located on a narrow strip of land leased to the Zoo by SCE&G as well as land owned fee-simple by the Commission. The Commission has previously voted to sublet its land to the City, subject to SCE&G approval.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 16 day of June 2016.

Clayton Mark Secretary Vice Chair