

Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
18 February 2016

Attendance Report

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

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Satch Krantz, Tommy Stringfellow, Steve Hatchell, Christie Vondrak

Call to Order

Chairman Bartlett called the meeting to order.

Staff Presentation

Riverbanks' Director of Human Resources, Christie Vondrak, addressed the Commission about the Zoo's new recruiting and onboarding program, Riverbanks 101. Among the highlights of her presentation were:

- The HR department started sourcing our open positions last year on job boards, local colleges and universities, social media, and other websites in an effort to increase the quality and quantity of our candidate pool. As a result, each open position gets exposed to 50-100 different sources (all free).
- All of our application processes have now been streamlined and are consistent for Riverbanks' employees, volunteers and interns as well as SSA employees.
- The Riverbanks 101 new-hire orientation is also available to all volunteers/interns and employees as well as SSA employees so that on their very first day of work they can understand Zoo and Garden expectations. Following Riverbanks 101 each new hire has department-specific training and checklists that further expand on their orientation and equips them with the confidence and ability to perform their jobs as Riverbanks ambassadors. Each new hire is given an orange lanyard during their training and after their managers determine that they are equipped and ready to work on their own, they convert to a black lanyard. The orange to black lanyard program also encourages existing staff and managers to recognize new employees.
- Riverbanks 101 is the first step in demonstrating enthusiasm to our new hires and thanking them for choosing to be part of the Riverbanks' team.

Chief Finance Officer's Report

CFO Hatchell provided the following report:

As of January 31, 2016, the Commission is showing a deficit of \$147,013. This amount is actually a *positive* variance to the budget of \$214,000.

Attendance

- Total attendance for the month of January was just over 49,000, which is in line with the January budget. Membership visits for the month were over budget by 5,000 visits, while free visits were below budget by the same amount. This is due to poor weather conditions during Free Fridays.
- Actual attendance exceeds budget by 36,000 guests for the fiscal year to-date. Paid attendance is under budget by 19,000 guests, membership attendance is over budget by 46,000 and free attendance is over budget by 8,000 guests (due mainly to the free days following the October flood).

Balance Sheet

- Assets
 - We continued to maintain a positive cash position at the end of January.

Revenue vs Expense

Revenue

- Total Revenue for the month of January was \$1,658,000, which was \$20,000 above budget. For the fiscal year, revenues are at \$7,225,000, which is \$196,000 over budget. We are also over by \$409,000 compared to January 2015. This is due mainly to the timing of the support allocation from Society.
- Admissions revenue through January 2016 is \$42,000 over budget and \$109,000 over the prior fiscal year.
- As mentioned last month, Events net revenue for the year fiscal year is \$99,000 over budget and \$133,000 over last fiscal year. This is due to the fact that Lights Before Christmas and Boo at the Zoo were both successful.

Expenses

- Administrative expenses through January were \$149,000 over budget. As mentioned last month, this is due to the payment of architectural fees associated with the pedestrian bridge project (not included in the bond package). We also had an upgrade to our payroll services contract due to the reporting requirements associated with the Affordable Care Act. This is due to timing of software purchase updates.
- Marketing/Public Relations expenses are under budget by \$328,000 due to timing of paid advertising and production costs (which typically occur late in the fiscal year).

Destination Riverbanks Update

Krantz presented the following report on the Destination Riverbanks projects:

- **Sea Lion** – The sea lion exhibit is nearly finished. In spite of the inclement weather over the past few weeks, Rodgers only missed two days of work. Major developments related to the sea lion exhibit since the November meeting include:
 - The indoor keeper and holding areas are complete.
 - All phases of the gunite rockwork are 100% complete.
 - The public indoor viewing room is now finished, except for the interpretive package which will be installed in April.
 - The rooftop viewing deck is complete.

- The public sidewalks surrounding the exhibit are scheduled to be completed by next Friday.
- The Wet Edge coating has been installed on the pool bottom and is over half-way through its 29-day cure period.
- The anticipated turn-over date is scheduled for March 18th.

Krantz noted that although the exhibit itself is nearly complete there are several weeks built into the schedule for concrete curing and “shake down” of the life support system. A Riverbanks keeper will be traveling to San Diego next week for continued training sessions with the animals.

- **Waterfall Junction** -- This project continues to slowly progress towards completion, with an anticipated turn-over date of February 29th, five and a half months past the contracted completion date. Since the last Commission meeting several major issues have been discovered and these are now being addressed including replacing the entire men’s bathroom floor and a large section of sidewalk. On a positive note, the treehouses are now completed and look fantastic. Most of the other main components are scheduled to be completed within the next 10 days. Of particular note is the DHEC final inspection of the water feature, which is scheduled for 10:00am tomorrow.
- **CSX Pedestrian Bridge** – As anticipated, Rodgers Builders began construction of the CSX pedestrian bridge on Monday, February 8th. Since then all trees have been removed from both sides of the track and general site work has been completed. Rodgers began work on the north tower yesterday. An 8 to 9 month construction time is anticipated.

Destination Riverbanks Capital Campaign Update

Krantz was pleased to announce two major gifts since the February meeting, BB&T and First Citizens. In addition, Riverbanks and Rodgers have closed out Phase I (entry, grizzly, otter) with a \$150,000 reduction in cost (unused contingency). As a result of these two items and the Lexington County Fund Balance supplemental funding, the Destination Riverbanks capital campaign has succeeded in covering all capital costs associated with the Destination Riverbanks expansion effort.

Chief Operating Officer’s Report

COO Stringfellow provided the following report:

- Opening schedules and planning for Waterfall Junction and Sea Lion Openings – Stringfellow reviewed the tentative schedules for opening the remaining two Destination Riverbanks exhibits. Waterfall Junction is scheduled for a media event on the morning of Thursday, April 7th, with a donor reception that evening. Sea Lion Landing is scheduled for a VIP event on May 12th, a June 9/10 media event (date uncertain), and a public opening on Friday, June 10th. A pre-opening event for members will be held sometime during the week of May 16 – 19.
- SSA experienced significant revenue growth last year. Highlights include:
 - Concession Sales: \$3.4 million in gross sales (up from \$3 million in 2014) with a \$3.05 per cap (up \$.10)
 - Retail Sales: \$1.9 million in gross sales (up from \$1.6 million in 2014) with a \$1.68 per cap (up \$.08)

- Catering Sales: \$810,000 in gross sales (up \$90,000)
- Total Sales: \$6.2 million (up \$700,000)
- Commission Paid to Riverbanks: \$1.5 million (up from \$1.3 million in 2014)
- The Society's Wine Tasting is scheduled for April 29th. Over 50% of the available 850 tickets have already been purchased, virtually guaranteeing another sell out. As a result of the strong pre-event sales we will not run a paid advertising campaign. Ticket prices for the event are \$55.00, a \$5.00 increase over last year (\$45 for members).

Chief Executive Officer's Report

CEO Krantz provided the following report:

- Lexington Fund Balance – On January 26th, Lexington County Council gave unanimous second reading approval to the Commission's request for supplemental funding from its Fund Balance Account. On February 9th, a public hearing on our request was held during the regular Council meeting. No one spoke in opposition of the ordinance so the third and final reading will occur as scheduled on Tuesday, February 23rd.
- SAFE – Krantz provided the Commission with a PowerPoint outlining the AZA's newest directive, SAFE. This program will highlight the role of zoos and aquariums in conservation efforts in the wild. Currently, AZA institutions rank third internationally in such efforts.

March 2016 Meeting

Krantz noted that due to the Society-sponsored Botswana safari he would not be available for the March 17th Commission meeting. However, he would be available the following Thursday, March 24th. Following some discussion the Commission decided to meet on March 24, 2016.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 19 day of ^{April}~~March~~ 2016.

S. A. Liles, Secretary

6