

Riverbanks Park Commission

Meeting Minutes

18 July 2019

Attendance Report

Commissioners Present: Bud Tibshrary, Bob Davidson, Jan Stamps, Phil Bartlett, Mary Howard

Commissioners Absent: Alana Williams, Mike Velasco

Staff Present: Tommy Stringfellow, Katie McCoy

Special Guest: Rachael Bashor, Director of Education

Call to Order

Chairman Tibshrary called the meeting to order.

Reading of the Minutes

The June 20, 2019 commission minutes were approved as distributed.

Bartlett motioned, Stamps seconded, m/c unanimous.

Chairman's Remarks

It's a pleasure to have Rachael Bashor, Director of Education, with us. We look forward to hearing about the new updates in the education department. Tibshrary also reminded everyone to hydrate and stay cool in this heat.

Guest Presenter- Education Update

Rachael Bashor has been at Riverbanks for just short of one year now. She moved here from Oregon and has loved the transition to Riverbanks and Columbia. Her background is environmental education and foundation work. Rachael has taken this year to focus on balancing revenue and mission-based programs.

The highest revenue generating program in the education department are camps. Camp programs are offered year-round, for a wide range of ages. Camps feature age appropriate curriculum and experiences that campers are unable to receive at any other visit to Riverbanks. This year we will be conducting an evaluation of the camp program with satisfaction surveys and through participating in an AZA program impact study. Summer 2020 we will be making program changes.

Overnights is the second highest revenue generating program. Primarily overnights are reserved by scout groups, school groups, youth groups, etc. This year the team made changes to the programs by including smaller groups in Sea Lion Landing and hosting groups simultaneously. Overnights have also expanded to the garden and teach basic camping skills.

The ZooTeens program includes about 50+ high school kids who volunteer their time throughout the year. This program will be transitioning from service oriented to youth development and will focus on STEM concepts and introductions to zoo careers.

Garden programming has seen a big shift. Fundamentally garden programming has a different audience. The focus is shifting to "littles learners" with their parents and adult programs. For

young learners, we now offer a year-round program on Fridays for ages 3-5 that features hands on and exploratory programming. This year we will also introduce a nature preschool two days a week, as a half day program.

The traditional education programs are the onsite and outreach K-12 programs and Homeschool Mondays. The team will continue to assess and evaluate school programming and look for ways to integrate the park and exhibits/gardens into learning opportunities.

Financial Report

President and CEO Tommy Stringfellow shared the following monthly financial report:

- Please note year-end financials are still closing out so numbers are tentative at this time.
- Stringfellow noted that this year received the second highest attendance with 1.3 million visitors.
- To help with cost savings it was impressed upon supervisors and managers to consistently evaluate staffing levels and monitor situations, such as inclement weather and adjust on-site staff appropriately.
- Commissioner Bartlett suggested Riverbanks consider investigating State funding as well as a lobbyist to assist with future state and county funding. There was some discussion, and all agreed that would be in the best interest to look into this for follow up at the August Commission meeting.

Attendance

Budgeted attendance for the month of June was 109,000; actual attendance was 137,625, up 28,625 visitors. Year to date we are up to budgeted attendance by 50,606. Membership sales are still holding strong, resulting in membership visits tracking ahead of projected visits. The increase in member visits is helping offset the paid (general admission) attendance deficit. Paid attendance represented 39%, membership visits represented 54%, and free represented 7% of the total.

Revenue

Year to date budgeted gross revenue through June was \$18,974,007; actual revenue was \$19,184,911, resulting in a \$210,904 increase compared to budget.

Despite paid attendance being soft, the primary contributor in the revenue increase is due to the Lexington County escrowed funds that were received in November. General Admission revenues are down primarily due to a decline in paid attendance, due to weather factors, and an increase in membership sales, which has created the decline in general admission per cap. The per cap decrease is found across all ticket types, which began trending this way in the month of October. With the ticket price increase in group and corporate ticket categories in January, we are seeing our budgeted per cap rebound slightly as the summer season approaches.

Expenses

Gross year to date through June budgeted expenses were \$18,948,393; actual expenses were \$17,933,022, resulting in \$1,015,464 savings compared to budget.

Primary contributors to the savings are due to timing of invoices, savings in open or unfilled positions, and reduced staffing expenses during bad weather days.

Society

Annual budgeted membership households is 38,000; year to date actual membership is 42,138. Actual membership revenue through June was \$5,616,833, compared to budget of \$5,228,081, resulting in an increase of \$388,752 in Society membership revenues. Increase is primarily due to the increase in purchases of memberships before dues increase in January and anticipation of The Farm Experience exhibit and Dinosaurs.

Bartlett motioned to approve the June financials, Davidson seconded, m/c unanimous.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

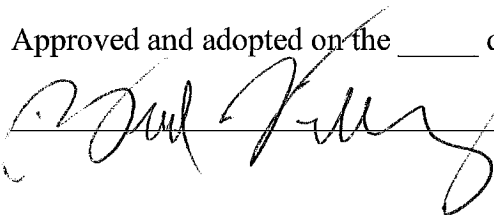
President and CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- Capital Projects- Stringfellow reported on the status of the capital projects that the Commission approved in December. All projects were listed and categorized as completed, underway, or pending.
- Master Plan Timeline/Update- Next month we should see the preliminary master plan. We will have an elephant farewell in the fall and plan to open rhino in summer 2020.
- The bird department was excited to welcome recently hatched flamingo and penguin chicks.
- The lorikeets have been temporarily moved off exhibit. We will use the time while they are off exhibit to do needed renovations of the space. Capital money will be reallocated from hospital van to renovating the exhibit.
- Brew at the Zoo is August 2.
- Working on scheduling an appreciation day with lunch and backstage tours for local councils.

Bartlett motioned to adjourn, Stamps seconded, m/c unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the ____ day of August 2019.

 _____, Chair