

**Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
15 September 2022**

Attendance Report

Commissioners Present: Deneen Shockley, Mike Velasco, Alana Williams, Jan Stamps, Cliff Bourke, Jeff Reeves, Bob Davidson

Commissioners Absent:

Staff Present: Tommy Stringfellow, Lochlan Wooten, Christie Vondrak, Ashley Harris, Katie Eaton

Others Present:

Call to Order

Chair Stamps called the meeting to order.

Reading of the Minutes

The August 18, 2022 Commission Meeting minutes were approved as distributed.

Bourke motioned to approve the minutes, Shockley seconded, m/c unanimous.

Chairman's Remarks

Chairwoman Stamps remarked that she is very much looking forward to the annual Zoofari fundraiser next Friday, and that she is proud of the Riverbanks staff's continued hard work in providing an excellent guest experience.

VP of Finance Report:

VP of Finance Ashley Harris provided the following report:

- Audit committee (Williams and Velasco) will meet in November for audit review
- Harris reviewed the August financial statement:
 - Total membership count is up over budget by 4,500 and slightly over prior year actual
 - Revenue is down, but attributed to timing and renewals
 - Paid admissions are slightly under budget- attributable to memberships driving attendance
 - Public support line is down due to timing in slower collections and abnormally high collection in 2021
 - Sponsorships are up due to generous donations from Lexington Medical and Dominion Energy
 - Departmental expenditures- animal care is under budget due to staff departures. Guest Services is under budget due to waterfall junction being closed over the summer
 - Velasco motioned to approve the August financials. Shockley seconded; m/c unanimous.

President & CEO Report:

President & CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- Stringfellow, accompanied by Theo DuBose and Rebecca Best, recently met with Mayor Daniel Rickenmann to discuss alternative funding options.
- Stringfellow and Rebecca Best recently with former Mayor Bob Coble for consulting regarding Richland County bonds and City of Columbia council.
- Stringfellow and Rebecca Best will be meeting with Lynn Sturkie, Lexington County Administrator for updates and feedback on bond referendum
- Capital improvement project- the commission acknowledged the need to include the resurfacing of the splash pad floor as part of the capital list (approved June 2022 meeting). Estimates are currently \$100K to complete the project.

- CLR will be in town in October to review and reprioritize master plan projects.
- AZA Conference- Six Riverbanks staff attended the AZA Annual conference in Baltimore, MD last month. It was nice to meet for the conference in person again. Stringfellow was involved in several conversations regarding governmental relations. AZA would like to increase focus on legislative relationships.

Administrative Officer Report:

Administrative Officer Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- Reminders & Updates:
 - Zoofari is next Friday, September 23
 - Boards Emeritus luncheon will be October 18
 - Boo at the Zoo-October 20-30
 - Covid- month of August saw the highest count of covid cases amongst staff
- Vondrak shared an update from the recent partnership with the local Fireflies baseball team.
- Vondrak shared that she enjoyed the annual AZA conference in Baltimore, MD. There were 2,200 staff in attendance. A lot of the discussions involved strategic planning post covid.
- Recently hosted an in-person Town Hall meeting last week in an informal format. Staff seemed to appreciate the time to spend in person together again.
- Yesterday our leadership team attended a workshop hosted by a Brene Brown facilitator. The team focused on getting back to trust and values. It was a very valuable day and exercise for our team.

Operating Officer Report:

Operating Officer Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- New meerkat group is doing well together. The mob includes female Lily and 3 new males
- New splash pad surfacing project will be underway shortly.
- Very excited about the new greenhouse projects. The new greenhouses will allow for the horticulture team to work on new projects and improve some efficiencies in their current processes.
- New in SSA- bringing back more local product. Bringing back Carolina Kettle chips in concessions and Sunrise Artisan soaps in retail.
- Aquarium construction continues to progress beautifully. Sod went down today, and exterior is looking beautiful.
- Zoofari ticket sales are strong.
- Membership trends continue to track with budget.
- In 2020 the Conservation Committee began opening portions of the Satch Krantz Conservation Fund to all staff to nominate their favorite conservation organizations to receive funding. Three projects were recently voted on by our staff and will receive funding from SKCF; The Mountain Marmoset Conservation Program, the Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife, and the Felidae Conservation Fund. Riverbanks has a new Conservation Programs Manager on board now, and we are excited to have this dedicated staff person take the reigns and focus in on conservation programs and initiatives at Riverbanks.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 20 day of October 2022.

, Secretary