

Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
21 March 2024

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the agenda is available to radio and TV stations, newspapers, and persons requesting notification; was posted in the lobby of Riverbanks' administration building and was uploaded to Riverbanks' webpage.

Attendance Report

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

Commissioners Absent: Mike Velasco

Staff Present: Tommy Stringfellow, Lochlan Wooten, Christie Vondrak, Ashley Harris, Jessica Austin

Call to Order

Chairwoman Stamps called the meeting to order at 12:30pm.

Reading of the Minutes

The February 15, 2024 Commission Meeting minutes were approved as distributed.

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

Chairman's Remarks

- Welcome back Tommy, Christie, and Lochlan from AZA Midyear Conference in Memphis.

Finance Report:

VP of Finance Ashley Harris provided the following report:

- February Dashboard Report:
 - Memberships are holding strong, up over budget as well as prior year.
 - Still running under budgeted attendance through February YTD, however we had a strong month of February, helping to close the gap of the running variance to budget seen in the first part of the fiscal year. Through January, we were reporting 29,043 visits under budgeted attendance, and through February, we are reporting 17,734 visits under budgeted attendance.
 - Free Fridays turnout showed much better in February. In prior year FY23, February free Friday visits totaled 10,408 and in the current year FY24, February free Friday visits totaled 13,382. However, in prior year FY23, January free Friday visits totaled 11,757 and in the current year FY24, January free Friday visits totaled only 3,037. So, we experienced some less desirable weather days in January causing us to report a total of 5,746 less Free Friday visits in FY24 than in the prior year across the 2 months this was offered.
 - Earned revenues up over budget and prior year, primarily due to General admission fees, Concession & retail commissions, Facility rental & group admission fees, and Interest income exceeding budgeted revenues.
 - Governmental support is running over anticipated collections as we're seeing Richland County's property tax proceeds coming in earlier this year. Received a payment of \$1.6M just in February.
- February Balance Sheet:
 - Average earning interest rate in LGIP for February was 5.57%
 - Bond related costs and bond proceeds are recorded in a separate fund, so as we pay bond related costs, we'll report a balance as 'Due from Bond fund' in the General Fund.

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

President & CEO Report:

President & CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- Continuing to communicate with Richland and Lexington County councils regularly. Beginning to build rapport with City of Columbia council and state representatives.

Chief Administrative Officer Report:

Chief Administrative Officer Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- Dates & Reminders
 - Spring Break Week- March 29 – April 7
 - April Commission Meeting will be held at Ndoki Lodge
 - Wine Tasting – April 19 7pm – 9:30pm in Botanical Garden.
 - 50th Anniversary – April 25 6pm – 8:30pm.
 - Legislative Night – May 1 5:30pm – 8:30pm
- For Black History Month, we hosted the Donut Guy Food Truck, and our BIPOC & Friends ERG had a booth set up to give us information on Black History Month and the contributions of African Americans in the Zoo and Science industry.
- AAZK hosted Conservation on Tap to raise money for the Fishing Cat Fund. They were able to raise \$885 from the event and still have t-shirts and stickers available for purchase.
- Staff voted on Satch Krantz Conservation Fund award recipients:
 - 1st Place – Ocean Rescue Alliance International
 - 2nd Place – Bahamas Plastic Movement
 - 3rd Place – Hitchcock Woods Foundation


Chief Operating Officer Report:

Chief Operating Officer Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- Isabelle the giraffe passed away due to health issues.
- Riverbanks' bird department won a third Plume Award. Honored for building engagement: long-term propagation of Lorikeets for interactive aviaries.
- 400 Rivermont construction projected to finish at the end of 2024.
- Parking lot opens on Friday 4/22
- Komodo are scheduled to move in on May 22.
- Received two SSA Awards
 - GM of the Year – Nate Ennis
 - Partnership of the Year – Riverbanks Zoo & Garden
- 50th Anniversary
 - Membership drive
 - Day celebration
 - Golden ticket promotion
- Won Greater Irmo Chamber of Commerce Large Business of the Year Award

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 18 day of April 2024.

 , Secretary