

Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
24 April 2014

Attendance Report

Commissioners Present: Earl Brown, Bud Tibshrany, Lloyd Liles, Jim Smith, Phil Bartlett, Jan Stamps
Commissioners Absent: Mary Howard
Staff Present: Satch Krantz, Steve Hatchell, Tommy Stringfellow
Guests Present: John Dillard (CSX)

Call to Order

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order.

Reading of the Minutes

The March 2014 minutes of the Commission were approved as distributed.

Chairman's Comments

Chairman Brown welcomed Commission members and staff and thanked them for their service.

CSX Update

The Commission welcomed John Dillard, representing CSX railroad. Dillard noted that CSX sees a number of benefits to providing additional access to Riverbanks Zoo by adding either tunnels or bridges under or across its tracks. He further noted that all appropriate departments within CSX are actively working on the Zoo's project. Following several questions, the Commission thanked Mr. Dillard for his work in facilitating this very important project.

Chief Financial Officer's Report

The March 2014 financial statement continues to reflect overall improvement in both attendance and revenue when compared to the current budget and the prior fiscal year. The general fund currently shows an excess of \$600,024 or \$187,389 more than the same period last fiscal year

Attendance

- Total attendance at the end of March is slightly over budget projections. However, when compared to prior year amounts, total attendance is down by 11,000 people. This amount is due to free admissions being down by 10,000 and

membership visits by 1,000. Our paid admissions are on par with last fiscal year's amounts.

Balance Sheet

CFO Hatchell reviewed the financial statements and reported that cash is down from prior year due to more timely allocations back to the Society (primarily for membership sales at the gate). He also noted that \$452,000 in expenses related to the bond projects have yet to be reimbursed by Richland County. We will be requesting this amount in April.

- The Accounts Receivable balance is up as a result of the spring season bookings.

Revenue vs. Expense

- Earned revenues continue to out-perform both budget and prior fiscal year.
- Governmental Revenues
 - We have received all anticipated funding from Lexington County for this fiscal year (\$1,126,286).
 - We have only received about \$38,000 from Richland County for the month of March.
- Other Revenue – Overall these revenues are outperforming budget for the year. Classes and Programs are only at a \$6,000 deficit, as compared to a budgeted loss of \$79,000.
- Department expenses continue to show favorably as related to budget.
 - Marketing & Promotions is under budget mainly due to the timing on invoices and to when possible expenses were budgeted.
 - Facilities Management is over budget primarily due to the continued maintenance and repairs that have been needed.

Bond Issue Projects

Commissioner Stamps and Krantz presented the following report on the various bond issue projects:

- **Rivermont Parking** – Demolition of the two Rivermont buildings was completed just prior to spring break and guests were able to use the graveled portion of the new “parking lot” for overflow during that critical week. It was gratifying to see that on the three days when attendance exceeded 10,000 guests there was no back-up onto I-126. Plans are to begin construction as soon as possible on resurfacing the exposed south wall of the 400 Rivermont building and to pave those portions of the gravel lot not impacted by the bridge/tunnel. The staff and architects feel

that the renovation of the remaining two-story 400 building can be addressed using savings from the demolition budget.

- **CSX** – Krantz reported that he received a phone call on Monday of this week from Joe Schofield of Arcadis, the consulting engineers to CSX. The purpose of the call was to clarify the Zoo's position regarding its desire for either a tunnel or bridge at the Rivermont *pedestrian* crossing. Krantz explained that both concepts were submitted in order to prevent any further delay if one or the other design was denied. Schofield noted that this was most helpful and will once again communicate with CSX regarding the Zoo's strategy. Schofield noted that it was likely that CSX would prefer the tunnel due to problems with bridges built in the past.
- **Entry/Grizzly** – Krantz noted there is nothing to report on this project other than the fact that on Monday of this week the Zoo's two grizzly bears were transported to the Tulsa Zoo. They will remain there until their new habitat is completed sometime next spring or summer.
- **Sea Lion** – Nothing new to report.
- **Children's Garden** – The children's garden architects and designers, along with the Zoo and Garden staff, have been frustrated in their dealings with DHEC regarding the planned splash pool and stream. According to DHEC regulators, they have never been asked to license such a feature. At this point the architects and engineers will proceed with the originally-intended design and submit it to DHEC for input.
- **Graphics and Interpretation** – Krantz noted that the staff has just concluded a two-day workshop with the zoo architects and consultants aimed at outlining the graphics and signage package for the new entry, otter and grizzly exhibits and the sea lion exhibits.

Chief Operating Officer's Report

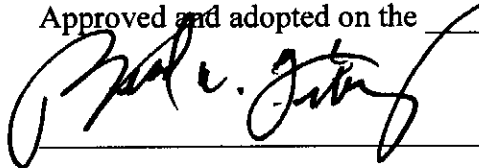
- **Tuskers Update** – COO Stringfellow noted that the new Tuskers restaurant is performing as anticipated. Not only is per capita spending up significantly, the speed of service is much faster than the old Kenya Café. He also noted that work has begun on the outside seating deck.
- **Spring Break 2014** – Due to inclement weather, Spring Break 2014 was a mixed bag. In spite of the fact that three days were lost to rain, attendance still reached within 500 guests of budget. Stringfellow noted that the most significant development of the week was the fact that during three days of 10,000+ visitors, traffic never backed up onto I-126. This was attributed to the new Rivermont parking lot.
- **Wine Tasting** – the annual wine tasting will occur in the Botanical Garden this Friday night, April 25th. The event is completely sold out.
- **40th Anniversary** – Riverbanks will be celebrating its 40th anniversary this Friday as well. A press conference is scheduled for 10:00 am that day to mark the occasion. The press conference will be the "official" unveiling of the various Destination Riverbanks projects. In addition, WIS-TV will be broadcasting live from the Zoo beginning at 4:30 am that morning.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

- **414 Rivermont** – As previously communicated, the owners of 414 Rivermont Drive (the Spectra Building) have agreed to sell the building to the Commission for \$1,550,000. The owners will remain in the building for five months for \$100.00 per month plus all expenses. If they have not vacated the building at the end of the five-month period, they will be charged rent of \$12,000 per month. Krantz noted that Commission attorney Kevin Garrison was involved in the negotiations and has written the contract. Krantz also thanked Commissioners Liles and Smith for their valuable advice and counsel. Tibshrary moved, Bartlett seconded, m/c unanimous, to approved the purchase of the 414 Rivermont building from bond funds for a price of \$1,550,000.
- **Garden Sculpture** – Krantz noted that the Botanical Garden has received a donation of a large metallic garden sculpture. The sculpture was designed and fabricated by the same person who fabricated the famous Busted Plug in downtown Columbia and is a giant representation of a tropical plant. The piece is quite large but will make a wonderful photo backdrop in the Garden parking lot.

Executive Session

Approved and adopted on the _____ day of May _____, 2014.


_____, Secretary