

**Riverbanks Park Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**19 November 2015**

**Attendance Report**

Commissioners Present: Mary Howard, Jan Stamps, Lloyd Liles, Bud Tibshrary, and Jim Smith

Commissioners Absent: Phil Bartlett, Alana Williams

Staff Present: Satch Krantz, Steve Hatchell

**Call to Order**

Vice Chair Howard called the meeting to order and thanked members of the Commission for their concern for her husband, Jerry, during his recent illness.

**Chief Finance Officer's Report**

CFO Steve Hatchell provided the following report:

As of October 30, 2015 the Commission is showing a deficit of \$1,034,741. This amount is actually a *positive* variance of \$183,000 when compared to budget.

**Attendance**

- Attendance for the month of October was just under 98,000 guests. However, this amount is below budget by approximately 12,000 guests. Paid attendance for the month was 40,000 guests, which was 25,000 below budget. This is due almost exclusively to the fact that the Zoo and Garden was closed for three days during the flood (Sunday through Tuesday) and then offered free admission for an additional three days (Wednesday through Friday). Because of the three free days our free attendance for the month was 19,000 guests over budget.
- For the fiscal year, total attendance is still over budget by 26,000 guests. Paid attendance is under budget by 14,000 guests and free attendance is over budget by 15,000 guests.

**Balance Sheet**

- Assets
  - Cash is still in a positive position at the end of October, especially considering paid admissions were below budget for the month.
- Liabilities
  - The amount Due to Society is higher in October as compared to the prior year. This is due to the timing of the reconciliation of revenues (less expenses) the Zoo collects on the Society's behalf.

## Revenue vs Expense

### Revenue

- Total Revenue for the month of October was \$813,000, which is \$341,000 below budget. This is due to paid attendance being considerably down because of the flood. However, for the fiscal year, we are at \$3,332,000, which is \$121,000 over budget.
- Admissions revenue through October 2015 is \$40,000 over budget and \$30,000 under the prior fiscal year. This is in spite of admissions revenue for the month of October being \$290,000 below budget.
- Attractions/Rides net revenue through October is \$16,000 below budget and \$17,000 under last fiscal year. This area was also affected by the low paid attendance numbers. For the month of October alone, Attractions/Rides were \$25,000 under budget.
- Boo at the Zoo continues to be a success. Boo was \$33,000 over its net revenue budget through October. There will be a few more expenses coming in for Boo, but the event still should finish strong.

### Expenses

- Administrative expenses through October were \$58,000 over budget. As previously mentioned this is partially due to credit card processing fees (which we are reviewing) combined with the timing of expenses for computer hardware and software updates.
- Marketing/Public Relations expenses are under budget by \$226,000 due to the timing of paid advertising and production costs.
- Guest Services expenses are over budget by \$61,000. This is mainly due to salary expenses associated with custodial services and public safety. These two items are under current review.
- Utilities are over budget by \$57,000. We believe this is partly due to the new facilities and power consumption by the sea lion and children's garden contractors.

## Destination Riverbanks Update

Krantz presented the following report on the Destination Riverbanks projects:

- **Sea Lion** -- Rodgers continues to make progress on the sea lion exhibit. Developments related to the sea lion exhibit are:
  - The rooftop viewing paver system has been installed.
  - The ductwork and glass handrails in both the interior viewing areas are almost complete.
  - The rooftop snack bar is almost complete.
  - Ceiling fans, doors and associated hardware in the interior building are being installed.
  - The shotcrete structural base coat within the exhibit pool is in progress, and it is hoped that the pool can be filled next Wednesday
  - Asphalt paving behind the Holding Building is scheduled for this week, weather permitting.
  - Melodie and her crew are planting large trees throughout the exhibit.

- **Children's Garden** -- This project continues to progress:
  1. The education center is now nearly complete.
  2. Tyler is aggressively working on the dino dig shade structures.
  3. The treehouses are being prepared to receive their roof structures next month.
  4. Cost of Wisconsin is making necessary revisions to make the splash pad and associated areas DHEC compliant.
  5. Riverbanks commissioned a safety audit on the children's garden on November 2 – 3.
- **CSX Pedestrian Bridge** – There have been two developments with the bridge:
  1. Riverbanks staff, Rodgers Builders and JCS architects have continued to refine the bridge design and, as a result, have reduced the anticipated cost by approximately \$100,000.
  2. Construction has been delayed due to issues with insurance limits required by CSX. If Rodgers is required to carry the liability insurance required by CSX, it will add approximately \$35,000 to the cost of the bridge. Attorneys for Riverbanks, Rodgers and CSX are currently discussing the matter. If not soon resolved, this issue could delay the start of construction.

#### **Chief Operating Officer's Report**

Lights Before Christmas -- Lights begins this Friday night, November 20, and will run through December 30. The event will be open each evening from 5pm to 9pm with 3 scheduled closings -- Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas.

#### **Chief Executive Officer's Report**

- **Ron Hall Estate** – A former Riverbanks employee, Mr. Ron Hall, has decided to leave his entire estate to Riverbanks. His attorney prepared his will and sent copies to the Zoo. The President and CEO of the Zoo is listed as Mr. Hall's Personal Representative. Krantz noted that he is aware of at least five other instances in which the Riverbanks is listed as the sole beneficiary of the estates of individuals.
- **Lexington County Escrow** – On November 4, Commissioner Stamps and CEO Krantz met in the Children's Garden with Lexington County Council members Todd Cullum and Debbie Summers. This meeting was held at the suggestion of Council Chairman Johnny Jeffcoat for the purpose of reviewing the status of the County's Riverbanks escrow account. The two council members were very impressed with the Children's Garden and quickly grasped its potential impact on West Columbia and Lexington County. They expressed their support of the Zoo's request for some portion of the escrow account but suggested that instead of making a formal presentation before Council on November 10 as planned, we first meet with the County Administrator and Finance Director. That meeting was held on November 13 and a summary of the meeting was previously provided by email. Following some discussion Stamps moved, Howard seconded, m/c unanimous, to request \$700,000 from Lexington County's Riverbanks Zoo Support Fund, Fund Balance.

- **Flood Update** – One lasting issue from the recent flood and heavy rains was discussed. Over the last few years much of our original asphalt paving (original parking lot and perimeter roads) began to decline. This is understandable given the fact that the asphalt in question is now over 40 years old. The recent flood as well as the rain of the past few days has greatly accelerated the overall decline in some of these areas, especially potholes. We will be developing a plan to address the worst of these areas, and it is anticipated that it will be quite expensive.
- **SSA Update** – Eli Grill, an SSA district manager, has relocated to Columbia and is stationed at Riverbanks. He has also taken responsibility for certain portions of the Riverbanks account. Adam Suggett, SSA's Director of Sales for Riverbanks, is transferring to the Miami Zoo at the beginning of January. According to SSA this move has been planned for quite some time. Riverbanks' General Manager, Laura Caster, remains onsite, but it is our understanding that she still wishes to transfer.
- **Sculpture Accident Claim** – The IRF has notified Riverbanks that the parents of a child injured from a fall on the lion entry sculpture have dramatically reduced their demands by a significant amount. It is unknown at this time if negotiations are still underway.
- **Columbia Green Award** -- Columbia Green and the Columbia Tree & Appearance Commission has recognized Riverbanks with a Columbia Choice Award. These awards are given annually to businesses, schools, individuals, neighborhoods, and developers whose work has significantly enhanced the appearance and quality of life of our Columbia environment. The award was specifically given to the new Zoo entry complex. The Commission thanked Riverbanks' Director of Habitat Horticulture, Melodie Scott Leach, and her staff for all of their excellent work.
- **Elephant Importation** – Krantz updated the Commission on the status of the Dallas, Omaha and Wichita Zoos permit application to import 18 African elephants from the Kingdom of Swaziland. He noted that, as anticipated, the animal rights community has mounted a fierce PR campaign in opposition to the importation and will most certainly file a lawsuit aimed at stopping the US Fish and Wildlife Service from issuing the permit.

### **December Meeting**

The December meeting, scheduled for noon on December 17 was cancelled.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of January 2016.

 \_\_\_\_\_, Secretary