

Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
19 December 2013

Attendance Report

Commissioners Present: Earl Brown, Bud Tibshirany, Lloyd Liles, Jim Smith, Mary Howard, Phil Bartlett

Commissioners Absent: Jan Stamps

Staff Present: Satch Krantz, Kathryn Masewicz, Steve Hatchell, Tommy Stringfellow

Prior to the meeting, members of the Zoo and Garden management team joined the Commission for lunch.

Call to Order

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order.

Reading of the Minutes

The November 2013 minutes of the Commission were approved as distributed.

Chairman's Comments

Chairman Brown thanked the Commissioners for their continued dedication to Riverbanks Zoo and Garden. He also thanked the Zoo and Garden staff for all their hard work. The Chairman wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Chief Financial Officer's Report

Riverbanks' new Chief Financial Officer, Steve Hatchell, was introduced to the Commission. Commissioner Smith presented the financial statement. The November 2013 statement reflects continued success in most areas. The budget currently shows a surplus of \$711,231, but with seven months still remaining in the fiscal year.

Cash

- Cash is down \$693,142 from last year due to approximately \$300,000 spent on bond projects for which we will be reimbursed and \$453,021 spent on non-bond projects so far this year.

Revenue

- Earned revenues continue to out-perform both budget and prior year. Of particular note is revenue from Food and Retail Commissions, \$107,441 over the current fiscal year budget and \$139,689 over the 2012 budget.

Expenses

- Overall, departmental expenses are in line with budget and prior year. Total department expenses are less than 3% above last year's total department expenses.
- Guest Services expenses are slightly above budget but are inline with the corresponding increase in admissions revenue.

Capital Projects (Non-Bond)

- The current Capital Budget stands at \$679,652. The balance sheet reflects an assignment of the Unassigned Fund Balance for the Capital Budget. This amount will be adjusted throughout the year as additional projects are added or amended.
- Since the November 2013 meeting, an adjustment to the Capital Budget was approved by the President and CEO for replacement IT equipment related to the Zoo's system backup. The amount is \$ 15,000 and will appear in next month's numbers.

Capital Projects – Bond

- Bond Costs incurred through November were \$3,695,461 and include:
 - Purchase of Rivermont Properties - \$2,663,721
 - IT Network Upgrades - \$89,907
 - Sea Lion Exhibit - \$308,778
 - New Entrances - \$99,702
 - Children's Garden - \$195,686
 - Rivermont Parking Lot - \$10,233
 - Other Bond Costs - \$322,750
 - Temporary Entrance - \$4,683

Bond Issue Projects Update – Commissioner Stamps asked Krantz to review the status of the various bond issue projects.

- Parking/Access – Krantz reported that the November 21st bid opening on the demolition package for 400 and 420 Rivermont Drive produced a bid within budget. A contract has since been signed with demolition work scheduled to begin within the next two weeks.
- Zoo Projects – Krantz noted that the sixth architecture planning session on the Zoo projects (parking lot plaza, gift shop, guest services, otter/grizzly and sea lion) was held on December 10th and 11th. The bulk of the workshop was spent reviewing details with the various consulting engineers – HVAC, structural, electrical, plumbing, etc. During the meeting a tentative construction schedule was discussed. The schedule now calls for work to begin on the new entrance and grizzly/otter on or about April 1, 2014 with completion set on or about March 15, 2015. Sea lion is scheduled for construction beginning on August 1, 2014 and concluding in January 2016. However, there was some discussion about tightening up the lag time between the beginning of the entrance/grizzly/otter project and the sea lion exhibit. There was also some discussion about the budget. Rodgers has promised to have more accurate budget numbers for the entry/grizzly/otter exhibit on January 10, 2014 and sea lion on January 31, 2014.
- CSX Tunnels – Since the last meeting of the Commission, CSX has given tentative approval to our request to construct tunnels and/or bridges across their tracks. The next step in the process is to sign an engineering agreement with CSX. A check for \$69,410.00 must accompany the agreement for reimbursable

expenses. CSX, through its consulting engineers, Arcadis, has also submitted an Order of Magnitude. This is an estimate of the reimbursable costs that CSX and Arcadis will incur during the design and construction process. These costs are estimated to be approximately \$1.5 million. There was discussion about the merits of a bridge versus a tunnel at the entry plaza location. Krantz suggested that we have a more detailed discussion with the architects and engineers on this matter when we have more information.

- Children's Garden – Work continues to progress well on the children's garden project. However, the architects have encountered some problems with the City of West Columbia's zoning ordinances. These problems revolve around a required sound barrier and height restrictions. The architects and Riverbanks' staff will file for a variance on these two issues within the next two to three days.
- Kenya Café Renovation – While not a bond issue project, the renovation of Kenya Café continues on schedule.
- Perimeter Road Realignment – This is another self-funded capital project and is now well underway.

Chief Operating Officer's Report

- Lights Before Christmas – Stringfellow reported that Lights Before Christmas 2013 has gotten off to a slow start due to inclement weather. In fact, it has rained every weekend since Lights began. As a result, attendance is down 40%. He noted that we only have a few days remaining before Christmas. These are traditionally the busiest nights of the year and the weather forecast is favorable.
- Fee Committee – Stringfellow and Krantz asked that the Chairman appoint a committee to work with the staff in reviewing all fees charged by the Commission for its many activities. Commissioners Smith and Bartlett were asked to serve in that capacity.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

- Penny for Progress – Krantz reviewed his recent email communication with the Commission regarding the proposed Penny for Progress (PFP) sales tax in Lexington County. That email outlined plans to submit the following Botanical Garden projects for possible inclusion in the Penny for Progress referendum: expanded parking, improvements to the amphitheater and a new guest relations building.

The meeting was formally adjourned, followed by a 30-minute tour of the Zoo.

The undersigned secretary of the Riverbanks Park Commission certifies that the above is a full, true and correct copy of the minutes of a regular meeting of the Commission, duly called and held in the manner provided in the by-laws of the Commission, on 19 December 2013, at which a quorum was present.

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

 Secretary