

**RIVERBANKS PARK COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
15 December 2016**

Attendance Report

Commissioners Present: Mary Howard, Jan Stamps, Bud Tibshrary, Jim Smith, Alana Williams, Phil Bartlett, Robert Davidson

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Satch Krantz, Tommy Stringfellow, Breta Rheney

Guests Present: None

Call to Order

Chairwoman Howard called the meeting to order.

Swearing In of New Commissioner

Chairwoman Howard was pleased to issue the Commission's Oath of Office to Richland County Council's newly appointed Commissioner, Robert Davidson. Commissioner Davidson was recently appointed to fill the expired term of Commissioner Lloyd Liles. Davidson's term will expire on December 13, 2022. Mr. Davidson expressed his pleasure at serving on the Commission.

Appointment of Treasurer

Chairwoman Howard appointed Commissioner Davidson to fill the expired term of former Commissioner Lloyd Liles as Commission Treasurer.

Reading of the Minutes

The November 2016 minutes were approved as distributed.

Chief Finance Officer's Report

- **2015 – 2016 Audit Presentation** -- Michael Slapnik with Scott and Company reviewed the draft of the District's audited financial statements. He noted he had no problems with the overall audit. He mentioned meeting with the audit committee and reviewing the financials in detail with them prior to this meeting. All questions, comments and changes were minor and incorporated into this version. He encouraged all members to read the Management's Discussion and Analysis section as it provides a good recap of the year. He stated the financials are presented in two presentations, government-wide financial statements where the significant difference is representation of capital assets and long-term debt and pension liability on the net position statement (i.e. balance sheet) and government fund statements where they are expensed when acquired. He noted we had

another good year and have a strong financial standing. Lastly, he noted there was a finding that is classified as a significant deficiency related to the classification of construction in progress in the prior year financials which should have been expensed over the prior two fiscal years vs. a capital asset. All of it relates to the ongoing bond projects. It fell below the audit materiality threshold for the prior two years, as well as the current year; therefore, after discussing it with his staff and the District's management, it was decided to expense it within the current year being audited. He wrapped up the meeting asking the board members to review and respond with any questions or comments by December 24th. Considering no more questions and a final review by another partner at Scott and Company, the financials should be finalized prior to yearend to allow for posting to the EMMA website for timely bond reporting. Following a brief discussion, Stamps moved, Smith seconded, m/c unanimous, to accept the audit contingent upon no comments being received by December 24, 2016.

- **November 2016 Financial Reports** -- CFO Breta Rheney provided a report on the November 2016 financial statements. Riverbanks is showing a deficit of \$863,631 through November. This is ahead of the budgeted deficit by almost \$490,000 and ahead of the prior year actual by slightly more than \$315,000. Other highlights include:

Attendance

Attendance remains strong, with over 38,000 visitors ahead of budget and 57,000 over the same period last year. These numbers are a result of good weather and very good Boo and Lights attendance. The percentage of Paid Admission Visitors, as compared to total attendance is 42.2%, slightly less than last year's Paid Admission Visitors of 43.2%.

Balance Sheet

Assets

- Cash is still good. Riverbanks received almost \$515,000 in reimbursement from Richland County for the CSX Bridge in November. There is approximately \$316,000 still due from the County, plus the 50/50 split of the unsuitable soil expense.

Unassigned Fund Balance

- Of the approximate \$1.2 million of unassigned fund balance, slightly more than \$450,000 has been assigned to capital projects previously discussed and approved by the Commission. The Commission also approved moving \$500,000 from this category to the Operations cushion, increasing it from \$1.2 million to \$1.7 million. This will be reflected in next month's statements.

Revenue vs Expense

Revenue

- Revenue is running almost \$642,000 ahead of budget and \$630,000 ahead of prior fiscal year, exclusive of the Society operating transfer difference.

- Admission revenue and concessionaire revenue are reflective of the ticket price increase effective 7/1/16 and strong attendance.
- Events are mostly Boo at approximately \$100,000 and Lights at \$70,000, net revenue. Boo ticket prices increased after budget preparations, resulting in more revenue than budgeted. Additional expenses for the remaining fiscal year will reduce the revenue slightly.
- The first Riverbanks 5K Run netted approximately \$8,700.

Expenses

- Some departmental expense differences are a result of timing in actual vs. budgeted expenses.
- Animal care has incurred some higher than expected costs for drugs and lab work.
- Facility Management includes Facilities Maintenance & Life Support Systems (LSS) departments. Contracted expenses, safety supplies and tram repairs are over for Facilities Maintenance. Tools, small equipment, and parts and supplies are over for LSS.
- Utilities overage is split between electrical and water/sewer due to new exhibits in the Zoo and Garden. We are continually monitoring these by meter to better understand the increases.

Chief Operating Officer's Report

COO Stringfellow provided the following report:

- **Lights Before Christmas Update** – Stringfellow noted that we are now half-way through the 2016 Lights Before Christmas event and in spite of a few days of inclement weather attendance is on budget. SSA is reporting that their sales are up.
- **Attendance Trends and Membership Update** – A PowerPoint was presented that illustrated general attendance and membership trends over the past few years. Of particular note is the fact that as membership numbers have increased (to nearly 40,000 households) the daily percentage of members attending the Zoo and Garden has also increased. While this impacts admission and other earned revenues, it is offset by the increase in membership revenue. This will need to be monitored to ensure that all revenue is maximized.

President and CEO Report

CEO Krantz provided the following report:

- **Sea Lion Update** – Rodgers Builders is in the process of ordering a replacement for the broken viewing window. Everyone (architects, zoo staff, etc.) agrees that the glass window should be replaced with acrylic. Once the new window is installed the broken glass will be examined by an expert in an attempt to determine how/why it shattered. Only then can liability be determined. It is hoped that the window can be replaced in January.
- **Columbus Zoo Visit** – On December 6, a team of six people representing the Columbus Zoo (OH) visited Riverbanks to observe Sea Lion Landing. The

Columbus Zoo is in the early stages of designing their own sea lion exhibit and their architects and staff are traveling around the country looking at the latest designs. All six agreed that our exhibit is the best they have seen.

- **Waterfall Junction** – Krantz noted that construction has begun on the new toddler splash pad (replacing the stepping stone pond). The large stepping stones have been removed and the new piping installed.
- **Norman J. Arnold Foundation** – Krantz was pleased to report that the Zoo has received a \$100,000 contribution from the Norman J. Arnold Foundation. The staff crafted a proposal to construct replacement bird aviaries that were demolished to make way for the construction of the sea lion exhibit, based on the Foundation's request that the grant be used to construct a new animal exhibit.
- **NSF Grant** – Riverbanks has been awarded a portion of a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant. The grant is titled, *Science Learning + STEM Teens: Examining the role of your educators as learners and teachers in informal learning sites*. The grant will be shared between the University of South Carolina as well as a counterpart university in the United Kingdom, the Virginia Aquarium and EdVenture. Riverbanks is listed as a Co-Principal Investigator and will receive approximately \$80,000 over the 5-year grant cycle. This project has multiple facets, and our portion will entail looking at the messaging/impact of the Riverbanks ZooTeens, docents and graphics during a typical guest's visit to the Zoo. It will also allow us to follow new ZooTeen recruits through the ZooTeen program and evaluate the impact the program has on the teens as they begin making career-minded decisions and choose the degree fields they want to pursue. Krantz praised the efforts of Riverbanks' Director of Education, Elizabeth Clemens in securing the grant. Receiving a NSF grant is quite an accomplishment that could open the door for other prestigious grants.

Executive Session

An executive session was held to discuss a personnel issue. No action was taken.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 19th day of January 2017.

Jaw H. Stamps, Secretary