

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

**Attendance Report**

Commissioners Present: Phil Bartlett, Jan Stamps, Mary Howard, Jim Smith, Bud Tibshrary

Commissioners Absent: Liles, Williams

Staff Present: Satch Krantz, Tommy Stringfellow, Steve Hatchell

**Call to Order**

Chairman Bartlett called the meeting to order.

**Approval of the Minutes**

The January 2015 meeting minutes were approved as distributed.

**Chief Finance Officers Report**

COO Hatchell reported that Riverbanks completed the month of January with a year-to-date surplus of \$189,823. This amount reflects a positive variance of \$243,000 compared to the current fiscal year budget, as well as a positive variance of \$270,000 compared to actual totals through the same time last year. The following are the highlights of the January 2015 statements:

**Attendance**

- Due exclusively to the prolonged inclement weather, total attendance for the year is under budget by 3,868.
- Likewise, paid attendance continues to be below budget through January by 15,178 guests.
- Membership attendance continues to help offset the deficit of paid attendance and free admissions by being nearly 25,000 over budget through January.

**Balance Sheet**

- Cash is lower through January as compared to last year due to the timing of the reimbursement of bond funds (See "Due from Bond Fund" line item under Assets).
- Capital funding is at \$850,000.

**Revenue vs Expense**

**Revenue**

- Total Revenue is \$211,000 over budget through January, mainly due to the \$200,000 in capital support from the Society that was not budgeted. Total Revenue, compared to the same time last year, is \$862,000 over budget. This is due to the \$200,000 mentioned above, but also to the timing of receipt of funding from Richland County (\$289,000 over last year).
- Admissions' revenues for the year continue to be below budget by \$67,000, but are above the same point in time last year by \$171,000.
- Other Revenues are \$186,000 over budget and \$175,000 over the same time period last year. This is mainly due to the reduction of the property tax bill on 500 Rivermont for this year, as well as the refund check we received on the property taxes we paid for the property in 2013. We budget the Rivermont leases at zero net revenue, but we do generate modest net revenue every month from these leases. Donations and Sponsorships are both over budget through January by \$27,000 and \$39,000 respectively.

## **Expenses**

- Total Expenses are \$389,000 under current year's budget. All departments are under budget, with the exception of Guest Services, Facilities Management, and Utilities. Guest Services and Facilities are working quite hard in preparation for the AZA Mid-Year meeting and to get the Zoo and Garden ready for the spring and summer season. Utilities are up mostly due to the extended cold weather.

## **Full-Time Positions**

- There are 3 additional full-time positions as of January compared to last year. These additional positions include the LSS Manager, approved and hired in April of 2014, and the additional full-time positions created to avoid the ACA issue we encountered at the end of 2014.

## **Destination Riverbanks Update**

Krantz provided the following update:

- **Entry/Grizzly/Otter (EGO)**

Krantz was pleased to report that this large cluster of projects: the plaza, parking lot restroom, guest services building, gift shop, grizzly bear and otter exhibits and life support building are progressing extremely well, with only routine construction issues. The restroom and guest services building are now "dried in." Rodgers anticipates turning on the HVAC system in the guest services building next week. OTL, the exhibits subcontractor, is in the final stages of fabricating the artificial rock at the grizzly bear and otter exhibits, and the results so far are great. Also, one can now fully appreciate the size and scope of the new gift shop. It will be an incredible addition to the Zoo. We are still within budget and on target for an early July 2015 completion date. At this time we are still uncertain as to the impact that construction of the pedestrian bridge may have on our ability to fully use the new entrance. We should know more about this with the next 30 days.

- **Sea Lion**

Rodgers Builders began laying steel and pouring concrete for the sea lion holding building foundation last week. Due to the size of the two sea lion buildings (animal holding and public viewing), this work will continue for several more weeks. No serious issues were discovered during the preceding site work phase, where unforeseen conditions can create significant change orders. Other than the foundation work, there is really nothing more to report than the schedule, which Rodgers claims they will still make (late spring 2016). At this early stage of construction we are still on budget and schedule.

- **Children's Garden**

Krantz noted that while the project continues to have problems, most of them are/were beyond our (Riverbanks) control or due to unforeseen circumstances. The following is a list of the main issues:

- **Schedule** – The rains of December and January had a severe impact on the construction schedule because the project was still in the site work phase (unlike EGO, which by then was "out of the ground"). It is still too early to know how this will impact the garden's opening.
- **Water Feature** – Krantz noted that early in the design process we decided to split the construction of the water feature (splash pad, stream and pond) from the rest of the children's garden project. We did this due to the unique nature of water features, particularly the artificial rock and water quality/life support components (pumps, filters, etc.). We (Riverbanks) contracted directly with Cost of Wisconsin, one of the nation's leading zoo exhibit contractors. Cost constructed all of Riverbanks' original exhibits -- cat/bear, siamang island, etc. -- and they will build the new sea lion exhibit rock, working as a subcontractor to Rodgers. In turn, Cost hired a pool designer and installer from North Carolina, Mastin Aquatics, to engineer and install the life support system for the water

feature. This company allegedly had experience in building similar features in theme parks. This company did not perform as expected, and about three weeks ago Cost terminated their contract with them (Riverbanks had no contractual agreement with Mastin; they were a subcontractor to Cost). Cost has since hired another pool contractor/consultant. That company is now on site and, by all accounts, is performing well.

- Poles – Construction has been slowed due to wooden poles. Specially treated (non-toxic) wooden poles will be used in the tree houses and parts of the garden’s education building. These poles were delivered last week and promptly rejected due to their poor condition. The poor condition was caused by the amount of moisture that was in the poles at the time they were treated. New poles are supposed to be delivered later this week. In spite of these “issues,” the project is still on budget and mostly on time.

- **Rivermont Parking Lot**

In spite of the unsuitable soil conditions (described in an earlier email to the Commission), this project is still progressing at a rapid pace. We have been very pleased with CR Jackson, the contractor, and are convinced that they will deliver as much of the parking lot as they can to us by Spring Break (bad weather notwithstanding). Due to the above conditions, we will have a substantial change order associated with the removal of the poor soil. Krantz reminded the Commission that we have a verbal commitment from Richland County staff to pay for this parking lot with Transportation Penny funds.

- **CSX Pedestrian Bridge**

Krantz noted that there is little to add to the status of this project. CSX now has most of what it needs from Jumper Carter Sease in order to grant final approval of the bridge design and authorize construction. CSX still requires two additional documents, a “stamped” set of drawings from the structural engineer and a certain document from the company that will supply the pre-engineered portion of the bridge. Todd Sease assures us that one of these documents was delivered to CSX earlier today but that he is waiting on the other document from the bridge deck supplier. The other major development related to the bridge is that Rodgers presented the Zoo with a preliminary cost estimate to build the bridge last Tuesday. Per our procurement code (and Richland County’s), Rodgers’ cost to build the bridge cannot exceed 10% of our current contract amount, approximately \$23 million (EGO and sea lion). This means their cost to build the bridge cannot exceed approximately \$2.3 million. Their initial estimate was just under \$3 million. However, after getting clarification from JCS on three main components of the estimate (site work, concrete and electrical), Rodgers is revising their estimate. An updated cost estimate should be received by the middle of next week.


## **President & CEO Report**

Krantz presented the following report:

- **ARC Renovation** -- This project is 98% complete and the results are stunning. The only things left to be completed are to finish tweaking the new graphics and a handful of minor punch list items. Except for a major, unanticipated issue with the subfloor, this project was on budget.
- **Solo’s Market** (Ape Island Snack Bar) – This SSA-funded project is proceeding very well and is on time and on budget. Kingdom Productions, SSA’s theming company, will be on-site next week. We are on target for an early March 2015 reopening.
- **Aviary Replacement** – This first of several replacement aviaries is nearing completion. It is hoped that it will be complete within the next week and that we can then begin landscaping so that the birds can be introduced prior to mid-March. The project is on budget.
- **Richland County Council Liaisons** – Krantz noted that Richland County Council has appointed councilmen Greg Pierce, Norman Jackson and Torrey Rush to serve as liaisons to the Riverbanks Park Commission.

- **AZA Mid-Year Meeting** – The AZA Mid-Year meeting is rapidly approaching. The conference will begin on March 22<sup>nd</sup> and conclude on March 27<sup>th</sup>. It is anticipated that as many as 700 people may attend the meeting. Krantz informed the Commission that they are encouraged to attend both the Icebreaker (State Museum) and Zoo Day, scheduled for Monday and Tuesday March 23 and 24, respectively.
- **Gorilla Transfers** – On Tuesday, February 17, the Zoo's bachelor group of three male gorillas were successfully transferred to the Houston Zoo. Beginning next week and continuing for the next several weeks we will transfer in to Riverbanks a total of four new gorillas, a male from the Birmingham Zoo, two females from Zoo Atlanta and one female from the North Carolina Zoo. It is hoped that these gorillas will be bred within the not-too-distant-future.

The Meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 19 day of March 2015.  \_\_\_\_\_, Secretary