

**Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
17 August 2017**

Attendance Report

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

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Tommy Stringfellow, Andy Cabe, Melodie Scott-Leach

Call to Order

Chairwoman Howard called the meeting to order.

Special Presentation:

Andy Cabe, director of botanical garden, and Melodie Scott-Leach, director of zoo habitat horticulture, talked individually about their background, passion for the industry and what areas of responsibility they have for the botanicals and habitats in the Zoo and Garden. Both presented their vision and goals for what they would like to achieve this fiscal year and in the next two to three years. The Commission provided positive feedback, stating that they really enjoyed getting to know the two better.

Reading of the Minutes

The July 2017 minutes were approved as distributed.

Chief Finance Officer's Report

CFO Rheney provided the following report:

Currently Riverbanks has excess revenues of \$324,797.

Attendance

The annual attendance for FY2017 is projected to be 1,389,856. This is over budget by 189,856 and 109,032 over the prior fiscal year. *Annual attendance may be adjusted as we complete the closing of the fiscal year.*

Revenue vs. Expense – Subject to Change

Revenue, net

- Revenue for the year is shown as \$990,798 over budget and \$1,194,949 over prior fiscal year, excluding the increase in the Society's operating contribution.
- Concessionaire commission and net Rides and Attractions comprise 51% of the increase over budget.

- Admission Fee revenue is the largest increase over prior year due to the increase in ticket pricing, comprising 78% of the increase.

Expenses

- Departmental expenses are currently in excess of budget by \$150,233 and \$824,130 over prior fiscal year.
- Utilities are \$140,305 over budget, comprising 93% of the excess before end of year accruals.
- The excess over prior year is felt in all departments and is mostly due to new exhibits and increased attendance.
- Animal Care, Guest Services & Utilities comprise 67% of the increase.

Operating Transfers

- These transfers consist of the following:

○ Birdhouse & Discovery Center floor	\$ 60,152
○ Toddler splash pad	\$143,100
○ Hospital roof, HVAC & water heater	\$122,861
○ Sea Lion acrylic glass & shade structure	\$120,779
○ Bond & bridge expenses	\$544,172

Chief Operating Officer's Report

COO report was provided by Tommy Stringfellow:

- Brew at the Zoo was once again a sellout with 2,450 tickets. The 150 VIP tickets sold out the first week at \$100 each. We received great feedback from the vendors as well as the guests that attended.
- Farm to Fork is scheduled for August 31 at 6pm. The first-time event is a sellout @ \$100/ticket for 50 guests.
- ZOOfari is scheduled for Friday, September 22. Tommy will bring tickets to the September meeting for the Commissioners and their guests.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

President and CEO Stringfellow provided the following report:

- Update on Meerkats - The meerkat exhibit is currently being used for radiated tortoises as we replant their exhibit. In the meantime, Riverbanks' two meerkats are in the hospital receiving treatment for a feral cat disease. We are working with CLR to obtain the costs associated with updating and expanding the holding area in order to manage and breed a family of meerkats. The current housing is not conducive to managing families due to the holding size and configurations.
- Riverbanks has completed the ownership transfer of Rivermont Drive from the City and is now able to gate the road off after hours to protect the campus areas.
- The annual employee breakfast is scheduled for Thursday, August 24. This will be the first staff breakfast with the new President and CEO. Tommy will present his vision and short term/long term goals. The Commission is invited to attend.

- The Total Solar Eclipse will take place Monday, August 21, and Riverbanks has prepared a dozen special presentations for the day along with scientific observations and research on animal behaviors. We are expecting a large crowd and preparing as we do for Spring Break crowds. Riverbanks is receiving media attention from around the country, specifically about how the animals will react during the eclipse.
- A new bird aviary has been designed and is out to bid for construction. The aviary will be paid for with donation dollars from the Norman J. Arnold Foundation. Estimated construction costs are \$100,000, and the aviary will be located across the sidewalk from the back of the bird house and adjacent to the children's train. This is the second of eight aviaries that are needed to replace the collection of birds that were originally removed from the grounds in preparation for the sea lion exhibit.
- \$300,000 of the \$1.7 million in capital expenses, approved by the Commission in the summer of 2016, was allocated for the construction of an animal holding facility as part of the improvements needed to expand Riverbanks' education outreach program. This facility will also allow us to have the ability to engage Zoo and Garden guests with more one-on-one animal encounters throughout the park. The RFP for the design of this building is in process, with the goal to receive bids by the end of September.

Executive Session

The Commission went into executive session to discuss personnel matters.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 21 day of September 2017.

Jan W. Stamps, Secretary