

Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
16 July 2020

Attendance Report

Commissioners Present (via Conference Call): Deneen Shockley, Bob Davidson, Mary Howard, Phil Bartlett, Alana Williams, Mike Velasco

Commissioners Absent: Jan Stamps

Staff Present: Tommy Stringfellow, Christie Vondrak, Lochlan Wooten, Katie Eaton, Kathryn Masewicz

Call to Order

Chairman Davidson called the meeting to order.

Reading of the Minutes

The June 18, 2020 commission minutes were approved as distributed.

Bartlett motioned to approve the minutes, Velasco seconded, m/c unanimous.

Oath

Chairman Davidson distributed the oath of office to newly appointed At-Large (Lexington) Commissioner, Mrs. Deneen Shockley.

Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Davidson extended his appreciation for what President Stringfellow and his staff have done to protect Riverbanks during this challenging time. Expenses are low and that is a tribute to what the staff are doing on their part to help as well.

President & Chief Executive Officer's Report

President and CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- Stringfellow welcomed newly appointed commissioner Deneen Shockley to her first Riverbanks Parks Commission meeting. The Commission and the Riverbanks is excited to have her on board.
- Financial Summary for month ending in June and preliminary end of fiscal year report:
 - The membership number is inflated due to membership extensions from COVID closing
 - Membership revenue is down which can be attributed to closure. For year end a little less than a million down in revenue
 - Per Cap is up which is positive for what individuals are spending on the average
 - Total attendance for the year is finishing at 880,289- budget was 1.25 million
 - Bottom line is \$1.2M down in revenue. Will pull from operating reserve to offset loss in revenue. Will leave less than one million in operating reserve
- Velasco motion to approve the financials, second Williams, m/c unanimous
- Funding Update- Still working closely with Parker Poe Consulting and lobbyist Lander Hiott. There are still opportunities in the works for potential funding. Tommy will send the commission an email with a link to support the pending Federal funds for Covid

relief. State money has been distributed by the Governor and now we are applying for some of those funds. Hoping to see movement on that in the next month or so.

- Working with Rebecca Best to put together an action plan to contact and thank the council members for providing the funds that they did.
- Aquarium Update- The Boyd Foundation has provided a generous gift that will allow for Aquarium and Reptile Center renovations. Last week had meetings with impacted staff to get their input on how to best overhaul that building to make it more impactful and inspiring to our guests. Ideally would like this project to be wrapped up by summer-fall of next year.

Chief Administrative Officer's Report:

CAO Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- Christie shared that she was on an AZA panel for building resiliency in organizations during these times and how other institutions are navigating their cultures and organizations in our industry. Dan Ashe has shared that for the next 12-24 months we will likely be in survival mode before we can shift to recovery mode and can get back to doing the great work that we are here for.
- Next week is National Zookeeper week. We will be doing some highlights on social media with our Zookeepers and have found ways to treat them throughout the week
- Have not added any new staff yet but have replaced/filled positions as needed.
- More staff testing positive for COVID 19. We have created a contact tracing program to protect our staff and guests. Continuing to monitor that our COVID related safety measures are still in place and that staff are not getting complacent.

Chief Operating Officer's Report

COO Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- Rhino is coming along well. The project is close to being completely finished. Horticulture is working today to finish the Savannah grasslands look with newly planted grasses. The two female rhinos are here and their introductions to each other are going very well. We will be hosting media for the opening of the exhibit, though we will not be able to do a traditional ribbon cutting this year.
- New binturong has arrived. Preparing a new exhibit for them in the RCO tunnel.
- A few corals from the Florida Reef Tract collection have started to reproduce which is very exciting and important.
- Opened kangaroo and lorikeet exhibits in the last week. Continuing to monitor the ability to open the splash pads in Waterfall Junction. With case numbers the way they are at now, it is not yet safe to reopen.
- Riverbanks Summer Camp has a few weeks left and it has gone very well despite all the challenges. The participating families have been very grateful and thankful that Riverbanks was still able to offer this opportunity.
- Brew at the Zoo has been rescheduled (without a date yet) and we will continue to monitor what options for Zoofari will be.
- Will be launching more virtual programming through both education and marketing to allow for more opportunities and new offerings
- Seeing a slowdown of call and email volume from guests which has been a welcome relief to our teams

- Commissioner Davidson inquired about what the Commission can do to help during these times. Christie will follow up separately.

Bartlett motion to adjourn, Howard second m/c unanimous

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 20 day of August 2020.

Michael Velasco, Secretary