

**Riverbanks Park Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**16 September 2021**

**Attendance Report**

Commissioners Present: Bob Davidson, Deneen Shockley, Mike Velasco, Jan Stamps, Alana Williams, Jeff Reeves, Cliff Bourke

Commissioners Absent:

Staff Present: Tommy Stringfellow, Christie Vondrak, Lochlan Wooten, Jessica Johnson

**Call to Order**

Chairman Davidson called the meeting to order.

**Reading of the Minutes**

The August 19, 2021 commission minutes were approved as distributed.

**Chairman's Remarks**

Chairman Davidson remarked that the groundbreaking for the Boyd Foundation Aquarium earlier in the week was very well done and had a great turnout of media and local persons of importance. He is looking forward to the continued progress of the ARC renovation project.

**VP of Finance Report**

VP of Finance Jessica Johnson provided the following report:

- The commissioners received the August monthly financials, along with the deferred maintenance for capital items list
- For August, member households was up to 45,402- well over budget of 39,000.
- Total attendance remains strong through August
- To date we have collected \$225,000 of the \$1 million from Lexington County
- Stamps motioned to approve the August Financials, Reeves seconded, m/c unanimous.
- Stringfellow and Johnson reviewed the capital items list. Every month the updated list will be shared with Commission as priorities shift and reorganize. The allocated capital fund balance on the financials should be reflective of funds used on capital projects as funds are spent as well.

**Chief Administrative Officer's Report:**

CAO Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- Pleased to report that our positive COVID cases have declined since September when the Delta Variant hit our team hard, and we had the most cases to date.
- The Aquarium and Herpetology teams have been working hard behind the scenes along with many other departments to get our animals moved into temporary holdings for the Aquarium renovations. Lots of hard work and good teamwork happening.
- Shared save the dates for our ZooFari, on site COVID vaccinations, and Boo at the Zoo.

- Staff nominated 4 conservation projects and 100 staff voted for the next recipients of the Satch Krantz Conservation Fund dollars. This year so far, we have had 9 staff nominate different projects and we have donated \$17,000 to support their picks.
- AZA has updated the accreditation standard 7.9 to have established and measured goals with our Diversity program. We have revised our DEAI program and will be forming a committee to focus on these initiatives and look forward to sharing more with the commission as we progress.

**Chief Operating Officer's Report:**

COO Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- COVID vaccinations have been approved by the SC state vet and we have received our allotment and will be administering in at-risk species
- The ARCC groundbreaking was held on 9/14 with several special guests including members of the Boyd family, Governor McMaster, conservation partners at DNR and a variety of state, local and federal level politicians.
- AZA inspection went extremely well. There were a few notable items in the final report:
  - Riverbanks needs to rebuild the giraffe hay barn.
  - The reptiles need better housing, which will be fixed when the ARCC renovations are complete.
  - The inspection team report complimented the Riverbanks team's passion, dedication and positive attitude, and said the animal division is outstanding in every way.
  - Inspection response is due Monday, and inspection hearing takes place on Oct 22 and is the final step in the accreditation process.
- We are working on opening Sky-High Safari ropes course on weekends, but we still face employee recruitment and retention struggles. Fortunately, the splash areas are closed so we can redirect staffing.
- We are under a 60-day mask mandate as a result of city and county ordinances.

**Executive Session**

Davidson motioned to enter executive session to discuss a legal matter, Stamps seconded.

No action was taken following the executive session.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 21 day of October 2021.

Jane H. Stamps, Vice Chair