

Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
18 November 2021

Attendance Report

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

Commissioners Absent: Cliff Bourke

Staff Present: Tommy Stringfellow, Christie Vondrak, Lochlan Wooten, Jessica Johnson, Katie Eaton, Rachael Bashor

Guest Presentation: Prior to meeting start, Director of Education, Rachael Bashor shared a presentation on the Riverbanks Conservation Committee. Riverbanks participates in many conservation efforts, including funding small grants through the Satch Krantz Conservation Fund, providing institutional support for conservation projects, sponsoring field conservation associates, participating in and leading various AZA initiatives, partnering with local resources on wildlife projects, and much more! The Conservation Committee is in the process of developing their plans and focus for the next few years and looks forward to sharing more on the great conservation work done at Riverbanks.

Call to Order

Chairman Davidson called the meeting to order.

Reading of the Minutes

The October 21, 2021, commission minutes were approved as distributed.

Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Davidson remarked that he was impressed with the great work that the Riverbanks Conservation Committee is doing and looks forward to hearing updates on their efforts in the future.

VP of Finance Report

VP of Finance, Jessica Johnson provided the following report:

- Michael Slapnik and Terri Wilson from Scott & Company presented a brief overview of the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 audit. The auditors met earlier in the week with the audit committee (Velasco and Williams) for an in-depth review. Scott & Company is providing a clean audit opinion, which is the highest audit opinion possible. The financial statements are fairly presented in accordance with GAAP (generally accepted accounting principles). There are no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in internal control to report and no audit adjustments.
 - Velasco motion to accept the FY2020-2021 audit, Shockley seconded, m/c unanimous
- Johnson presented the October 2021 financials. Total membership is up to 47,000 household memberships and attendance is about 58,000 over budget.

- As a reminder, Riverbanks did not qualify for any federal support to cover losses from the pandemic. Earlier this year the Small Business Administration opened a grant program called the “Shuttered Venue Operators Grant,” and we found that Riverbanks was able to apply under the “museum” category. Riverbanks just received our grant amount of \$6.5M. These funds will be applied to reimburse payroll since March 2020.
 - Stamps motioned to approve the October financials, Reeves seconded, m/c unanimous

President & CEO Report:

President & CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- AZA Accreditation hearing went well and was successful. Riverbanks has been awarded accreditation for another 5 years.
- Yesterday the Society Board met to discuss members for re-election, the new 2022 slate of Executive Officers, and new incoming board members. Stringfellow shared the names of these Board members with the Commission.
- December meeting discussion. The Commission decided not to meet in the month of December.
- Travel with Riverbanks- in the newest Riverbanks Magazine, you will see the next Africa trip advertised. We will invite Tom LaRock of Safari Professionals to come speak to our Society Board and Commission on how these trips operate.

Chief Administrative Officer’s Report:

CAO Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- We are continuing to support our teams with more social and appreciation events throughout the year. We are hosting a “cookies & cocoa” event for staff this week and will also provide them with a festive winter reusable face mask.
- Mask update for staff- we are continuing to ask our staff to wear masks in indoor spaces
- Vondrak shared a reminder of the “Riverbanks Gives Back” program. All staff are provided one day a year as a paid day off to go volunteer for something they are passionate about.

Chief Operating Officer’s Report:

COO Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- Wooten provided an update on the ARCC construction project. Construction continues to progress through the demolition phase. Work has begun on the front entrance and grading of the new tortoise yard outside the entrance.
- Boo at the Zoo went very well. We did keep a ticket cap this year for attendance. The event performed beyond expectations. About 60% of attendees were members.
- Looking forward to this year’s Lights event. Lights will open on select nights beginning Saturday, November 20th through December 30. The schedule is available online.
- RFP out for marketing agency. Moving forward we want to make sure that we are building conservation into all of our roles and messaging.
- Timeline- we are looking to do a membership increase in January. We will monitor doing an admission increase with the opening of the renovated ARCC.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 20th day of January 2021.

Jon Stamps, Vice Chair