

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE NEW ORLEANS CITY PARK IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

A meeting of the Board of Commissioners (the “Board”) of the New Orleans City Park Improvement Association (the “NOCPIA”) was called to order Tuesday, January 28, 2020 at 4 p.m. by President Larry Katz. The meeting was held in the Administration Building.

PRESENT: Commissioners, Adkerson, Arnold, Batt, Cahn, Dale, DeBlieux, Fitzpatrick, Gardner, Giarrusso, Hess, Katz, Lester, McNeil, Nossler, Pate, Savoie, Spears, Taylor, Waller, and Worley

ABSENT: Commissioners Arata, Baker, Banks, Hollis, LeCorgne, Leger, Lupo, Masinter, Pineda, Seamon, Thomas, and Thorpe

STAFF: Bob Becker, Rob DeViney, Keith Hemel, Casie Duplechain, Briana Spruille, Sarah Olivier, and Denise Joubert

COUNSEL: Henry Kinney

GUESTS: Charles Marsala, Leslie Ackel, Leslie Kramer, Andrea Legrand, and Edmund Schrenk,

President Katz introduced Leslie Kramer, operator of Equest Farms, who reported on the status of the equestrian facility. Kramer reported that the 20th anniversary for “Tails but no Black Tie” fundraiser is scheduled for March 14. Becker thanked Kramer for her presentation and hard work on this event.

Public Comment – There was no public comment on any agenda item

Paul Soniat stated that the Botanical Garden Foundation is working toward accreditation for the Garden, and revising the Strategic Plan. They would like the City Park Improvement Association Board to approve a new Mission Statement for the Garden; “To enrich life through the knowledge and appreciation of plants, art, and culture.” The Board voted unanimously to approve the new Mission Statement. Commissioner Rebecca Lester mentioned that the Foundation was inspired by CPIA to simplify the mission statement; “recreation, culture, education, and beautification.” Becker mentioned that it is important to have a clear and simple mission statement.

The minutes from the November, 2019 and December, 2019 board meeting were unanimously approved.

Larry Katz, President of the NOCPIA Board of Commissioners, called the meeting to order. Katz introduced new Board Members, Julie Nossler, and Rob Worley.

Katz introduced Cynthia Bankston, with Postlethwaite & Netterville; who is the independent auditor for the Park. Bankston presented the financial audit, and delivered a positive report.

Bankston reported that there were no negative audit findings. Becker thanked the Fiscal staff, and P&N for their work on the audit. The board unanimously voted to accept the audit report.

In the President's Report, Larry Katz reported that resumes for the Chief Executive Officer position are due on February 17. Katz thanked all Commissioners that attended the Wisner Tract public meeting. He distributed and reviewed the Development Annual Fund Commitment form, and encouraged everyone to consider.

A Resolution was unanimously adopted that authorizes the Chief Executive Officer to claim \$4,066.53 from the Unclaimed Property Account administered by the Treasury of the State of Louisiana. Katz thanked John Schroeder, State Treasurer, for making the Park aware, and for offering to expedite the payment.

In the Management Report, Chief Executive Officer Becker reported that operating results from November were ahead of budget. As a result we were able to reduce our year to date deficit. He noted that Celebration in the Oaks was very successful. A major factor to its success was the weather. Last year there were ten days that were impacted by the weather, opposed to two and one half days this year. One being the Saturday before Christmas which approximately \$300,000. We missed our \$3.0 million dollar budget by only \$10,000. Becker thanked all of the staff that worked on the event.

Becker reported on the following:

- The ordinance reauthorization of the City's participation in the Tax District was approved and signed by the Mayor. It is effective through 2026. Becker thanked Councilmember Joe Giarrusso for his help.
- The Park has experienced a rash of car break-ins at various facilities. We have taken steps to increase security, through the use of overtime and contracting with other law enforcement agencies.
- Billy Bayle, our former Police Chief passed away. Billy had given over 30 years of service to the Park.
- President Katz noted that Biz Magazine recognized Bob Becker as one of the Executives of the Year in 2019.

Committee Reports:

P, A&E – Edmund Schrenk reported that the money for the inclusive playground requested by the City will come from the next bond issue. Lamar Contractors has begun to work on the new Maintenance facility. The Park engaged a consultant to help develop a plan for Couba Island. The Committee will meet to discuss the proposed Wine and Beer garden.

CITO/Special Events – Commissioner Chenier Taylor updated the Board on future events. She noted that we had a very successful Celebration in the Oaks.

Development – Casie Duplechain distributed the annual fund commitment form. To date, eleven legislatures have confirmed to attend the luncheon on February 6. The Park's end of year annual unrestricted giving for the fiscal year is \$175,000; approximately \$150,000 to goal. In the process of revamping the Oak Tree Circle to identify where revenue will be dedicated i.e. operating versus endowment. The Heart of the Park Hat Luncheon is off to a great start \$220,000 to date, \$93,000 increase since last month and approximately \$30,000 ahead of last year

Environmental Stewardship – Commissioner Carro Gardner reported that the City signed the contract with Batture for the design of the City Park Water Plan. Several school tours have been conducted at Couturie Forest. Meg Adams showed a short film on the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation shoreline restoration project at the Volunteer Center, as well as a drone video of the restored portion of the Louisiana trail, the native plant area around Big Lake. There was a collaborative planting day in conjunction with park staff, Master Gardeners, Iris Society, the Native Plant Initiative and New Orleans Town Gardeners on the Louisiana trail at Big Lake. There will be another planting day on March 21. The Park is considering having an engineer conduct an Energy management study on eight buildings, in collaboration with Energy Smart, an incentive program of Entergy New Orleans. 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and it will be celebrated on April 21st in the Botanical Garden, in conjunction with the LPO Swing in the Oaks at the Great Lawn. If anyone is interested in joining the Committee contact Carro Gardner or Meg Adams.

Finance & Audit – Commissioner David Waller reported that the Park is doing well financially. Golf is performing well – Hemel will compile a one page document on departmental revenue status.

Friends – Commissioner Larry Dale reported that Friends currently has more than 5700 members, over 650 from last year. Currently interviewing for an Executive Director. An Administrative Assistant was hired and should start in a week. Lark in the Park is scheduled for March 13, 2020. The proceeds will benefit Celebration in the Oaks. Friends secured a car from Bryan Subaru to be raffled. Sponsor deadline is March 2, in need of auction items. Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser is the honorary chair of Lark.

H&G Committee/Dog Park – Commissioner David Waller reviewed ongoing projects. Work continues on improvements behind the Casino building.

Legal & Risk Management – No Report

NOMA – No Report

Wisner Tract – Sarah Olivier reported that Kurt Culbertson, from Design Workshop, has produced preliminary schematic drawings for the tract. The plans are very nature oriented; remove old golf paths, to create an enhanced trail network and focus on removing invasive species and planting native species.. A public meeting to secure more input will be held on January 15.

Public Relations – No Report

Nominating – According to the By-Laws, the President makes all appointments to the Committees, with the exception of the Nominating Committee; which is voted on by the Board. The Nominating Committee members are Robert Lupo, Cleveland Spears, and Larry Katz. If anyone would like to serve on the Nominating Committee, contact Larry Katz or Bob Becker.

Sports – Commissioner Adam McNeil reported that high school soccer will end soon and track will begin in March.

Tennis – Commissioner Rob Worley

Botanical Garden Foundation – Commissioner Rebecca Lester reported that the job description for Special Events Manager at the Botanical Garden has been posted. Lester passed out a list of upcoming events in the outdoor kitchen as well as educational programs in the Botanical Garden. She noted that a dinner on March 5, featuring Chef Ryan Prewitt of Peche restaurant was added to the schedule. A board retreat was held on January 11 to begin work on a strategic plan for the Garden.

OTHER REPORTS:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 18, 2020 at 4 p.m.

Denise Joubert
Recording Secretary

Bryan Fitzpatrick