

## 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, March 26, 2019 at 4 p.m. by President Larry Katz. The meeting was held in the Administration Building.

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Arata, Arnold, Baker, Batt, Cahn, Dale, DeBlieux, Fitzpatrick, Gardner, Giarrusso, Katz, LeCorgne, Leger, Masinter, McNeil, Pate, Pettus, Pineda, Savoie, Seamon, Sloss, Taylor, and Waller

**ABSENT:** Commissioners Adkerson, Banks, Donovan, Hess, Hollis, Lupo, McCrossen, Messer, Navarre, Powell, Spears, and Tregre

**STAFF:** Bob Becker, Paul Soniat, Meg Adams, Amanda Frentz, Rob DeViney, Sarah Olivier, Lindsey Kirsch, and Denise Joubert

**COUNSEL:** Henry Kinney

**GUESTS:** Casie Duplechain, Andrea LeGrand, and Dana Hansel

A quorum was present and voting throughout the meeting.

Larry Katz, President of the NOCPIA Board of Commissioners, called the meeting to order.

Anyone wishing to comment on any item on the agenda must sign the sign-in sheet and indicate what item they wish to comment on.

Katz mentioned that at the request of Commissioner Billy Arnold the February minutes were amended to, "A discussion took place in regarding to the impact the festival has on the Park, and our current partners and visitors".

The minutes of the January, and February Board meetings were approved.

Katz introduced Paul Soniat, Director of the Botanical Garden. He gave a history of the Botanical Garden, and the Horticultural Department; and showed pre and post Katrina photos.

In the Presidents Report, Katz reported on the following:

- Children's Museum construction is underway
- Sculpture Garden is scheduled to open in May
- Café Du Monde under construction
- Friends Executive Director search
- Lark fundraiser
- Hat Luncheon scheduled for April 11
- Drainage improvements at Festival Grounds

- Voodoo negotiations
- Wisner Tract discussions
- Tad Gormley visioning meeting
- Botanical Garden Response fundraiser
- Botanical Garden Outdoor kitchen
- New swing ride in the Amusement Park
- Girl Scout camp-out
- Fundraising for Storyland
- Beer and Wine Garden discussions

Becker mentioned that the All-State Sugar Bowl Track and Field Championship, held at Tad Gormley Stadium, were well attended. There were 1800 participants this year compared to 1300 in 2018.

Becker mentioned that Councilmember Jay Banks has a conflict, and attending our monthly meetings will be difficult. Banks wanted to express to the Board that he is very supportive of the Park, and will speak with the other Councilmembers to see if they are interested in serving on the Board.

In the Management Report, Chief Executive Officer Becker reported, that through January, we were approximately \$656, 000 below the budget. In February we reduced the deficit to \$478,000, by instituting additional cost controls, and increased revenue. In the first eight months of the year, the golf course was closed 41% of the time, tennis has been closed 34% of the time, all due to bad weather. Other losses were in outdoor activities including Celebration in the Oaks, the Amusement Park, and City Putt. Overall, we are behind in departments that are weather dependent.

- Staff members, and several board members attended several community outreach meetings, in each of the Council Districts, to explain the millage proposal. Mayor Cantrell attended each meeting, and is a strong advocate of the proposal.
- At the request of Management and the Executive Committee, the Board unanimously approved the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between the City Park Improvement Association, the City of New Orleans, the Audubon Commission, and the New Orleans Recreation Development Commission. The CEA requires interagency programming to ensure equitable access, to recreations opportunities at Parks and Facilities. It also requires participation in two meetings per year, to discuss shared initiatives, cooperative programming, and all other efforts to coordinate parks and recreation services throughout the City. There will also be quarterly meetings to assess the effectiveness of the Cooperative Endeavor, and evaluate the level of cooperation between the entities involved. Commissioner Paul Masinter noted that the agreement has been carefully reviewed the by the Park, and legal counsel, and creates certain obligations in exchange for the millage. Any party may terminate their participation in the Agreement for cause by sending written notice to all Parties involved. Some of the obligations that we are assuming include extensive reporting and transparency requirements. The CEA also

commits us to support a City wide Master Plan for Parks and Receptions. Commissioner Jay Batt asked what contracts or agreements, rise to the level of requiring the entire Board's approval. Masinter responded that Bob has limitations on what contracts he can, and cannot, execute; without authority being given by the Board. Councilmember Joe Giarrusso abstained from voting, because he previously voted in favor of the proposal with the City Council. Giarrusso noted that he sees the CEA as a device to memorialize the obligations among the various entities. Commissioner Waller asked if the CEA is available for public viewing. Becker noted that the CEA is available on the City's website for viewing.

- Spoke with employees at an all-staff meeting to review recent park developments, and explain what activities they are permitted to undertake, with regard to the upcoming millage.

Katz introduced Shon Baker, Friends appointment to the Board. Baker noted that she is the incoming president of Friends of City Park.

#### *Committee Reports:*

P, A&E – Edmund Schrenk reported that Grow Dat currently occupies seven acres, and requested an additional three acres of land. The Committee recommended acceptance of the request. The Besthoff Sculpture Garden is scheduled to open in May. The lagoon in the Sculpture Garden is currently being filled. Renovation of the Casino Building is delayed approximately thirty days, due to plumbing issues. The Botanical Garden kitchen is scheduled for completion in August.

CITO/Special Events – Andrea LeGrand reported on upcoming events. The Big Bass Fishing Rodeo is scheduled for March 30. Bunny Hops, a new adult event is scheduled for April 20, in the Amusement Park.

Development – Commissioner Jay Batt invited all Commissioners to attend the Committee meeting on Wednesday, March 27 @ 11am. Batt thanked Commissioner Richard Cahn, and Baptist Campus Ministries for their donation to the Wisner Tract. The Storyland Campaign is close to raising \$1,000,000. Batt thanked Casie Duplechain, and the Friends staff for an amazing Lark in the Park in spite of weather constraints.

Environmental Stewardship – Commissioner Carro Gardner reported that, in an effort to reduce single use plastics, we produced reusable bags for sale in the gift shops and at plant sales at the Pelican Greenhouse. We received a \$25,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. We worked on shore restoration, and lagoon dredging behind the Volunteer Center. Volunteers from Shell Oil are planting native Louisiana Iris, as well as other shoreline grasses with the help of students from NOLA Micro Schools and volunteers from Limitless Vistas. The Committee is collaborating with the local Girl Scouts organization to hold the 1st camp out in the Park, to be held on March 29, with approximately 55 girls participating. We are installing phenology trail in Couturie Forest. Earth Day is scheduled for April 16 in the Botanical Garden,

from 4-7, before the Swing in the Oaks event at the Great lawn. She invited everyone to attend the Lunch and Learn educational sessions.

#### Finance & Audit – No Report

Friends – Commissioner Larry Dale commended Casie Duplechain and her staff, for an amazing event; and making the right call to change the venue for the event, when bad weather threatened. Dale mentioned that attendance was down due to the timing of Mardi Gras Friends currently has more than 4,900 members. Emily Mueller has been hired as the new Executive Director, and will start in April. Casie Duplechain gave an update on the millage. A letter and pledge form of support was mailed to all Commissioners providing information on the Park's and Recreations millage reallocation proposal. Duplechain reviewed endorsements that we received to date. Mayor Cantrell will attend Swing in the Oaks on April 16 to speak about the proposal. Becker thanked Commissioner Mayra Pineda who filmed a segment for a video on the millage in English, and Spanish. Commissioner Paul Masinter thanked Duplechain for all her work and efforts. He also thanked Rebecca Dietz at Audubon Institute for her willingness to go anywhere to promote the campaign. If anyone has an organizations that you would like someone to make a presentation, contact Duplechain or Katz. Katz recognized Masinter for his leadership, and support. He reported on the importance of the millage to the Park, and encouraged everyone to reach out to as many groups as possible to support the millage. He also asked for continued donations to the PAC. Commissioner Fitzpatrick asked if Friends is set up with GNOF to accept donations. Friends of City Park is meeting with the Ehrhardt Group to discuss promoting the millage.

H&G Committee/Dog Park – Commissioner Liz Sloss commended the Grounds Department for the tulips that were planted at Big Lake. Additional drains were located at the Festival Grounds, and we are working on a plan to optimize drainage. NOLA Soul has adopted the bio-swale, and will come four times a year to maintain the area. Wildflower seeds are being sown in front of Tad Gormley Stadium. The Grounds Department has hired temporary staff to assist with mowing. The Irrigation at Nursery Island has been completed. Commissioner Paul Masinter requested planting wildflowers by the Sculpture Garden.

#### Legal & Risk Management – No Report

NOMA – Katz thanked Commissioners Lupo, Batt, and Masinter for their help in securing NOMA endorsement for the millage.

Wisner Tract – Commissioner Bill LeCorgne reported that the Committee discussed the Master Plan for the Wisner Tract. A proposal from Design Workshop for the Master Plan is being finalized and Kurt Culbertson with DW will make a presentation to the Committee. After the Master Plan is complete, fundraising for the implementation of the project can begin

Public Relations – Commissioner Chenier Taylor updated the Board on upcoming events. She reported that the Big Bass Fishing Rodeo is in its 72nd year, and is the oldest freshwater bass fishing rodeo in the country. The Park started a new partnership with local fitness group Move ya Brass. We had a productive first meeting for the Scout Island Scream Park. Branding is shifting

from a frightening to a family friendly “Halloween Festival”. The Park received press for hosting a benefit for Lighthouse Louisiana at City Putt. NOMA is pushing forward for the May 15 opening of the Sculpture Garden Expansion. Becker mentioned that the Louisiana Children’s Museum is planning to schedule their opening events around Labor Day. Katz noted that the Louisiana Children’s Museum currently receives 150,000 visitors per year, and is expecting 250,000 at the new site in the Park. Commissioner David Waller asked if there are joint marketing opportunities for the Park and the Children’s Museum. Becker said that we exploring reciprocal arrangements between Park facilities and the Museum.

Nominating –. No Report

Sports – Commissioner Adam McNeil reported all sports fields are being utilized to capacity. Golf revenue is down due to inclement weather. Year to date, actual rounds played is 28,000; versus budgeted rounds of 34,000. Several junior programs are underway, including youth golf camps, and the First Tee program; with over 150 participants. Golf is hoping to make up some of the deficit with an increase in food and beverage sales.

Tennis – Becker reported that a subcommittee was formed to explore the possibility of constructing indoor courts. The Pepsi sponsorship agreement is scheduled to end in 2020.

Botanical Garden Foundation – Katz thanked Commissioner David Waller for his help in securing a donation to the PAC from the Botanical Garden Foundation. Waller mentioned that a part-time programmer was hired to manage the outdoor kitchen. Response, a fundraiser in the Botanical Garden is scheduled for April 5-7, 2019.

OTHER REPORTS: Becker reported that the Finance Committee approved opening an endowment with GNOF for funds from the Hat Luncheon. He encouraged everyone to attend Swing in the Oaks on April 16.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 23, 2019 at 4 p.m.

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Denise Joubert  
Recording Secretary

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Elizabeth Sloss