

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, February 18, 2020, at 4 p.m. by President Larry Katz. The meeting was held in the Administration Building.

PRESENT: Commissioners, Arata, Arnold, Batt, Cahn, DeBlieux, Gardner, Hess, Katz, LeCorgne, Leger, Lester, McNeil, Pate, Pineda, Savoie, Seamon, Thorpe, Waller, and Worley

ABSENT: Commissioners Adkerson, Baker, Banks, Dale, Fitzpatrick, Giarrusso, Hollis, Lupo, Masinter, Nossier, Spears, and Taylor

STAFF: Bob Becker, Rob DeViney, Keith Hemel, Casie Duplechain, Meg Adams, and Denise Joubert

COUNSEL: Henry Kinney

GUESTS: Andrea Legrand, and Edmund Schrenk,

Larry Katz, President of the NOCPIA Board of Commissioners, called the meeting to order. Katz mentioned that for the first time in 129 years, the board recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Katz announced that the former State Senator JP Morrell has been appointed to the board by the president of the Senate.

Public Comment – Anyone wishing to comment on any item on the agenda must sign the sign-in sheet, and indicate the item they wish to comment on.

In the President's Report, Larry Katz reported that the deadline for accepting applications for the Chief Executive Officer position has passed. He stated that he was very pleased by the number of applicants for the position. Katz said that he thought it was a testament of the excellent reputation of Bob Becker and City Park that we received so many applications. We have received applications locally, regionally, statewide, and nationwide. Katz mentioned that the committee will meet with the search firm in March.

Katz reported that the luncheon meeting with the Legislative Delegation was well attended. He noted that the food was excellent, and that Becker's presentation was outstanding. The meeting received positive feedback from the legislators. He mentioned that this was something that we hadn't done in about three years, but thought that it was something we should do every year. The Friends of City Park funded the luncheon. Commissioner Susan Hess said that she thought our approach should be more than an annual luncheon, and that we should be continuously reaching out to the legislators. Katz agreed noting that we are working on a three pronged

strategy: focusing on insurance payments, the TIF and capital outlay. Becker stated that we asked the legislators to draft a letter of support for the park to Commissioner Dardenne. He noted that we need to work on continuing relationships with legislators; rather than only reaching out when we want something. He also suggested finding out what information would be helpful to them as well as working with them when they are out of session.

In the Management Report, Chief Executive Officer Becker reported that the operating results for December were ahead of budget mainly due to a successful Celebration in the Oaks. A major factor of its success was the weather. Last year, ten days were impacted by the weather, as opposed to two days this year. Becker commended the staff for their hard work in hosting a successful event. He stated that we have completed our six month budget review, and that year to date we are ahead of budget.

Becker reported on the following:

- The endowment has reached \$6.4 million
- Waggoner and Ball Architects will review the schematic plans for the Conservatory Expansion project
- We are in the process of implementing new payroll and Human Resources software
- We conducted six month budget reviews with all departments
- He attended a quarterly meeting with Park Partners which is required under the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement. There will be a second public meeting in May to report on the progress among the Park Partners. At that meeting they will report on the previous six months and receive public input. He noted that it will be the responsibility of the incoming CEO to continue attending these meetings.
- We are moving forward with seeking proposals for a food and beverage operation at City Putt.

Becker again stressed the importance of a relationship with the legislators. Katz mentioned that we have always tried to stress to our delegates the importance of City Park as a regional park. He said that several legislators from Jefferson Parish attended the luncheon. Katz noted that State Senator Jimmy Harris is a strong supporter of the park. He also noted that one of the legislators who could not attend the luncheon, invited the park to make a presentation on the Northshore. Commissioner Susan Hess mentioned that our efforts to pass the millage was not only financially successful, but also opened people's eyes to the park.

Committee Reports:

P, A&E – Edmund Schrenk stated that test pilings have been driven for the new maintenance facility. The city has signed an agreement with Batture Engineering for the lagoon drainage project. Schrenk said that Batture is also on the team for the Wisner Tract, therefore coordination on the two projects should be good.

CITO/Special Events – Andrea Legrand reported on upcoming events. The Big Bass Fishing Rodeo is scheduled for March 28. Bunny Hops is scheduled for April 9 and 11 in the Amusement Park.

Development – Casie Duplechain asked that anyone interested in hosting a donor cultivation gathering to contact her. Becker stated that these meetings are very effective, and that the park has developed some major donors that have continuously supported the park as a result of these meetings. The Park’s end of year annual unrestricted giving goal for the fiscal year is \$175,000, and the current amount is approximately \$170,000. Development is in the process of creating an ad-hoc committee for the Oak Tree Circle. If anyone is interested in joining the Committee contact Casie. The department is also preparing for the spring mail appeal as well as a Search Influence campaign. The Heart of the Park Hat Luncheon is off to a great start. We collected \$245,000 to date, with a \$25,000 increase since last month.

The minutes from the January board meeting were unanimously approved. Katz said that Mr. Charles Marcella, expressed concern that his words were mischaracterized at the October, 2019 board meeting. Marsala requested that the minutes be amended from saying that he was requesting that the park “donate” the Beauregard statue to him, to requesting that the statue be “released”. A motion was unanimously approved to amend the minutes.

Environmental Stewardship – Commissioner Carro Gardner reported that the Committee is focused on festivities for Earth Day. The office of Resilience and Sustainability at City Hall will create and host a website listing all of the Earth Day activities taking place around the area. She noted that a new plogging event is scheduled for April 20 where people will jog and pick up trash along the way. Meg Adams and Batture met with Bayou Oaks to determine the potential for their involvement in the drainage project. There will be another collaborative planting day hosted by the Native Plant Initiative at Big Lake on March 21. The February Lunch and Learn at the Children’s Museum, was very successful.

Finance & Audit – Commissioner David Waller distributed a one page dashboard to provide a summary of various departments financials, both for the month, and year to date. Commissioner Richard Cahn expressed concern about the revenue for mini-golf. Hemel stated that even though mini-golf revenue is up, it is still not bringing in the revenue that we anticipated. He also mentioned that the birthday houses are not doing as well as expected. Becker stated that we have tried multiple tactics, but revenue has still lagged. As a result, we are looking into adding a significant food and beverage operation. .

Friends – Commissioner Leigh Thorpe reported that Friends of City Park currently has 5548 members, which is 740 more than this time last year. Final interviews are underway for the Executive Director. Lark in the Park is scheduled for March 13, 2020. The proceeds will benefit Celebration in the Oaks. Thorpe thanked Commissioner Jay Batt for donating a week in Asheville for the auction.

H&G Committee/Dog Park – Commissioner David Waller reported that in anticipation of the Hat Luncheon, the Committee identified the following tree planting locations: Big Lake, Fishing Pier on Marconi, area near the Wisner overpass, Doctors Cypress Grove, north fence at Festival

Grounds, and Filmore Avenue. Work continues on improvements behind the Casino building. He noted that the Dog Park currently has 2000 members. He mentioned that a survey has been completed on the dog park; and the facility received positive feedback. He noted that 40% of the respondents mentioned that they would be willing to fundraise for the Dog Park. A new invasive species, Water Cabbage, was found in the park behind the Children's Museum.

Legal & Risk Management – No Report

NOMA – No Report

Wisner Tract – Commissioner Bill LeCorgne reported that at the last public meeting, Design Workshop presented two plans. Some attendees said that they didn't want anything to change. The Committee will put together the best features from both plans to give the designers more specific guidance. He noted that the committee is methodically working its way through a good process.

Public Relations – No Report

Nominating – According to the By-Laws, all Committee appointments are made by the President, 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. The board unanimously elected Commissioner Robert Lupo to a fourth term, Commissioner Cleveland Spears to a third term, Commissioner Larry Katz to a second term, and Commissioners Richard Cahn, Mayra Pineda, Ray Seamon, and Bryan Fitzpatrick to a first term. President Katz thanked everyone for serving on the committee.

Sports – Commissioner Adam McNeil reported that the end of the high school soccer season is approaching, and track season is scheduled to begin on March 6. He noted that Golf is approximately \$60,000 ahead of budget, and is expected to turn a profit this year. Year to date 32,000 rounds of golf have been played. They hosted a President's Day scramble which was successful; and they are gearing up for a Tuesday couples league.

Tennis – No Report

Botanical Garden Foundation – Commissioner Rebecca Lester reported that the spring line-up for the outdoor kitchen is complete and is posted on the website. Interviews are underway for the Special Events/Marketing Manager for the Botanical Garden.

OTHER REPORTS:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS: President Katz noted that the City has experienced a rash of car break-ins. Becker stated that the park had more than 60 break-ins over a five week period. However, over the last two weekends, the number of break-ins has slowed dramatically. He noted that our park

partners are having the same problems, with numerous break-ins among them. He said that we have taken steps to increase security, and contracted with various law enforcement agencies.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 24, 2020, at 4 p.m.

Denise Joubert
Recording Secretary

Bryan Fitzpatrick