



**DORCHESTER COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 Johnston Street, SC 29477
March 28, 2023
6:00 pm**

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, the Dorchester Eagle Record, the Summerville Journal Scene and the Post and Courier were notified and a notice was posted on the bulletin board 24 hours before the meeting.

PRESENT:

Commission Members

Mr. Jay Byars, Commission Chairman
Mr. Joe Debney, Commission Member
Mr. Charles Brown, Commission Member
Mr. Juan Santiago, Commission Member
Mr. John Jones, Commission Member
Mr. Joe Craft, Commission Member

Staff

Mr. Austin Zuniga, Dorchester County Parks & Recreation Director
Mr. Rigel Kocur, Parks and Recreation Administrative Assistant
Mr. Bryan Havir, Dorchester County Assistant Administrator

ABSENT:

Mr. Mike Montei, Commission Vice Chairman
Mr. Edward Tupper, Commission Member

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Byars called the meeting to order at 6:01pm

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE:

The invocation was given by Mr. Brown, who also led the Pledge of Allegiance.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Mr. Byars introduced two new commission members, Jonathan Jones and Joe Craft, to the commission and staff. Jonathan Jones is Councilman Chinnis' appointee who has lived in Summerville for over twenty years. Joe Craft is the appointee of Councilman Friddle and will be replacing Rita May Ranck as she now serves on County Council. Both are excited to begin working on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting held on February 28, 2023. Mr. Debney made a motion to approve. Mr. Brown seconded. The Commission voted six in favor, two absent. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comments were offered at this time.

REVIEW OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE CHANGE TO CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE IV:

Mr. Havir updated the Commission on a recent proposal that is being brought forward to County Council that will change Chapter 2, Article IV, Division 10, Sections 2-411 through 2-418. This change will eliminate four items from the current bond, including the position of a Secretary for the Parks and Recreation Commission. Mr. Debney made a motion to publicly approve of these changes. Mr. Brown seconded. The Commission voted six in favor to publicly approve this change, two were absent. Motion carried.

DAVIS-BAILEY PARK:

Mr. Zuniga began his Parks and Recreation update report with an update on Davis-Bailey Park. Dixie Youth continues to use the ballfields for regular practice. Permanent shade structures exactly like the ones at Ashley River Park have been installed at the splash pad. The Davis-Bailey Pavilion was used to host an event with Dorchester Seniors Center.

The new Upper County Park Manager, Michael Sapp, has been establishing relationships with the locals and is working on creating athletic tournaments with the community. Mr. Santiago suggested the department also reach out to Orangeburg County and the Town of St. George for their field use, as well.

ASHLEY RIVER PARK:

Splash pads will reopen as of April 1st. Were delayed from March 15 due to sudden cold weather. The Ashley River Park Pavilion hosted the Charleston County parks and Recreation employee retreat. They were very impressed with the department's growth and organization within one year.

The department also hosted an employee training to familiarize both seasoned and new part-time staff members on all Parks and Recreation operation rules and regulations.

Ashley River Park celebrated its first-year anniversary on March 19.

ROSEBROCK PARK:

Staff continue to perform routine maintenance checks.

TEXAS COMMUNITY PARK:

The department continues to work with the Texas Community to address important needs and improvements. Playground repairs are underway. The immediate nearby Community are the residents who primarily use this park space.

PINE TRACE NATURAL AREA:

Groundbreaking ceremony for this future park space was held on March 9, 2023. The department is still waiting on ninety-percent of the construction documents.

SWAN DRIVE RIVER ACCESS:

The department provided a recently learned update from DHEC designating that this project falls under the Navigable waters Individual Permit review. This will mean a longer review process for this project.

ASHLEY RIVER PARK PEDESTRIAN CONNECTOR:

No updates at this time.

OAKBROOK SPORTS COMPLEX:

Due diligence services are underway as land conveyance discussions continue. Design development drawings are proceeding based off the master plan layout.

EDISTO LAKES PARK:

Dorchester County's Legal department is currently drafting an agreement between Audubon outlining the maintenance and usage of the property. Previous ideas from Mr. Byars to include campgrounds and kayak orders have been shared with Stantec. There is still no timeline on this project.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING:

There are two egg hunt programs planned in April. A glow-in-the-dark egg hunt at Ashley River Park on April 7 and an Easter Egg Hunt/Family Fun Day at Davis-Bailey Park on April 8.

The Commission once again reviewed the Special Events and Sponsorship Programs that will eventually be brought to County Council. Mr. Santiago asked about how competitive the rates

were when compared to other County sponsorship packages. The rates are lower than other packages but still enough to be competitive. No further discussion was made.

OPERATIONAL UPDATES:

The Greenbelt Initiative will be receiving a pool of money for greenbelt conservation initiatives. County Council will soon pass a motion to disband the Conservation and Rivers and Waterways Commissions and establish a new Greenbelt and Conservation Commission.

Dorchester County's Business Services Department has received the budget and expansion requests for the Parks and Recreation Department for the upcoming fiscal year. The budget has been approved and is set for the next fiscal year.

Park Admin Rigel Kocur has accepted a promotion to be the Communications Coordinator under the Public Information Office. His last day with the Department was on March 24, 2023.

Keith Eno and LaQuan Priest attended a session to become certified playground inspectors.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Byars called for future discussion regarding the property across the street from Ashley River Park.

Mr. Byars asked about plans for additional benches at Ashley River Park. This is something the department is working on, as well as establishing better drainage at the dog parks.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Byars made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. No objections. Meeting adjourned at 6:34pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rigel Kocur, Communications Coordinator