

**DORCHESTER COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**500 N Main Street Summerville, SC 29483**

**May 23, 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:**

Mr. Austin Zuniga, Dorchester County Parks & Recreation Director  
Ms. Dena Cone, Dorchester County Parks & Recreation Office Manager  
Ms. Pam Zanowski, Parks and Recreation Special Events and Marketing Manager  
Mr. Bryan Havir, Dorchester County Assistant Administrator  
Mr. Jay Byars, Commission Chairman  
Mr. Jonathan Jones Commission Member  
Mr. Charles Brown, Commission Member  
Mr. Juan Santiago, Commission Member  
Mr. Edward Tupper, Commission Member  
Mr. Mike Montei, Commission Vice Chairman  
Mr. Joe Craft, Commission Member

**ABSENT:** Mr. Joe Debney, Commission Member

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 6:03PM by Chairman Byars.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE:** The invocation was given by Chairman Byars, who also led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Chairman Byars made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 28, 2023, meeting. Mr. Santiago seconded this motion. Six voted to pass this motion. Mr. Tupper abstained. One was absent. Motion carries.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Shirley Brown, 619 St Paul Road, Dorchester, requested St. Paul's Church Park be taken back under control of the County. She is asking for picnic tables, playground equipment, walking area, and a concession stand.

MR. ZUNIGA PROVIDED A STATUS REPORT ON THE FOLLOWING:

**SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING:** Nature Walk at Ashley River Park was held on May 6<sup>th</sup> with 9 participants. Caribbean Night Steel Band Concert was held on May 10<sup>th</sup> and drew in 500 attendees. Carnivorous Plant Workshop had 17 participants. Hurricane Expo is planned for June 3<sup>rd</sup>. We have a great number of vendors and a great response from the public. We will be raffling off a generator. This will be more of an event than an expo. Ms. Zanowski also has many other activities scheduled for the upcoming months. Mr. Santiago asked how ARP is set up for food truck vendors.

**DAVIS-BAILEY PARK:** Dorchester Paws Community Event was held on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Pet food and supplies were distributed. Pet counseling was also provided. Easter Egg Hunt took place on April 13<sup>th</sup>. Over 40 kids participated. Partnered with Woodland High School to give 25 students a tour of the park. Team building day for 40 participants from Covelli Enterprises. Partnering with the YMCA for recreation events. First basketball practice was held with about 15 participants. Volleyball practice is starting this week. The adult kickball and softball did not bring as much response as we wished for. Going to challenge Dorchester County to possibly start some teams. Pushing the start of flag football. This will be 6-8 weeks of practices and games. Pitch, Hit, & Run is starting in June. This is an official MLB program. Home Run Derby will also start in June. This event will allow the players to advance up.

**ASHLEY RIVER PARK:** Glow-in-the-Dark Easter Egg Hunt was held on April 7<sup>th</sup> with 125 registrations and about 75 participating. Beat Beethoven 5k was held on April 20<sup>th</sup>. This event brought in over 200 participants and 300 spectators. Mutts for Miles continues to be held on Tuesday mornings. Nature walks, full moon yoga, a carnivorous plant workshop, and photography are included in the upcoming months. Revenue figures were provided to the committee. Facility rentals generated \$20,249 in revenue, admissions \$61,800, \$675 in vendor fees, \$498.33 in concessions, and \$40 in program fees.

**ROSEBROCK PARK:** Staff continues to do routine site visits and maintenance checks. We have a new attendant focusing on the trails and he has been busy marking roots and cleaning debris. We are planning major trail renovations. We had a volunteer community litter sweep this week and Ms. Rosebrock came out and walked the park.

**TEXAS COMMUNITY PARK:** Staff continues to perform routine site visits and maintenance checks at this park and have taken over the opening and closing during the week. The community handles the opening and closing on the weekends. We continue to work with the community to address the future of this facility. The park continues to get a lot of weekend use. Chairman Byars requested a tour with the new commission members to be held mid-June.

**PINE TRACE NATURAL AREA:** Pre-construction meeting on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Busy marking trees and putting up silt fence. A meeting was held with Johnson-Laux and ADC on May 5<sup>th</sup> to discuss the changes from priced drawings and 100% plans.

**SWAN DRIVE RIVER ACCESS:** Public comments have been received and sent to Administration. Responses are due by May 30<sup>th</sup>. A meeting is scheduled with Gordian to review the cost proposal sent by F.H. Paschen. We were not aware the waterways encroachment permit was required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and should take 4-6 months to receive.

**ASHLEY RIVER PARK PEDESTRIAN CONNECTOR:** HDR Engineering is conducting a survey of the site to include area under the bridge. Cost estimate for the proposed option of placement under the bridge should be forthcoming and renderings available in May.

**OAKBROOK SPORTS COMPLEX:** We are in receipt of the plat for the YMCA property subdivision for land conveyance. Architectural drawings for the buildings on the site are underway.

**EDISTO LAKES PARK:** Tree, topography, and wetland surveys are underway. Proposal for master planning services have been sent to Stantec. Land-use agreement with Audubon is being drafted by Legal Department. Chairman Byars asked for a review for new Commission members. It is 125-acre piece of high land cut from 460 acres owned by the Audubon Society. It will be used for camping and kayaking. Chairman Byars stated he would like to schedule a tour of this park as well as Texas Community Park and St. Paul's Park.

**OPERATIONAL UPDATES:** Mr. Zuniga introduced the new Upper County Park Manager, Michael Sapp. He started on March 13, 2023, and has already started bumping up programs and activities at Davis-Bailey Park. With the departure of Rigel Kocur, the department has restructured to move Dena Cone from Ashley River Park to the Human Services Building where she will now be the Office Manager for the Department. With this move, we have created a new entry level position for Ashley River Park, Parks Operation Specialist. Interviews are currently underway for this position. The goal is to have this person assist with day-to-day operations and assist with supervising staff. Interviews are in progress and will hopefully have this filled soon. LaQuan Priest resigned from his position at Ashley River Park to return home to Greenville, his last day was April 14<sup>th</sup>. Stephanie Jacky has been hired to fill the Assistant Park Manager position and officially begins on May 20<sup>th</sup>.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Ashley River Park is the finalist in three categories and winner of two other categories in this year's Reader's Choice Awards. Presentation is May 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00PM at the Summerville County Club. Davis-Bailey dedication of the Memorial Monument is set for Memorial Day, May 29<sup>th</sup> at 10:00AM. Mr. Havir noted that County Council has disbanded the Conservation Commission and has formally created the Conservation and Greenbelt Advisory Commission. This is a seven-member citizen advisory committee commission. County Council is in the process of making recommendations to staff this commission. They will meet monthly and make recommendations to council on purchasing property for public use under the greenbelt program. We had an RFP out to bring in a planning consultant that just closed. We had five responses and they have been sent to the evaluation committee. These evaluations are due on Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup>. If there is a clear front runner, the recommendation could possibly be announced at the council meeting on June 5<sup>th</sup>. The intent is to have the advisory commission meet before the end of June. Chairman Byars discussed the potential redevelopment of 500 N

Main and the TIF district. There are some capital projects with the TIF district. There was a joint workshop in March with the Town of Summerville. There are some transportation funds from the Maple Street project that may be reallocated to put toward a recreation center. Chairman Byars feels the community needs more indoor gymnasium space. This may be something that may come in front of the Parks and Recreation Commission for review and input. The goal is to support our community first but also has the potential to bring in revenue for the County. Clemson University completed a study that shows a community should have recreation center that is no less than 2 or 3 basketball courts per every 54,000 people. Currently we have 170,000 who live just below the swamp. Kudos were given by Chairman Byars for the success at Ashley River Park, the job the staff is doing, and what is beginning at Davis-Bailey. Committee Member, Jonathan Jones, questioned our trails and the work being done to connect the trails. Chairman Byars would like to add this to the agenda to update. There is a master trail plan in place and funding is in place.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Montei made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Santiago seconded the motion. No objections. Meeting adjourned at 6:58PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dena Cone, Parks and Recreation Office Manager