



**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 Johnston Street, St. George, SC 29477
September 26, 2023
6:00PM**

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. Mike Montei, Commission Vice Chairman
Mr. Edward Tupper, Commission Member
Mr. Jonathan Jones Commission Member
Mr. Charles Brown, Commission Member
Mr. Joe Craft, Commission Member

Staff

Mr. Austin Zuniga, Dorchester County Parks & Recreation Director
Ms. Dena Cone, Dorchester County Parks & Recreation Office Manager
Mr. Bryan Havir, Dorchester County Assistant Administrator

ABSENT:

Commission Members

Mr. Joe Debney, Commission Member
Mr. Juan Santiago, Commission Member

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Byars called to order the meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission at 6:02 P.M.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 25, 2023, meeting. Mr. Jones seconded this motion. Five voted to pass. Three were absent. Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comments were offered at this time.

MR. ZUNIGA PROVIDED A STATUS REPORT ON THE FOLLOWING:**DAVIS-BAILEY PARK:**

- General maintenance performed at the park.
- We have seen an uptake in use.
- Opening concessions more frequently.
- Dixie Youth has announced they will not have their fall ball season. Mr. Sapp, Upper County Park Manager, reached out to David with the YMCA and the YMCA will hold the fall ball this year.
- Multipurpose Field lined for practices and games.
- Partnered with Dorchester District 4 to hold their Back to School Bash.
- Revenue figures were provided to Commission Members.
- Questioned raised on stocking the pond. Mr. Zuniga will reach out to SCDNR to request the park be placed on a restocking schedule.

ASHLEY RIVER PARK:

- We are making a push to advertise the Ashley River Pavilion for private events through social media to attract more rentals. We have also prepared packets for the front desk to handout to potential renters. Currently the porch is bringing in the most revenue for facility rentals. Chairman Byars is surprised the pavilion is not rented more than it is. We are sure we will be doubling the rentals next year.
- For operational purposes, spreadsheets have been created to track overages/shortages, uniforms, and unexcused absences.
- General maintenance performed on the playground equipment and splash pad. Most of the work on the playground is warranty work.
- Puzzle Palooza was held again at the park, bringing in nine teams to compete.
- Porch Pickin' is a very popular event when the weather cooperates. This will pick back up in the fall along with movie night.
- Birds of Prey is becoming one of our most popular programs. We saw a record number of approximately 250 people for the last demonstration.
- We have partnered with SCDNR for their Fishing Loaner Program to provide tackle and equipment needed to fish to those who do not have the necessary equipment. SCDNR has suggested we open the fishing to harvesting. We are currently working on signage to prepare for this.
- Revenue figures were provided to Commission Members.

ROSEBROCK PARK:

- The park continues to be under the purview of the Ashley River Park staff.
- A survey of all the bridges and boardwalks was conducted. We are in the process of putting together the cost and a plan for repair.
- A couple of nature walks were held at the park.

TEXAS COMMUNITY PARK:

Staff is working with the Texas Park Community to discuss their needs.

PINE TRACE NATURAL AREA:

- Starting to clear trees.
- Currently in bi-weekly meetings.
- Chairman Byars has requested pictures for the next presentation so members can see the progress.
- Mr. Jones questioned the work on the Eagle Chandler Trail System. Public Works is almost finished paving. Connectivity between the upper and lower parts of the county is needed.

SWAN DRIVE RIVER ACCESS:

Contract has been executed and we should start seeing progress shortly.

ASHLEY RIVER PARK PEDESTRIAN CONNECTOR:

- Waiting for 100% plans from HDR.
- Chairman Byars added the connection will go under Bacons Bridge Road to the library. We purchased an additional 120 acres to expand Ashley River Park upriver plus closed on another 110 acres. This will make Ashley River Park 300 acres on the Ashley River with the potential to go further. There is a meeting on Wednesday, September 27th with the Conservation Bank in Columbia who may be giving us matching money for this purchase. Staff has done a great job.

OAKBROOK SPORTS COMPLEX:

Agreements with the YMCA are coming along. We are just waiting on the land conveyance. We are hoping to show some designs soon.

EDISTO LAKES PARK:

We should have some plans to provide to the Commission Members by our next meeting to show what the park will look like.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING:

- The amount of programming and events and the reception we have received from the public is amazing.
- We have started the Afterschool Adventure series. This is a series of fun educational series for kids. This is allowed to be counted as part of many homeschoolers' curriculum.
- Fishing clinics are very popular. They are built for individuals with little knowledge.
- Parks and Recreation staff partnered with the Sheriff's Office and other organizations to hold National Night Out at both Ashley River and Davis-Bailey Park.
- We are partnering with Friends of Dorchester to hold the Ashley River Adventure race on September 30th. There are ninety plus people registered.

- Fun Fins received a great reception, and we are extremely proud of this program. We had people from surrounding counties to enroll their children. If one child doesn't drown or panic in the water, the effort was worth it. Summerville Medical, Colleton County, Dorchester District 2, and the YMCA came together to make this a success. We are hoping to expand to more locations next year. This is only the third pool of this kind able to be broken down and moved.

OPERATIONAL UPDATES:

- Park staff assisted with the ribbon cutting at the new North Charleston Library.
- Staff prepped, cleaned up, and worked the emergency operation duties for Tropical Storm Idalia. The park only lost approximately a day of operating time from the storm.
- We have hired a part-time Parks Operations Aide to assist Ms. Zanowski. She is a naturalist and was an interpreter with Charleston County. This has enabled Ms. Zanowski to expand the programs/events.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

No announcements were made.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Montei made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Craft seconded the motion. No objections. Meeting adjourned at 6:41 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Dena Cone, Parks and Recreation Office Manager