



**SPECIAL MEETING  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
500 N Main Street, Summerville, SC 29483  
December 6, 2023  
4:00PM**

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. Joe Debney, 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. Mike Montei, Commission Vice Chairman  
Mr. Juan Santiago, Commission Member  
Mr. Edward Tupper, Commission Member  
Mr. Jonathan Jones Commission Member

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Byars called to order the meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission at 4:04 P.M.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE:**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Brown made a motion to approve minutes from the September 26, 2023, meeting. Mr. Craft seconded this motion. Three voted to pass, four were absent, and one abstained. Without a majority vote, motion to pass will be voted on at January's meeting.

**REVIEW OF CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS OF EDISTO LAKES PARK:**

Mr. Prentice, Deputy Administrator and Chief Financial Officer for Dorchester County, introduced members of Stantec to the Commission. Stantec was hired to perform the master plan for Edisto Lakes Park. This plan is uninfluenced by anyone at the staff level. The plan is Stantec taking the land and speaking to what the land can accommodate to allow the Parks and Recreation Commission to review it. Once comments are received from the Commission, staff will put the plan out for public feedback and incorporate staff review. Stantec has not been involved with ability of the property to serve as a campground by DHEC regulations due to the way sewer regulations need to be implemented. There is currently no county sewer at this location which will impact the number of pull through full hook up sites, the amount of capacity to a dump station, and the number of campsites allocated to a bathhouse. Dorchester County is currently working with DHEC to see where we may be able to get flexibility to implement the best possible solution. This master plan is an early concept plan. Staff hopes to have the product finalized and ready for Council approval in February.

Stantec representatives, Ms. Jamie Hairfield, Landscape Architect and Project Manager for Edisto Lakes and Ms. Christina Gramling, Landscape Architect for Edisto Lakes, presented three different concept plans. The concepts were drawn up taking into consideration the two entrances off Wire Road, the power easements between the two existing lakes, and new topographical, land/tree, and threatened/endangered species surveys to determine the wetland areas. The plans were based on the current septic regulations. The plans could either be in and of themselves where each of them could each be a final product or a phasing of a complex campground project.

Concept Plan Option 1 would maintain the two existing access points off Wire Road, an access point off Pine Bluff Road, a one-way loop, a full-service tent loop with a bathhouse, a series of full-service RV sites, a kayak launch, a boardwalk across the wetland area, a trail system around the campground, and an observation platform.

Concept Plan Option 2 retains the tent loop upfront, an added office/camp store by the observation platform, adds another segment of RV sites, an additional bathhouse, and platform tent sites on the wetland along the boardwalk.

Concept Plan Option 3 has the same loops with an additional RV loop, a second set of boardwalks with platform tent sites, and an additional bathhouse by the kayak launch.

Concept Plan Option 3 but incorporates adjacent Audubon property, which would add the ability to launch kayaks from the County's site onto the Audubon property.

Questions brought up from the presentation:

- A procedure from preventing long term campsites. We would have a maximum site stay of approximately twenty-eight days with a wait term of two weeks before registering again, and the price per night would detour this. This would be a short-stay campground. The campsite will have 24-hour Park Rangers on duty.
- Is this area going to be a campground only or more of a park with a campground integrated into it. Public will have access to the trails, kayaking, and the ponds.
- Is there sufficient parking to allow the public to use the facilities. Stantec does not currently know the number of parking spaces.
- Will there be a playground on the grounds? Stantec has only identified open spaces for now but there is adequate space.
- Will there be picnic shelters or pavilions? Stantec has identified a few platform locations to allow for shelters.
- Are we restricted to building on the Audubon's property? We have a loose agreement with the Audubon. No construction is allowed on the property. We are allowed to cut trail access, no vehicular access. There is concern with the distance between the parking area and the river access.
- Possibly the idea of a sportsman's park to host a field trial? The area is very wet and would make this hard to accomplish. We did strike a partnership with the Audubon for tree removal may allow to address the property to be used on a passive concept. This area does have signs for bird sanctuaries and the Audubon may not be open to this concept.
- Between the lakes where there is a land divider, are we able to put a bridge to connect the lakes when the lakes are flooded. The Audubon did express interest in this.

For the record, Mr. Debney notified the committee that he has a personal tie in this area and may come to a point he may need to recuse himself from some decisions being made.

Mr. Prentice explained the programming elements will include sliding scales for public preference to rank what they would like to see, and this will be included on the master plan with more detail.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Mr. Debney made a motion to adopt a meeting schedule for 2024 to meet every other month, six meetings, all to be held in Summerville. Mr. Craft seconded this motion. Four voted to pass, four were absent. Motion passes.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

No public comments were offered at this time.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Debney made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. No objections. Meeting adjourned at 4:41 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dena Cone, Parks and Recreation Office Manager