



**MINUTES  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
500 N Main Street, Summerville, SC 29483  
March 26, 2024  
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. Charles Brown, Commission Member  
Mr. Edward Tupper, Commission Member  
Mr. Joe Craft, Commission Member  
Mr. Joe Debney, Commission Member  
Mr. Jonathan Jones, 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

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Byars called to order the meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission at 6:00 P.M.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE:**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Debney made a motion to approve minutes from the September 26, 2023, December 6, 2023, and January 23, 2024, meetings. Mr. Tupper seconded this motion. Seven voted in favor. Motion carries.

**MS. SUNSHINE TRAKAS, TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, PRESENTATION ON SAWMILL BRANCH TRAIL EXTENSION:**

The Sawmill Branch Trail extension is a 1.8-million-dollar budgeted project funded by Transportation Sales Tax. A location map was provided to show committee members the existing trail limits and the new trail extension. The asphalt trail will be under the Town of Summerville's maintenance program; is 0.64 mile in length and is 10' wide. There is extensive hydraulic modeling with this project due to impacts to the Sawmill Branch Flood Control Channel mitigation area with the Berlin G. Myers Phase II project. Special features included are a pedestrian bridge and bioretention area. The proposed pedestrian bridge will cross the existing ditch which ties into the existing Sawmill Branch Trail. The proposed bioretention area runs along the swale on the backside of the Dorchester Village Shopping Center on the channel. The bioretention area will include a rain garden with native species being planted. This will allow stormwater runoff to infiltrate into the soil to help in collecting pollutants before they run into our waterways. This area will also include an underdrain system for overflow to run into the channel.

Four sample bridges and estimates on the pedestrian bridge options were provided to the committee for a recommendation. The bridge will be approximately 14' wide maintaining a 10' wide paved path and approximately 55' long. There are currently both Connector and Keystone style bridges on the paved trail. The committee unanimously voted on the Keystone option, if this option does not cost a lot of time. If time is an issue, the committee voted for the Capstone option as its first choice.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

No public comments were offered at this time.

**MR. ZUNIGA PROVIDED A STATUS REPORT ON THE FOLLOWING:****ASHLEY RIVER PARK:**

After the most recent South Carolina Department of Natural Resources fish survey, upon recommendation from the agency, anglers now have the option to keep their catch if fish fall within state regulations. We have posted signage around the pond and advertised the change on social media. Anglers are required to have a freshwater fishing license. If anglers do not have this license, the signage around the pond contains a QR code that can be scanned, and a license purchased and downloaded to the angler's phone. Park stats and revenue were provided to the Commission.

**ASHLEY RIVER PARK WEST:**

An application has been submitted with the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Program with the National Parks Service. This program will assist in the development and conservation of the

trails and river on the properties behind the Library on the Ashley and help map out a system of trails and master plan.

**DAVIS-BAILEY PARK:**

Flag football practices and games were held at the park. We received an application requesting the park host a tournament. Park stats and revenue were provided to the Commission. Concessions are being run during games and practices. We are in the last stage of finalizing the partnership with the Kids in Parks Program. This is a partnership with BlueCross/BlueShield and Diabetes Free SC. This program is an interpretive scavenger hunt which is grant based and totally free. Davis-Bailey and Rosebrock Parks were chosen by a committee for this program. The kiosk at Rosebrock will contain four different brochures for the kids to choose from and Davis-Bailey will have a mini kiosk with one brochure. The brochures are produced by Kids in Parks.

**EDISTO LAKES PARK:**

The consultant is currently working on the requested revisions and clarifications made by the Parks and Recreation Commission during the December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Capital Projects Manager has been in touch with the consultant requesting updates.

**PINE TRACE NATURAL AREA:**

Cunningham Recreation was selected to design the Pine Trace playground. Once complete, the design will be presented to the Committee for input. Construction pictures were shown to the Committee.

**ROSEBROCK PARK:**

Only update provided under Davis-Bailey for Kids in Parks.

**TEXAS COMMUNITY PARK:**

No updates to report.

**ASHLEY RIVER PARK DOG PARK AND LOBLOLLY SHELTER**

Power and water are currently being run to the new Loblolly Shelter. Dog park is now complete. Mulch will be replaced on an as need basis.

**ASHLEY RIVER PARK CONNECTOR:**

Currently waiting on pricing from HITT Contracting.

**OAKBROOK SPORTS COMPLEX:**

The kickoff meeting was in mid-March. Question was asked on a timeline on groundbreaking. We are too early in the process to choose a date. We will need to consult with the Capital Projects Manager for an update.

**SWAN DRIVE RIVER ACCESS:**

The dock construction has begun. The weather has caused a delay in the progress. Without any further major delays, we are looking at four to five months for completion.

**TRAILS:**

The Eagle Creek and Chandler Creek Trail have been closed out. We have received positive reviews on this trail. Parks and Recreation plan on having park ranger presence on the trail assisting the Dorchester County Sheriff Office in patrolling. A conversation needs to be had on Phase II and Phase III timelines and tying in Phase I to Phase II over the road using transportation and grant funds.

**EVENTS AND PROGRAMS:**

Mr. Zuniga gave an update on the programs and events that have taken place at the parks. Ms. Goettee, our Program Aide, has been working with the local schools to hold field trips. Our Friday Homeschool Enrichment Program has been very well received. Family Fun Day was held at Davis-Bailey Park. The programs are being advertised on social media and through email blasts. There is room to have a marketing campaign to advertise the programs.

**OPERATIONAL UPDATES:**

Parks and Recreation was honored with recognition for the Splash into Safety program by South Carolina Recreation and Parks Association. We also received the Outstanding Safety Achievement Award by the South Carolina Counties Worker's Compensation Trust.

We accepted resignation from the Ashley River Park-Park Manager. Our new Ashley River Park Assistant Park Manager, Gaeron Gruber, will start on April 8<sup>th</sup>. We also have the Pine Trace Park Manager position posted and have received several good candidates.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Debney made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Craft seconded the motion. No objections. Meeting adjourned at 6:48 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dena Cone, Parks and Recreation Office Manager