



MINUTES
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
500 N Main Street, Summerville, SC 29483
May 28, 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 (via phone)
Mr. Mike Montei, Commission Vice Chairman
Mr. Edward Tupper, 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

ABSENT:

Commission Member

Mr. Joe Craft, Commission Member
Mr. Ernest Blaylock, Commission Member

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chairman Mr. Montei 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. Montei, who also led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Debney made a motion to approve minutes from the March 26, 2024, meeting. Mr. Jones seconded this motion. Five voted in favor. Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comments were offered at this time.

MS. JORDYN BAKER, CAPITAL PROJECTS MANAGER, UPDATE ON PINE TRACE NATURAL AREA:

Progress has been made at Pine Trace Natural Area in the last month. The dock is substantially complete. Davis-Bailey and Ashley River Parks have given us experience as to what the community wants and does not want with our playgrounds. We are going through different revisions for the playground with Cunningham Recreation, our playground vendor. We have incorporated more inclusive pieces of playground equipment at this location. The playground will have the rubbery surface and not the mulch which will allow for wheelchair access to the playground. Extra benches have been incorporated to allow for more seating. The current playground layout will allow for future development and expansion. A concern was brought up about the heat on the rubbery surface being too hot. Shade is a concern, and it is possible that shade structures will be incorporated into the playground in the future. The trees around the playground have not yet been removed. The Commission would like to see as many existing mature trees remain in the playground area as possible to maintain a more natural shade rather than bringing in manmade structures. We must remove a certain number of trees to have room for swings and the merry go-round. The playground will be a fenced in area due to the proximity of water. Commission also questioned the possibility of seeking funding from outside sources for the shade structure. Ms. Baker commented the timeline is an issue when considering outside funding.

MS. ZANOWSKI PROVIDED A STATUS REPORT ON SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS:

May was a busy month for programs. We saw over 600 students for our field trips. We hope to create a curriculum this summer to provide future programs. Ms. Goette will be offering an outdoor nature camp along with working with Clemson Extension to offer a 4-H camp at Ashley River Park. Dorchester District 2 Steel Drum Concert brought in over 2,500 guests to the park for their concert series. We partnered with our EMS Department to get most of our part-time and full-time staff CPR/AED certified. We are hosting the Hurricane Expo on June 1st at Ashley River Park. We have Sippin' in the South on June 8th and on June 22nd we have Bark in the Park. Splash into Safety begins in June and will last for two weeks. We participated in the Wellness Fair and set up an environmental education table at Third Thursday. We are working on partnerships with Dorchester County Library, Clemson Extension, Beyond Basics, Birds of Prey, and YMCA for upcoming programs.

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

Revenue stats were provided to the Commission. We have been advertising the pavilion, specifically for weddings, and are seeing an increase in rentals at this facility. We are seeing the facility rented about three weekends a month.

ASHLEY RIVER PARK WEST:

We have been selected for technical assistance through the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program for Ashley River Park West. This is a non-monetary grant that provides expertise on the property. We do not have a specific timeline on when this program will actually commence but we anticipate early fall.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Monte, seconded by Mr. Debney, to recommend to County Council to hire a local design firm consultant for up to \$25,000 to create an initial concept design for Ashley River Park West property adjacent to the new Ashley River Library. The scope of the work can include, if appropriate, any outside consulting from the National Park Service, et al, but should rely heavily on local knowledge of the commission, staff, and community as the guiding force of the design. Motion carries with five members voting in favor.

DAVIS-BAILEY PARK:

The County is partnering with the YMCA to provide athletics at the park. We have Females in Flag, soccer, volleyball, NFL Flag, basketball, co-ed baseball, and cheerleading. Volunteers are needed for coaching. Revenue stats were provided to the Commission. The pavilion at Davis-Bailey Park is utilized on a first come first served basis if not rented.

EDISTO LAKES PARK:

Staff is hoping to meet for comments before the next commission meeting. Mr. Zuniga will question The National Parks Service if the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program can be used for Edisto Lakes Park instead of Ashley River Park West.

PINE TRACE NATURAL AREA:

Vertical construction is in progress. Staff walked the site with the disc golf representative to go over what the course will look like. Small areas that will need to be cleared were marked. ADC Engineering will update the CAD system to make sure everything we have planned is within the boundaries of the wetlands.

ROSEBROCK PARK:

No updates to report.

TEXAS COMMUNITY PARK:

No updates to report.

ASHLEY RIVER PARK DOG PARK AND LOBLOLLY SHELTER

We are currently waiting on Dominion Energy to connect the electricity. The concrete has been poured from the ADA parking area to the fishing pier.

ASHLEY RIVER PARK CONNECTOR:

Currently waiting on pricing from HITT Contracting.

OAKBROOK SPORTS COMPLEX:

Ospreys are almost hatched, and the birds and nest will then be relocated.

SWAN DRIVE RIVER ACCESS:

The dock is almost complete, it just needs to be connected to the concrete that will attach it to the parking lot. We do not have an estimated time of completion for the project, the rain has pushed back the completion date.

TRAILS:

Phase I of Eagle Chandler Creek is complete. We are in touch with the Town of Summerville to start discussions on the next phase. This will include bringing in Public Works and our Transportation Department for funding. We are getting positive feedback from the public. We need to get the trail across Miles Jamison Road.

EVENTS AND PROGRAMS:

Splash into Safety will take place in June for two weeks and two weeks in July. We not only received a proclamation from The Town of Summerville, but we also received a proclamation from South Carolina House of Representatives.

OPERATIONAL UPDATES:

Staff participated in Vehicle Career Day at Joseph R. Pye Elementary School. Our new Assistant Park Manager at Ashley River Park, Gaeron Gruber, started work approximately six weeks ago. We have hired Park Managers for Ashley River Park and Pine Trace Natural Area who will begin work on June 17th.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Greenbelt Master Plan was adopted on May 20, 2024. The document will be posted on-line shortly and will include a downloadable application. To date, Planning staff has had conversation with five property owners. The next Conservation and Greenbelt Advisory Commission meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday. They meet the first Wednesday of each month at 5:30PM. This Commission is advisory to County Council. The plan provides priority consideration and includes a matrix for funding. A portion of the Greenbelt funds were used to purchase additional property on the Ashley River. We also received state conservation funding to match these funds. These funds can be used to purchase property for passive park type elements, but funds cannot be used for active recreation such as baseball fields. A question was asked if anyone has contacted the surrounding property owners next to the property on Hwy 61 on the other side of the Ashley River we purchased. A developer is putting in a small neighborhood beside Legend Oaks on that side. There is approximately 300 acres with only about 20-30 acres being buildable. We have been approached by the developer about the possibility of donating part of this property to the county to be integrated into our park system to extend the Ashley River Park further upriver. This property is contiguous to the landlocked piece at the Walnut Hill tract. We could possibly look at putting up a pedestrian bridge to connect these properties.

The next Parks and Recreation Commission meeting is scheduled for July 23, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Debney made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Jones seconded the motion. No objections. Meeting adjourned at 6:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Dena Cone, Parks and Recreation Office Manager