

Recreation Committee Meeting

February 24, 2025

A meeting of the Recreation Committee was held on this date beginning at 4:00 p.m. over video conference call.

Councilmembers Present: Councilmember Caroline Parker (Chair), Councilmember William Dudley Gregorie (Vice-Chair), Councilmember Jim McBride, Councilmember Kevin Shealy, Councilmember Keith Waring, and Mayor William S. Cogswell, Jr.

Staff Present: Jason Kronsberg, Director, Parks; Laurie Yarbrough, Director, Recreation; Daniel Riccio, Section Chief, Community Services; Magalie Creech, Assistant Corporation Counsel; Melissa Cruthirds, Assistant Corporation Counsel; Katie Dahlheim, Assistant Corporation Counsel; and Wanda Stepp, Clerk of Council's Office (recording).

Also Present:

Chairwoman Parker called the meeting to order.

Chairwoman Parker opened the meeting with a moment of silence.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Councilmember Shealy, the Committee voted unanimously to amend the agenda to reflect approval of the December 16, 2024 Recreation Committee meeting minutes instead of November 25, 2024 previously approved.

On a motion by Councilmember Shealy, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2024 Recreation Committee meeting.

Public Participation:

None.

Old Business:

a. Projects and parks maintenance update:

See attached Exhibit A.

Councilmember Gregorie asked if they could start tracking the Longborough Dock, and if there was any additional information on where they were on that. Mayor Cogswell said it was currently in Capital Projects and there wasn't enough to do the City's bid for the dock, but he had heard that the homeowners had a less expensive way of doing it. What they were looking at doing was if they did the same design with public access, the City was open to having the homeowners build the dock and the City would contribute a set amount based on an approved design, which they had already agreed to. They needed to propose that to the homeowners. He agreed with Councilmember Gregorie in that they needed to set a tracker as Councilmember Gregorie had been dealing with this for a long time and he had been dealing with it a year now. He would like to flush it out and get it done. Councilmember Gregorie asked if the homeowners were going to

do both docks, the public and the private. Mayor Cogswell said they would do the whole thing. It would be under one contract.

Councilmember Gregorie said Halsey Creek, which was part of the Ecological Corridor, planting had been done with marsh plants the past weekend. He asked when they grinded old trees down into mulch, especially in Hampton Park, if it would be possible for the neighborhood to get any of the mulch on 10th Street where the old radio station used to be. They had started planting and he wanted to see whether they could get some of the mulch. Mr. Kronsberg said they kept some at the old yard and they could arrange for that.

Councilmember McBride said the tennis/pickleball courts with the Stormwater regulations required a lot of the vegetation to be cut down in the stormwater ditch behind the courts which had taken away a lot of the natural shade that happened during the summer for the pickleball and tennis players. They asked if the City or CCSD could build a small, inexpensive shelter so that when pickleball players were waiting to play, they could hang out in the shelter. He asked if that was something that could be put on a list for the budget or looked into. Mr. Kronsberg said that was not an uncommon request in the hot summers and they worked with Recreation to prioritize which ones, which was the order in which they were received. They could add it to a budget request and see where that took them. Councilmember McBride said he would love to involve the pickleball community to get their input, so that the end result would be something they were looking for, if that was possible. Ms. Yarbrough said they had recently been contacted by tennis players about adding shade on the tennis courts at Moultrie Playground even though they had a couple of small shelters. A group started trying to fundraise for it working with the City. That might be something they wanted to talk to the pickleball players about, as well. If they would be willing to help fundraise with the City for it, it might give a lot of buy-in on their end, as well. She thought it might create some excitement.

Councilmember Shealy asked if there was an update on the WPAL Park/Wappo Road property. Mr. Kronsberg said it was currently in permitting and should be nearing completion. He would get back to Councilmember Shealy with an update.

Councilmember McBride said for the soundproofing added to the fences of the tennis courts paid for by CCSD. He asked who maintained that if the soundproofing fell off or wore out. Mr. Kronsberg didn't know if they had gotten into the details of that on their Joint Use Agreement. It became City infrastructure and the City would have to address any needs that arose in the future. Chairwoman Parker said she was almost positive the MOU stated some regard to the maintenance. Mr. Kronsberg thought that was right. Councilmember McBride knew that part of the soundproofing already fell off and the CCSD contractor did go repair it as they were already in the process of doing that whole renovation anyway. He knew that whatever they chose to put on those fences was prone to fall off, so somebody would have to maintain it. He wanted to bring it up now so not to lose track of that. Mr. Kronsberg said since the project was still ongoing and hadn't been closed out yet, he would consider that a warranty item, but they would keep their eyes on it.

Chairwoman Parker thanked Mr. Kronsberg as there was a lot going on, a lot of City employees hard at work out there, as well. The fields looked great, and she knew the kids were getting ready.

b. **Johns Island Park update:**

Councilmember McBride knew that Legal should have some information on Johns Island Park as Legal was working with CCSD on allowing the practice field to be used because there was damage to the practice field. Ms. Cruthirds said she didn't know what the latest status of it was, but they were currently using fields 1 and 3 for practice. As of last week, she had heard that substantial completion was supposed to be the 28th. She wasn't sure if that had been pushed out in the past couple of days since they had rain last week that they were concerned about.

New Business:

a. **Spring Recreation Update:**

Ms. Yarbrough said they were still in winter recreation. The coming weekend they would be traveling with girls and boys All Star basketball teams to Orangeburg and Beaufort to compete with other Recreation departments in the Lowcountry area. That would end their winter basketball season. They might see lights on and kids already out on ballfields. They had been doing coaches meetings in combines. They had about 4,500 children Citywide currently playing either middle school sports or baseball, softball, or soccer. They also had 65 kids running track using Stoney Field and they were excited about that. She thanked Councilmember Gregorie for fighting the hard fight in helping them get the track. The elementary/middle school tennis program, which the City developed and started years ago, continued to run. They had about 1,500 kids signed up and those matches would start next week, so they would start to see little kids playing tennis all over the City and East Cooper using courts. It was a very busy season, and they were excited. They hoped that little taste of spring they got would continue to make their fields dry and playable. Burke had a soccer, baseball, and track that they would be using City facilities downtown on. They were working with St. John's High School. They had a lot of great things and special events going on and they looked forward to working with the community. Chairwoman Parker asked how many kids were signed up. Ms. Yarbrough said if they just looked at the traditional use sports it was 4,500. If they added the 1,500 in elementary and middle school, that was additional children, not being run by the City's sports program, but by the tennis program. They also had their gymnastic kids. They competed in North Charleston the prior weekend and there were 200 members in that as well as 330 members of their swim team. There were lots of different kids doing different things in the City.

Councilmember Waring was happy when he heard they had youth track over at Stoney Field. As an 11-year-old, that was the first place he ran track. Some years ago, Councilmember Gregorie was approached with a proposal to tear down Stoney Field to make a walking trail and dog park which reinvigorated the effort to get the money and get the place renovated. It was a wonderful facility. After the renovations were finished, the School District wasn't going to participate and put monies in the track. The City had to push back on that. Every time he passed by, he saw people walking and jogging around in the neighborhood. The City should never have lost that asset, and it didn't. Chairwoman Parker said it was a beautiful facility for sure. There were a lot of kids playing on the City's fields which was great news.

b. **Recreation ordinance review/update:**

Chairwoman Parker thought it might be a good time for the Committee to look at the current ordinance to see if it needed any updating. She would like to see the Recreation Commission appointments and their meeting schedule, but also have the chair of that Commission coming to the Recreation Committee quarterly or whatever it might be. She didn't know if that was something

they could begin discussing with Legal and if there was anything that the Committee felt that needed to be added, changed, or otherwise in the ordinance. She asked Legal how that process might work if they felt there needed to be change. Should they direct it to Legal and bring it back to Committee. Ms. Cruthirds said the Committee could send any changes they wanted, redlines even, the more specific the better, so they could ensure that they knew exactly what the Committee wanted. Then, they would go through the general process for ordinance changes brought by Councilmembers. Mayor Cogswell said they were going through a process of vetting a lot of commissions and making sure they were properly staffed or had sufficient membership. This was one of the changes they had made, for example, in recent Council meetings about requiring Councilmembers to be on committees if they don't want to be or they couldn't find people to do it. Over the years sometimes it had been very robust and active and then other times it had been dormant. He was curious as to current makeup and how often the commission was meeting. Ms. Yarbrough said prior to COVID they had a membership that had been on there for a while representing different areas and interest groups. After COVID when they started meeting again, most of those members had felt like they had served their time so to speak and asked to come off the commission. That was when they started trying to solicit new names, new interests, and new things. She had submitted a list to City Hall of people who had shown interest in serving. Having worked closely with this commission for a long time, but now that the City had a Standing Recreation Committee that was so involved, it took a lot of that business and those conversations that they used to have out of that. At one time, under different leadership, they didn't have Standing Committees that were as involved and kept up with the day-to-days and had agendas like today. At the time, she knew Council counted on hearing from some of the people, but really between Councilmembers Parker, McBride, Waring, Shealy, and Gregorie, they were all closely tuned into what was going on in the communities. A lot of the business work and the meeting/reporting out was being done at this Committee level monthly. Mayor Cogswell said that brought him to his point. It didn't need to be solved that day, but he thought it bared thought, and perhaps another longer conversation when the agenda wasn't as full, but if it wasn't a very active commission and it had changed, then he thought they, collectively as a Committee, ought to look perhaps at modifying the ordinance, so that this was a platform for parents and other people that weren't going to necessarily get involved in the business and day-to-day operations, but could provide meaningful insight and ideas on how the programs could grow. That was his suggestion, and they were happy to take the lead on that and provide the Committee an update, or some thoughts to consider, if that would help move things along. Chairwoman Parker thought that would be great and she appreciated it. She knew some people who had applied to be on the Commission had been asking, but she wanted to hear from anyone else on the Committee if they had any thoughts. She thought the Mayor's plan was great, but if any other Committee members wanted to offer up any discussion, they would continue to talk it out. She said to look at the ordinance, think about those ideas, and they would bring it back next month.

- c. **Recreation commission appointments and meeting schedule: (See Item e.)**
- d. **Volunteer and participant/parents' surveys: (See Item e.)**
- e. **Discussion re: QR Code at City parks for citizens to utilize and provide feedback:**

Chairwoman Parker said the Commission meetings could sometimes be well attended or not attended. She would love to see a QR Code or something like that at local parks as a lot of people might not be coming down to City Hall every other Tuesday but having that easy access to say what might be missing at a specific park could be helpful. She asked if they could bring to the Committee some of the feedback they got from the volunteers and parents. She didn't know if Mr. Kronsberg had talked to IT about having QR Codes at City parks. There was always staff at the

bigger facilities 90% of the time, but at the smaller community parks, it might be helpful where they had the pickleball communities and people utilizing the parks day-to-day, playgrounds, parents, and things like that. She would love to see that at the parks if that was something they could make happen. Mayor Cogswell said he would.

f. **Discussion regarding status of Longborough Dock negotiations: (See item a.)**

g. **Status of landscaping for the James Lewis Apartments:**

Councilmember Gregorie said he had put this on the agenda for Councilmember Mitchell and he thought the Mayor, as well as Parks, were aware of this issue. It looked incomplete without the appropriate landscaping especially around the Minority Development Center. He wondered whether they were in the position to either use TIF funds or any kind of funds. Mayor Cogswell thought they were aware of the potential funding for that area. They wanted to spend as much as they could in that area, and it was a key project. The only condition he would want to look at was what was required or supposed to be done by the developer versus what had been done. In terms of adding stuff and making it better, by all means, he was supportive and they could start working on that. Councilmember Gregorie said Councilmember Mitchell was adamant about it. Mayor Cogswell said understandably. Councilmember Gregorie said at the ribbon cutting, it just looked incomplete without the streetscaping as well as the landscaping. It was land that could be used for recreational purposes, as well. Chairwoman Parker asked if it was City owned or if it was developer space. Councilmember Gregorie thought Mayor Cogswell was going to determine whether the developer had the responsibility to do it. Mr. Kronsberg said Mayor Cogswell was right in that the private developer built that project and was responsible for the landscaping around it. He thought maybe some of the view of sparseness, in addition to the lack of foundation plantings, was the future Lee Street linear park. The entire length from Meeting Street down to the end at South Carolina State was the large drainage easement, but a future park space where they anticipated having some of those landscape features when that project came to fruition. To the Mayor's point, they had to see what the developer's responsibilities were. Councilmember Gregorie said the developer donated the 7,000 sq.ft. of that building to the City and that was how they were able to put the incubator space in, so he wasn't sure. He thought they were into year two since they did the ribbon cutting and that it distracted considerably. He asked if they could do it in phases. Mayor Cogswell said they could, and to Councilmember Gregorie's point, he thought yesterday was when a tree should be planted. Councilmember Gregorie said exactly. Mayor Cogswell thought there were basic moves they could do that would make a big difference that wouldn't cost a lot of money and would have a big impact. If it was up to him, he didn't think they needed an RFQ for a design for a linear park. They needed to be thoughtful about it, but in the interim, he thought they could do some base foundation plants around the buildings to make it look more complete and perhaps plant some trees to give shade along the sidewalk. Councilmember Gregorie thought the City had some of the best landscape designers in-house and he thought they could do that fairly quickly. They could just throw some grass seeds out or something. Chairwoman Parker said she would put it on the agenda to follow up to find out if it was the developer or if they were going to do some City-led efforts. Councilmember Gregorie agreed as long as they didn't wait another year. Chairwoman Parker and the Mayor agreed. Mr. Kronsberg said they would look at it and come up with something.

h. **Status of landscaping along Cleveland Street:**

Councilmember Gregorie thought they were doing a good job. They could see from Rutledge Avenue clear to Hampton now. It appeared they were doing it in stages. It was unbelievable improvement. He knew it wasn't complete, but they had talked at one point about perhaps getting

together with The Citadel and doing planting to correspond with what the City had done on the other side of the street, which was beautiful. He asked if that was something they could still consider as they moved forward with clearing it. It was about 80% complete and it was looking good. Mayor Cogswell thought it was a great idea.

i. **Request for the power washing of cinder block walls surrounding College Park on Grove Street and Rutledge Avenue:**

Councilmember Gregorie said any fencing, especially if the fencing was white, accumulated algae and green on it, and right now it looked bad. It had never been done before since he had lived over there. His concern was that he didn't know how they did that with the Charleston Strong paintings on it, but generally, it needed some type of soft washing just so it would look better in the neighborhood. Mayor Cogswell said they needed to talk to The Citadel as they owned the building, but it could be in conjunction with what they were talking about on Cleveland Street. Councilmember Gregorie said the basic cleaning they had done, the connectivity was unbelievable, and it looked good.

j. **Discussion regarding Martin Park and the ground in front of the James Lewis complex:**

Chairwoman Parker asked if this was on the same line as the landscaping and Councilmember Gregorie said it was. Mayor Cogswell said a design firm had been engaged which had gone up and down. They were looking at re-engaging, he knew it was a big priority for Councilmember Mitchell, and understandably so, specifically how to retrofit or build a new depending on costs the existing community building that was there. It barely had any windows, so perhaps expanding that and looking at some of the other sitework in conjunction with the linear park. They would wrap that together and he was excited to get some stuff going.

k. **Discussion regarding changing Recreation Committee meetings to in-person only or hybrid meetings (in-person and virtual):**

Chairwoman Parker said she would like the Recreation Committee meetings to be in person and hybrid. She wanted to get the Committee members' thoughts on it as well as staff. Councilmember Shealy said he was with Chairwoman Parker on it. He knew that the Public Safety Committee was hybrid and he thought there was a lot of value to being able to see people face-to-face before, during, and after the meetings. They could get further clarification and could see people, shake Jason or Laurie's hand, and that type of thing. He thought it would be good if they could do it in person, especially since they had moved the meetings where they were a little more spread out and it was sometimes a little tougher to plan, he thought there was value in the hybrid, as well. Councilmember McBride agreed, and as long as there was flexibility, hybrid was great. When they were able to come in person, it was always good to be face-to-face as it was more effective. The hard part was finding the right time of the day, whether it was that time or a different time. He voted for earlier in the day, but that was just one person. Chairwoman Parker thought the Recreation Committee meeting time had changed a few times since she had been there. She asked if the 4:00 p.m. time worked for everyone. Councilmember Gregorie said he was on the Peninsula, so any time worked for him, but when they started talking about meetings around 4:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m., they were right in the heart of rush hour traffic especially for folks coming from Johns Island or West Ashley. He thought they needed to be thoughtful about in-person meetings and what time those meetings would be. Mayor Cogswell said to Councilmember Gregorie's point, it was easy for him as he was across the hall. They wanted it to be convenient for Councilmembers, they also had a lot of staff that needed to part of it, and they were also trying to

do somewhat structured committee meetings where they were bunched together as much as possible for staffing purposes. Chairwoman Parker said she would love to hear from staff, as well, location-wise she thought it spoke to the bigger picture. It would be wonderful to meet off the Peninsula at some of their parks, but they didn't have those capabilities. If the Parks Department office was more convenient for the staff members that needed to be there, that was fine. She was flexible. She agreed that the afternoon times got her all the time as most of the time she was mobile. She would love to see it earlier in the day, but she wanted to make sure if it was something that the Committee was okay with. If so, then she would work with the Mayor's Office and the Clerk's Office to try to find that sweet spot if everyone was on board. Mayor Cogswell thought moving to hybrid was great. Councilmember Shealy reiterated what had been said about the traffic and being able to get off the Peninsula at 5:00 p.m. to get wherever they were going. Councilmember Gregorie said if they were going to do it, to make sure they didn't have only two or three items on the agenda. Chairwoman Parker said if they were meeting once a month, she would like to do it in person and there might be a few things on the agenda. Mr. Kronsberg said they would do the meetings however they got scheduled. Chairwoman Parker thought the Parks Department had a good set-up and capabilities. Mr. Kronsberg said their conference room was reasonably sized and they had a SMARTboard and camera. Councilmember Waring said he was just with the movement, and as long as they showed up, he would be there.

Miscellaneous:

Councilmember Waring asked if there was any more information on the First Tee Program. Mayor Cogswell said they were under contract on a piece of property off Henry Tecklenburg Drive for their facility. They had raised the funds to purchase the property and had a great design with an up-and-coming golf course designer for a small 9-hole course, and that would help with the storm water over there. He thought it was a great use and he had met with them a week or two ago. It would be something where the kids would be members and they could go as a guest. It would be a public course and he thought it could be something cool. Councilmember Gregorie thought they had one in Columbia. Mayor Cogswell said they were all over, but he thought the chapter in Charleston was impressive. A lot of the business community leaned into it, and apparently, a lot of people loved golf, so it helped. Chairwoman Parker said they had a great concept, and as far as the storm water, in that the land that they could utilize to build something like this worked as the City had a lot of low land. Chairwoman Parker thanked Councilmember Shealy for bringing them out and getting some more fun recreational activities for the young kids as it was desperately needed. Councilmember Waring said that was great news.

Councilmember Waring asked if the Muni bathrooms were in place. Mr. Kronsberg said the work was proceeding. Pumps had been set on Hole 12, utility work should be nearing completion, all the layouts were done, and excavation for the building foundations which would be gravel. They were putting a box on gravel where the utilities were stubbed up. They should be starting and completing, hopefully, that week and that would prep the pads for building delivery.

With there being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

Submitted by Wanda Stepp
Clerk of Council's Office

Exhibit A

Department of Facilities and Capital Projects Recreation Committee Updates February 24, 2025

Peninsula

- Brittlebank Park Playground:
 - GEL engineering developing foundation alternates for review based on ACOE landfill cap permit.
- Shaw Center:
 - Interior work is underway and includes commencement of interior painting and ceiling framing. All fixtures on site and new mechanical air devices will be installed starting 2/24/25.
 - Exterior work drainage work is in and approved by Stormwater.
- Hazel Parker Window Replacement: materials bid received. Pending BAR application for improvements.

West Ashley

- New Aquatic Center at WL Stephens and Forest Park Playground:
 - Visioning Session with Mayor, design team and City staff occurred 2/21
 - Conceptual Design and programming underway.
 - Full project schedule will be available when Design Contract is submitted to City Council for approval.
 - CMAR RFQ advertisement complete:
 - Submission deadline is 2/27/25
 - Selection Committee meeting scheduled for 3/20/25. Will determine if short-list interviews are necessary.
- West Ashley Bikeway:
 - Design consultant has received feedback from Stormwater reviewers and is preparing plans for submittal to TRC by the 3/10 deadline.
- Bees Landing Rec
 - Shingle roof replacement underway.

James Island

- Bayview Soccer Complex – Added new concrete ADA parking spots at Concession building.
- Ft Pemberton Park:
 - Contract with BluTide approved at Council on 1/14/25
 - Installation of silt fence and tree protection almost complete
- James Island Rec Center
 - Remove and replace sidewalks around ball fields to eliminate trip hazards.
 - Paint restroom and concessions building. Doors and hardware replacement complete.
- Muni Restrooms:
 - Utility work has begun at holes 12 and 5 with the grinder pump set at hole 12.
 - Site layouts complete
 - Excavation for the building pads began 2/21/25

- Plymouth Park Playground Renovation
 - Playground near complete – manufacturer/installer must make some repairs to equipment before final acceptance.
 - New Fence complete.
 - Parking Lot maintenance is near completion.
 - Buffer, signage, site furnishings and mulching underway.

Johns Island

- New Johns Island Recreation Center:
 - Visioning Session with Mayor, design team and City staff occurred 2/21
 - Conceptual Design and programming underway.
 - Full project schedule will be available when Design Contract is submitted to City Council for approval.
 - CMAR RFQ advertisement complete:
 - Submission deadline is 2/27/25
 - Selection Committee meeting scheduled for 3/20/25. Will determine if short-list interviews are necessary.
- Johns Island Park CCSD Ballfield Renovations:
 - TCOs were issued for field #1 (softball) and field #3 for practice and games
 - Acoustifence at pickleball courts installed.
 - Outfall ditch/Pond excavation still in progress.
 - Batting Cage, bullpens, ticket booth, drinking fountain, and plaza concrete completed
 - Field 2 repairs of areas disturbed during land clearing/grading operations still needed.
 - Landscape/Irrigation for Plaza/Concession area to begin week of 2/24/25. Parks waiting on submittals of trees/shrubs/groundcovers for review.
 - Scoreboards for field 1 and 3 not installed, work to be done week of 2/24/25.
 - City staff will be performing punchlist inspection the morning of 2/24/25.
 - GC is forecasting substantial completion in March.

Daniel Island / Cainhoy

- Governors Park Drainage Improvements:
 - Still in review by DHEC

Other

- Tennis and Basketball Maintenance:
 - Indefinite delivery contract awarded to Sports Surface Pros in February.
 - Maintenance for eight facilities is scheduled for mid-May and will be completed by June for summer camps
 - Mitchell Playground Basketball
 - Mary Utsey Playground 2 half-court basketball
 - Bees Landing Rec Center courts 1-3
 - Jack Adams Tennis Complex courts 1-3
 - Deming Park basketball court
 - Alan Fleming Tennis Complex courts 1-4
 - Waring Senior Center, four pickleball courts
 - Thomas Johnson Park, basketball court

Field Maintenance

Completed:

- Winter pre-emergent applications
- 3 rounds of fertilizer for over-seeded fields at Gadsdenboro, Harmon, Ackerman, Bayview, Bees, WAP, Gov Park, and Camp Road Middle
- Completed winter weed treatments at all athletic fields
- Added Clay to James Island Rec field 1(report is that clay is in short supply)
- Completed winter sports
- Set up Middle School fields for Baseball and Softball
- Currently doing spring and summer pre-emergent applications
- Completing 16-20 drags per day on fields.