

Virtual Recreation Committee Meeting

April 27, 2021
Minutes

A meeting of the Recreation Committee was held this date beginning at 3:32 p.m. over video conference call.

All media were advised of this meeting.

Councilmembers Present: Councilmember Gregorie (Chair), Councilmember Shealy (Co-Chair), Councilwoman Delcioppo, Councilmember Griffin, Councilmember Sakran, and Mayor Tecklenburg.

Staff Present: Jason Kronsberg, Director, Parks; Laurie Yarbrough, Director, Recreation; Scott Watson, Director, Cultural Affairs; Stirling Halversen, Assistant Corporation Counsel; Wanda Stepp, Clerk of Council's Office (recording).

Also Present: Pat Hoagland.

Chair called for a moment of silence.

On a motion by Councilmember Shealy, seconded by Councilwoman Delcioppo, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2020 Recreation Committee meeting.

Reverend Alma Dungee Community Center renovation:

Mr. Kronsberg said most of the contracting was either underway or completed. Many of the eyebeams had been installed that were the structural supports for the second floor. The initial termite rot and repair had been removed and new floor joists had been reinstalled. New flooring had been replaced on the second floor, framing for the restrooms had been completed, plumbing and electrical rough-ins had been started, and the new duct work for the new HVAC was underway. They had peeled back some of the ceiling in the second floor and found much more termite damage from many years ago. As part of that termite damage, some of the mortar and brick of the parapet wall had been damaged due to the rotting of the wood, which created additional moisture intrusion. They had the structural engineer come back in and prepare a recommended fix for the extra damage found. The contractor had priced that work and prepared a Change Order which would come at the next Council meeting. Completion was originally for May 1st, but with the additional work, the contractor was preparing a request for additional days and a new schedule which they thought was justifiable. He didn't have the new schedule yet, but the work was underway. They didn't think the additional repairs would be too significant in cost, but definitely needed. Chairman Gregorie asked if there had been any discussions with the previous tenant for moving back in. Mr. Kronsberg said he had not, but there was a meeting scheduled with Legal, and perhaps Real Estate and Recreation, to discuss how that was going to work. He would have to defer to others on how they determined what the terms were for them to come back in. They fully anticipated them coming back. He just didn't know the details on how that worked.

Signage for "Brenda Scott Way" at the corner of President and Fishburne Streets (Recommended by Arthur Lawrence and Burke High School Class of 1967):

Chairman Gregorie said the sign had already been installed.

W.L. Stephens Pool:

Mr. Kronsberg said based on their evaluations and recommendations from the consultants, they were converting the pool into a seasonal pool. The City's Facilities Maintenance staff were removing all of the old sliding doors that were screwed shut back in the 1980s. A new security system was being installed. The sewer line had been repaired. Additional painting needed to be done, column fixes around the pool, and additional fencing. They would be ready for the July 1st opening. Chairman Gregorie asked if there was an issue with accessibility for people with disabilities at one point. Ms. Yarbrough said the building was built 50 years ago so it was built before the ADA requirements were ever in existence. The facility met the minimum standards for those people to access. They had a couple of patrons who had larger wheelchairs or walkers and they worked with those patrons individually to bring them in through the side gate which worked well. While the building would not be brand new, it still had the number of lifts to get into the pool and enter the doors. They weren't re-doing the building, but the accessibility and they continued to work with their patrons who needed to come in through the side gate. Their people were trained in doing that and were happy to help. Chairman Gregorie said they were reasonably accommodating the best they could. Ms. Yarbrough said absolutely and that they met the reasonable accommodations. She thought everybody would be surprised to see how connected they became with the rest of Forest Park. They could hear what was going on on the playground, they could hear the birds, and it was amazing for that pool that she had been in for almost 28 years in working at the City and to walk into the pool now and feel connected to the rest of the park. She thought it was going to be a unique experience for their patrons. It was already looking good.

Stoney Field:

Mr. Kronsberg said there were two projects that were happening. The Charleston County School District was working on the field and the track. The field surcharge and compaction were complete. They renegotiated with the School District to make sure they had the proper track being installed. The new surcharge was in place and probably would be there through the summer. The surveyors were constantly monitoring the compaction rate and continued to provide updates. They also just approved their submittals for the synthetic turf field, as well as the rubberized surface of the track which was commensurate with all of the other tracks the School District was currently working on. In addition, the retaining walls were all completed, so all of the site work was almost done. Now, they were just waiting for Mother Nature to do it's job with gravity and the surcharge pile.

With regard to the City portion of the work, HVAC upgrades to the locker rooms had been completed. Since the 1960s when the facility was constructed, the locker rooms had never been climate controlled, so it should be a pleasant surprise for whenever people got back into the locker rooms. They had completed the undergrounding work with Dominion to get the power feed to the park and the stadium underground so they could rid of the pole and the transformers which were near the corner of the Home side of the stands. That pole still stood and they would be working with electricians to get that new connection in place soon. They were close to having their permit set for their approval set through TRC and Stormwater reviews for the parking lot

improvements and the new entry plaza that would be in the area that used to be the maintenance gate from the parking lot. There would be new paving, new landscaping, and it would be a much better and more pleasing entry into the stadium. Hopefully, they would get those permits completed and bids set to advertise at the end of April or May. Chairman Gregorie asked when it was scheduled to be ready. Mr. Kronsberg said they would have to wait for the School District to continually give them updates on their work. They were waiting for the surcharge to compact the ground soil condition which they anticipated being in place through August. He didn't have a new schedule yet of when they would be completed, but he assumed it would be fall. He wasn't sure that it would be ready for football season. He would have to defer back to the School District for an update on their schedule which he didn't have in front of him. Mayor Tecklenburg asked about the other improvements the City was doing including new fencing around the perimeter on Fishburne Street to make it look nicer, as well. Mr. Kronsberg said that was correct. Decorative columns and fencing which would be a Board of Architectural Review (BAR) item because it was in the BAR jurisdiction. They were working with the BAR to get the decorative fencing approved as well. Chairman Gregorie asked if it was any correlation to the renderings done in 2007 for the fencing. Mr. Kronsberg said he would have to go back and verify, but he thought it was similar. Mayor Tecklenburg said it was his understanding when they had the back and forth about the track and the delay that occurred, because of that, that it would not be ready for football this fall. That was the original plan, but since they ended up going back and forth about the track and enlarging it to make sure it was 400 meters, and they had to go back and re-surface that portion of the field. Chairman Gregorie said he would assume that the School District had already come up with some alternatives for where Burke would play their football games. Mayor Tecklenburg said he presumed so, as last season they played at The Citadel or some other location. It was the School District's responsibility to figure out. When the day was done and they had the nice track as part of it, he thought it would be worth the wait. Chairman Gregorie agreed.

Carr Richardson Park:

Mr. Kronsberg said the work was underway. Their SWIPP inspections had passed, site work had commenced, and the contractors made significant way with the submittals of product data for all of the products and appointments that the park would be seeing. The contractor had encountered significant debris at the end of the point which was the finger that stuck out into the marsh. Probably 25 percent of it was complete rubble. They were evaluating their options on how to improve that area and make it safe at the same time. It was literally just a pile of rubble at the end when they got all of the vegetation pulled out. They were figuring out ways to make it accessible, but it would be difficult to construct anything out there because they were just building on top of rubble and rocks. There was no ground substrate to connect anything to. They continued to evaluate different methods of securing soil with geotextile fabric and getting some sort of observation point out on the end. The contractors also excavated the building pad which was on the original highland, but they encountered significant debris there, as well. The original proof roll for that portion of the project did not pass. They had their third-party geotechnical engineers on site inspecting that work and coming up with a plan to make sure they got the building pad compacted to the needed specifications so they could construct the building. The going was a little rough out there with all of the rubble, but they should be good to go when all was said and done. Councilmember Sakran asked if they expected the amount of debris or if it was more than expected. Mr. Kronsberg said they knew from the old surveys that there was the line of the original land and they knew everything outside of that line was all rubble, but they didn't expect as much rubble and debris in the original upland area. It appeared that they were using it for concrete washout. They should be fine. It was just going to take a little extra work.

The contractor was tracking how much they were excavating just to make sure they didn't exceed the allotted amount on the contract. His fingers were crossed that everything would come in acceptable, but they should be fine with the park house. They would just have to continue on it on a day-by-day basis with their geotechnical engineers to verify that they got that sub-base compacted appropriately. Councilmember Sakran asked when the expected completion date was and would this affect that completion date. Mr. Kronsberg said not yet, but he could get back to Councilmember Sakran on that. As of now, they hadn't had any additional requests for additional time, but they were very early in the contract.

Councilwoman Delcioppo asked if Daniel Island was still on target for the July 1st opening. Mr. Kronsberg said that was right as far as he knew. He thought Ms. Yarbrough was in the process of staffing up to get that opened on time, but the building was ready. Ms. Yarbrough said they had started interviews and they were in the second phase of interviewing for the Manager position. One of the candidates they were hoping would still be interested from back when they were doing it in December did not submit an application, so they were looking at some new applicants this time. They hoped to make that selection and offer within the next week. That employee would begin the hiring of all of the other employees and put a calendar together. She had kept a large file of program ideas and people who had reached out that they would like to teach a class, so they had some information to give that Manager to get them running quickly. They would have to order supplies, but since they were able to get finance helping them they were able to get the position open. Councilwoman Delcioppo asked about pricing and things like that once the Manager was hired. Ms. Yarbrough said the pricing would be identical to all of the other community centers. In order for a City resident to go in and shoot basketball, they would get an I.D. A non-resident would pay a little more, but it was a nominal cost. For programs, it was a pay-as-you-go. There may be a Zumba class that cost \$5.00 or there may be an Art class that was free. It was going to be a real collection of things. All of the sports programs would be the same. The cost was what they charged now, but the fee structure would be similar to what they had at the Arthur Christopher Community Center because they both would have fitness rooms. The programming would not start until they were able to open the building. A building of that size was going to take at least three or four people to have it opened and safely monitored, so they would have to bring their staff on before they could actually open. They would be ready to do that by July 1st. Councilwoman Delcioppo asked if there was already some programming in place prior to July 1st where people could sign up for things or did they have to wait until the actual open date. Ms. Yarbrough said she didn't want to go in and set the programming up. She wanted the Manager to come in and do that with a pair of eyes that were not hers. They knew when new sports were going to be and they knew summer was already ongoing and things like that. Most everything would start up in August or September as they got into the fall, but the building would be open. If people wanted to come out for volleyball night on Thursdays or whatever night it was or if they wanted to play pickleball on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, they would have that set up. That was real easy to do on the fly. They should be introducing that information to the community in June as they started, but nothing should be so full that they wouldn't be able to open the building and have people be able to do pretty much what they wanted to do in that facility.

Cultural Planning Process:

Mr. Watson said at the April Arts Commission meeting they discussed and adopted the Public Art Policy Guidelines and Objectives leaving open the specifics of a governance body for structure and recommendations yet to come from the Special Commission on Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Conciliation. They were ready to move forward and they had been actively soliciting

fund raising through foundation grants including Coastal Community Foundations, Facebook funded, Sustaining Black Communities Initiative, the Bloomberg Asphalt Art Initiative, the South Arts Cross Sector Grant, and they would apply this summer for the NEA Our Town Program with the hope they had some ability to immediately kickstart high quality public art programs. They also would have some programs piloted during Piccolo Spoleto this year and they had an opportunity called the PEAK Caring Fitness Court that would blend public art with a functional programmable fitness court structure with three recommended sites. They would be happy to bring that information forward. The City was invited as one of ten cities across the Country to pursue this opportunity and would invite highly visible internationally recognized art work by the late artist Keith Haring and at the end of five years to be re-purposed to use the art work of a local artist like Jonathan Green or an emerging artist, but a great opportunity to intersect public art with community use in a way that was really engaging. Their next steps in the Cultural Planning process would be largely formed by recommendations coming out of the Special Commission. He knew they wanted to establish post-COVID some goals and benchmarks to try to achieve to make sure they truly were as inclusive and representative of Charleston's many communities across all of the City sponsored cultural platforms.

City Festivals and Exhibitions for 2021:

Mr. Watson said they continued to operate under fairly vigorous COVID protocols. All of the programs for Piccolo Spoleto would be in compliance with CDC guidelines, no large scale gatherings. The events programmed between May 28th and June 13th were intended to be discreet and accommodate safe social distancing. Probably the biggest program would be the Memorial Day Patriotic Concert relocated from Marion Square to Hampton Park to provide for greater crowd safety. They would extend some of the Piccolo Spoleto programs deeper into the summer including moving the CSO Pops concert that traditionally started things off at the Custom House. That was now conceived for July 4th at Joe Riley Stadium which would give far greater social distancing, safe attendance, and the addition of fireworks. He thought they were making good choices that were measured and considered while continuing to create a way to bring the arts prominently forward in the public realm. For MOJA, the MOJA Arts Festival Planning Committee had requested to defer most of their recommendations until 2022. That was largely recognizing that their core audience was of advanced age and in higher risk groups, but they were proceeding with a well-considered plan to use the Dock Street Theatre, to use public parks, Festival Hall, and Memminger Auditorium for a series of well-structured, safely-considered programs that would accommodate social distancing both indoors and outdoors, and keep MOJA very much in the public eye in September and October. The Free Verse Poetry Festival they would push until November in trying to buy more time and have better access to the school system for outreach and engagement. They were all hoping that Holiday Magic in Historic Charleston 2021 truly would be magic and that by the time they got to late November and early December, any significant concerns about the pandemic would be largely behind.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan:

Chairman Gregore said he thought sometimes people didn't realize all Mr. Kronsberg did. In particular, in the Urban Forestry area, the canopies that Mr. Kronsberg's staff created throughout the City were beautiful. He thought it was quite evident when driving through Hampton Park and getting a sense of how the trees formed almost a cathedral like feeling. The same thing was happening on many of the streets as they did the same thing. He thought Mr. Kronsberg and his people were doing a great job with all of the balls they had in the air and at

some point, perhaps maybe from a Ways and Means standpoint, Mr. Kronsberg would like to go over all of the Capital Projects he was in charge of and let people see what he was doing.

Pat Hoagland with Brandstetter Carroll said they were getting to the point where they were starting to wrap things up. He had three things to talk about. What had been accomplished, what were they working on right now, and the schedule towards wrapping things up. Early on, they went out and assessed all of the park facilities. They went to 145 different sites and then a separate group of architects looked at another 36 sites with structures. He looked at the programs and the offerings, and analyzed those and the demographics. They mapped the service areas for all of the facilities and the various park types so they could identify some of the gaps in the services. They looked at all of the previous studies and summarized those as there was a lot of them and then they performed a Social Needs and Conditions Analysis to identify those areas of the City that would benefit the most from parks, recreation, and other social services, as well, the areas that were more underprivileged. They also did some benchmarking to other communities, about 32 other communities in the southeast of similar size looking at their facilities, programs, and budgets in comparison to the City's. The biggest and exciting part was the public engagement and it was an amazing process with COVID hitting right when they were getting started, but despite that, he thought they had better participation than they thought they would. They went to 20 different parks and talked to 324 people in the parks which helped out because people were out in large numbers and they took advantage of that. They had a statistically valid survey of 100 households which represented about 1,300 people, another web survey that 2,400 people filled out, 28 different stakeholder groups with some of the sports groups, outside recreation providers, and partners. They participated in ten of the City Plan listening sessions that had over 300 participants and reviewed the results from those City Plan sessions which reached about 3,000 people. They had another online engagement forum that another 108 people were involved with. They worked with about 60 staff members to go through a process to identify a new mission, vision, values, goals, and objectives for Parks and Recreation for the next ten years.

Some of his staff went down and met with Tom O'Rourke, for three days, to review some of the findings and recommendations to start that process. Now they were at the stage to pull all of it together which was exciting. They were looking at Citywide parks and facilities recommendations, recommendations as to what should be done at each of the parks, and overall recommendations for the structure of the department and how the City could be more organized, potential for income generation, looking at staffing, funding and revenue, looking at other partnerships, and the programs and services offered. There was a lot they were working on right now.

Mr. O'Rourke met with Mr. Kronsberg and Ms. Yarbrough to go over the schedule. On May 10th, they would have some draft recommendations they were going to review with Mr. Kronsberg and Ms. Yarbrough. They would meet with the Steering Committee around May 13th to present some of those draft recommendations and would meet with the Mayor around May 17th to discuss the same. They would take that information, refine some of it, and get back with the Recreation Committee at the end of May. In early June, they would have a full draft of the report which would consist of several hundred pages. At the June Recreation Committee meeting, there would be a draft of the plan to discuss with them. In July, they would present it to the Full Council for possible approval of the plan.

Chairman Gregorie asked if they had cost it out. Mr. Hoagland said that was what they were doing right now, but he was sure it would be substantial. It would be a big, scary number. There

were a lot of older structures/facilities, not that they hadn't been maintained well, but they were just old and needed to be replaced and fixed at some point.

Mr. Kronsberg said in reference to the community engagement, that effort during COVID was incredible. Their team came up with the idea of printing t-shirts and they went out and walked the parks. They engaged with citizens that probably would have never been online, would have never come to a public meeting, and would have never logged into a Zoom meeting. He said it was an outstanding effort and the product would be a better result with that. Chairman Gregorie said especially on the basketball courts. Ms. Yarbrough said Mr. O'Rourke spent a whole day at Johns Island Park and had no idea of the participation from the Latino community in that park. He was down at Martin Park and happened to time it during a food giveaway. He was able to meet people that use the parks regularly, but were not people that would typically take part in a meeting or an online survey. She thought they heard a lot of great things from citizens, and picking a great firm and City Council approving of that expenditure, was why the plan was going to be good. They had been so thorough. Chairman Gregorie agreed and appreciated all of the work being done. Mayor Tecklenburg asked if anybody complained that there were too many parks. Mr. Hoagland said he didn't remember anybody saying there were too many parks and there were some growing area where the City needed to look where parks needed to go in the future, as well.

Councilmember Griffin said he knew that the number was going to be big and robust, but this was the future and they were going to have to break it down piece-by-piece and look at what was the most important to the community, look at what needed the most help, and start knocking these projects out. It was kind of like how the City was doing flooding now. They all knew there were flooding issues and they took each project and saw how much money they had every year and got them done, and that was what they were going to have to do here. He couldn't wait to see the Master Plan and the fact they all rolled up their sleeves to get the process rolling was going to be a step in the right direction, but he just didn't want them to harp so much on that big number because he knew it was going to be robust. If they broke it down and they started knocking out these projects, that number was going to be a lot more manageable. He couldn't be more honored than to serve with this Committee because he knew they were moving in the right direction. They were giving something, a service, back to the people which they really needed. He knew it was going to be reported when that number came out, how much it was going to cost, and people were going to throw up their arms and say that number was too big and there was no way they could do that, but if they broke it down and read between the lines and looked at what they really needed first, he thought they were going to do some great things in all parts of the City. He looked forward to that. Chairman Gregorie thought a part of this exercise was also to identify where there may be grant money or other money available to help with this. He was sure they would be giving them some recommendations for where they may be able to identify funding. Mr. Hoagland agreed.

With regard to questions earlier in the meeting, Mr. Kronsberg said he had the Carr Richardson Park Schedule and the contract was 365 calendar days. They had not received a request for a time extension yet, but they would work through the debris issues and see what the contractor had to say.

Mr. Kronsberg said with regard to Stoney Field, it would be brick piers with iron or steel fencing or aluminum fencing in between so it was decorative style, Charleston style piers and fencing.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 4:13 p.m.

Submitted by Wanda Stepp
Clerk of Council's Office