

Recreation Committee Meeting

May 15, 2023

A meeting of the Recreation Committee was held on this date beginning at 4:04 p.m. over video conference call.

Councilmembers Present: Councilmember Kevin Shealy (Chair), Councilmember William Dudley Gregorie (Vice-Chair), Councilmember Stephen Bowden, Councilmember Caroline Parker, Councilmember Jason Sakran, and Mayor John Tecklenburg.

Staff Present: Jason Kronsberg, Director, Parks; Laurie Yarbrough, Director, Recreation; Melissa Cruthirds, Assistant Corporation Counsel; Mallary Scheer, Assistant Corporation Counsel; Rick Jerue, Senior Advisor to the Mayor; and Wanda Stepp, Clerk of Council's Office (recording).

Also Present: Bobby Collins and Former Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan.

Chairman Shealy called the meeting to order.

The meeting was opened with an invocation by Chairman Shealy.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Mayor Tecklenburg, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2023 Recreation Committee meeting.

Old Business:

a. Bond Referendum Project Requests Discussion and Deadline

Mr. Kronsberg said he had gotten four responses from Councilmembers on the potential bond list. At the maximum, they had about two weeks so it would be best to get those by the end of the following week. He said they could send out a reminder at the beginning of the week as it would take them a little bit of work to pull the big list into the next list and put new estimates on them based on some assumptions so that they could wrap up the paperwork in order to meet all of the deadlines with the County which would be in August to get a question on the ballot if that was where they ended up through the process. Councilmember Parker asked if there had been a concrete dollar amount discussed. Mr. Kronsberg said not yet, and that they would take the information Councilmembers sent and crunch the numbers and put some broad cost estimating on them. He said Ms. Hanrahan would address it in her slides, but there had not been a decision on any value yet or even a discussion.

b. Update from Trust for Public Land – Pegeen Hanrahan

Ms. Hanrahan said it had been a pleasure to speak with Councilmembers and learn what their goals and objections were for the beautiful City of Charleston and its Parks and Recreation programs. She said the work was not only done by herself, but also her colleague Jessica Welch. The work was being done with entirely grant funding and charitable contributions from local private donors that the Parks Conservancy had helped them with. On Council's behalf, Mayor Tecklenburg asked to have the work done and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation was kind enough to fund it. Sometimes people thought if the goal was to focus on parks and connecting

people to the outdoors that they would be given an overly rosy view. She said they were all about success, and if the data and analysis were to come back indicating it wasn't a good thing currently, then they would definitely say to keep working in the community and not go to ballot yet. She said they wanted to be guided by Council's values and the community's values to make sure they weren't getting out in front of where the public was.

Ms. Hanrahan said they would share the report as soon as they got it finalized from a staff perspective, but there were some deadlines they were starting to face. She said the Feasibility Study for Charleston was somewhat abbreviated. Sometimes they looked at every possible funding source under the sun, but in this case, they focused on bonds. At the moment, they were looking for the Committee's feedback as well as all of their colleagues. If there was a list longer than the dollar amount, that was okay because what they would do next was some public opinion research. She knew that when they did the One Charleston Parks and Recreation Master Plan that there was some research done. This report was focused on City voters because they were looking at the November 2023 ballot. In 2019, 26,000 voters cast ballots. They would be looking at them, and the newly registered voters, and those who were projected and modeled to turn out. She said sometimes a Parks Needs Analysis would look at broader groups, users, and/or people who may be wonderful members of the community, but were too young, or not yet registered, or not diligent about voting. She said it was a statistically accurate poll. The pollster they chose had done their polling the previous year in Beaufort, Dorchester, and Berkeley counties. It was McLaughlin & Associates which was a national polling firm and they worked with them a fair amount across the country. She said there were some limitations as to what they could learn from the polling, but she would talk about why they poll and what they looked for. She said it had to be approved by the Committee and Council obviously.

Ms. Hanrahan said their whole mission was connecting everyone to the outdoors. She showed a picture of Davis-Bailey Park in Dorchester County. She said they worked in natural areas such as the play equipment and schoolyard projects. She said they had worked on 650 ballot measures across the nation since 1996 and a bunch were in South Carolina with over \$93 billion in funding and their overall passage rate. It was not just the measures that Trust for Public Land worked on but across the country with or without them. It was about 76% of bond measures related to parks and natural lands passed. It was in good times and bad times, it was in Democratic and Republican administrations, and it was regardless of the economy or whatever crisis was underway. She had thought a lot of stuff was going to drop off and/or fail in 2020. They had 50 ballot measures that Trust for Public Land worked on across the country and 49 passed. The previous year they had 33 and 30 passed. The three they assisted with in South Carolina along with a lot of local partners Lowcountry Land Trust, Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust, Conservation Voters of South Carolina, and others all passed. Most of the ones in Florida passed as well so they had a good record the previous year. This data was publicly available www.landvote.org.

Ms. Hanrahan said this was the process they always followed, and it was why they thought they had that overall high success rate. They start with Feasibility Research and then they go to the public opinion surveying. In order to do the Public Opinion Survey, they needed to have a target amount, a target list of projects, which could be longer than the ultimate list. It was great to have sort of a blue sky list and then narrow it down based on a lot of different factors, not the least of which was how people felt about different projects. They would make program recommendations and work with the City attorney's office to develop the ballot language. She said they needed a

draft of the ballot language to go to the public opinion surveying. So, they could start with something they hoped was close and the City attorney was comfortable with, and then they would adjust it based on what they learned. They would work with a local citizens group for a campaign. It had to be locally led and there had to be trusted people on the ground from Charleston who looked and sounded like Charleston actually working on the campaign, but they did help with best practices, messaging, development of materials, and so on.

Ms. Hanrahan said the three key elements were the Demonstrated Need. In a beautiful classic old city like Charleston that was one of America's great places, there was clearly a need for a first-class park system and there was clearly extraordinary infrastructure demands overall. She was reading the Post and Courier about Charleston's underground tunnels, which as an environmental engineer herself, she was fascinated by. She used to own a historical home. She knew once they started digging, they weren't sure what they would find, so Charleston had great needs. She believed there would be community engagement and support, but if not, they would say to keep working on it. Without City Council and Mayor Tecklenburg's support, this could not go forward. At any point if any one of those three things were to fall apart, they would step back and keep working in the community, keep engaging citizen, business, and neighborhood groups, and wait until they got to the point where they could succeed. All of that would lead to clear descriptive and legal ballot language that they hoped would be approved by the voters. The reason the ballot language was important was that everyone who would cast a vote on the measure would read the ballot language. She said they had done exit polling in Iowa, which as a Floridian, she would say was not the least thoughtful electoral state in the nation because they hosted the Iowa caucuses. Forty percent of people in Iowa told them that they made the decision on a ballot measure while standing in the ballot box, so it was important that the language was clear, concise, legal, and ethical as not to be challenged on it.

Ms. Hanrahan said the City had a great Parks and Recreation Master Plan that included a tremendous amount of public input, but it had a longer list of needs than they could likely meet in any one ballot measure. She said they were currently focused on viability for November 2023. As they knew, there were other City elections on the ballot. If for any reason that didn't look like a viable ballot to work with, they could look at other options. She said their overall recommendation was for bonds as bonds were to a city like a mortgage was to a household or a business owner. It was a long-term instrument to purchase something that they couldn't afford to purchase the whole of it currently, but they would pay it out over time. One of the reasons that made sense for a city like Charleston was because if they made major Capital improvements in the Parks and Recreation facilities, they would be used for 10, 20, 30, 40 years. It made sense that they would be paid out over that time, but on the other hand they did have to pay interest on bonds which had been rising over recent years. There were pros and cons. She said sometimes if the cost of building things and/or inflation was going up faster than the interest rate, it could also make sense to go ahead and do projects with bonds. The other option was to do a pay as you go where a certain amount of money was allocated every budget year and they wouldn't do a bond issue. She said if the City were to do a \$60 million bond, the City would have the ability to have \$60 million of Capital funding as bonds were only for Capital funding. They couldn't use bonds to do staff salaries or equipment that was less than a certain number of years old. They could use it to purchase equipment that was long-term equipment, but they couldn't use it for short-term supplies and things like that. Regardless, a \$60 million bond would cost about \$4.8 million per year to pay back over 20 years, so the mill increase associated with that was 2.56 mills plus based on the current tax base which was \$21 per year for a \$200,000 home, but a home in Charleston couldn't

really be purchased for \$200,000. The median home in Charleston would be about \$55 a year as the median household currently in Charleston was assessed at \$532,000. She said the \$50 a year mark was about what they were typically looking at. Lower was always better, so it would be easier to pass a \$30 million bond than a \$60 million bond. She had seen much higher amounts and the highest she had ever seen was in Doral, Florida which was over \$150 a year, but it was an affluent community. She said perhaps they could push it higher to \$80 or \$100. She said they would probably encourage Council to do that if they heard that \$60 might be about viable, but they wanted to do \$100, the way they would probably ask that question in the poll was to a statistically valid sample of people was they would ask the \$60 first and then to those who voted in favor they would say what if it was \$80 and the additional costs were this. She said they could test some different amounts, but once they threw out a lower number-- The other way they could do it was they could split the sample, but that decreased the accuracy of the answers, so they didn't usually like to do that.

Ms. Hanrahan said she had been meeting with Mr. Kronsberg on and off for a couple of years. She knew that the City needed to do more than just Capital, but also Operations and Maintenance. Council could look at other funding sources including just straight dedication of millage either in the existing budget, user fees, or other options. She mentioned that when the finance staff looked at this, they would say that it assumed a stable tax base, no annexation, all of the debt issued at once which it rarely was because it couldn't be spent all at once. This was what she described as worst-case scenario because it assumed there was no tax-based growth over 20 years, and that there was no annexation, and that all of the debts were issued right up front. Those were all hopefully not true things, but they gave a worst-case scenario.

Ms. Hanrahan said overall bonds did pass about 84% of the time for parks and land projects. Property taxes passed at more like 70% of the time. Those were the two big options for cities, so there was a decent and good chance and that was across all types of government. Cities were usually less averse to taxes than counties, so she thought the City's chances were good. She thought they had worked on 9 or 10 measures in South Carolina, and they had seen every one of them pass. It was usually a really strong coalition of a lot of different local groups, and they were proud of the work they had been able to accomplish with people in South Carolina. She said property taxes were more flexible and nobody loved property taxes alone, but they were the fundamental funding source for City government. She thought about 30% of the City's budget was funded by property taxes. It was at 80.3 mills currently which raised over \$107 million a year. If they just wanted to raise property taxes or dedicate some gross in the property tax revenue to the Parks and Recreation programs, for example, if they wanted to do a 1.0 mill increase, that would raise \$1.88 million per year and would cost a typical homeowner about \$21 a year. They could do a combination. Overall property taxes were in the purview of City Council. With increasing numbers of majorities and super majorities, the higher they went, but they could raise taxes for any valid public purpose at any time. Most people didn't like that, of course, which was why they talk about whether it ought to be sent to the voters for something like Parks and Recreation. The thing to know though was if they sent a property tax option to the voters, it was non-binding and any Council in the near future need not go by that. Many times they saw that they did, but if they had a Council in two or five years say they knew 80% of people voted for that, but they aren't going to do it anymore it was entirely within their rights as elected officials. She said while they did a lot of those, it was not necessarily the most reliable option because when tough times hit, they usually did roll back those rates and the staff couldn't really rely on that always coming in.

Ms. Hanrahan showed two examples of ballot measures that Trust for Public Land assisted with. In 2019, they assisted Dorchester County with parks and library bonds. They did the polling, and feasibility research, and helped with the ballot language design with Dorchester County attorney John Frampton. She pointed out that it listed out the specific projects. The Dorchester County Courthouse Park which was n/k/a Davis-Bailey Park, Ashley River Park, Rosebrock Park, Swamp Fox Connector, Pine Trace Natural Area which was under development currently, and the development of hiking, biking, and pedestrian trails, and bridges. She said they polled every word in that ballot language, amended it, and polled the amount. On the Beaufort County language passed in 2018, her colleague Will Abberger worked on that, and he had also worked on the Charleston Greenbelt Program, but for the County, which she knew the City had done great work with. It listed, 'Shall issue general obligation bonds not to exceed \$25 million for the purpose of land preservation,' etcetera. It went through place names, wildlife area, wetlands, and natural areas. It painted a picture to voters as to what they would get if they voted in favor. She pointed out they were a little more persuasive with the Beaufort County attorney than they were with Dorchester County. They liked to see the language that said, 'all expenditures shall be subject to an annual independent audit,' because that gave voters assurance. They would communicate that often in the voter communications. The counties were doing independent audits anyway, but not every voter knew that.

Ms. Hanrahan said they needed Council to give them a broad list of potential projects. The list could be specific such as needing a recreation center, a pool renovation, or trails at a particular location or it could be broad categories such as lighting improvements in parks, or safety improvements in parks, or increased access to the Ashley River. In general, people tended to focus on access to the water, water quality projects that were improving, or park safety as well as getting children outside and out from behind their electronic devices. She said they needed to choose a maximum amount for the bonds, but they didn't need to issue all of the bonds and they didn't need to be issued all at once. She said they liked to know a maximum amount that would appear in the ballot language and also accountability measures like annual independent audits and citizen oversight. If people were hesitant about something like this, it was normally because they weren't 100% confident that the local government would do what they asked them to do, so they liked to build in those assurances.

Ms. Hanrahan said the very last date to send the ballot language to the Charleston County Election people was Monday, August 15th at noon. They would love to see it much sooner than that because it was hard to get the campaign up and running until the point that the ballot language had been formally affirmed. As they knew, things normally went through several readings, so they wanted to get all of that lined up and work backwards from there and they needed to have the final proposed numbers and projects. The rest of the dates she showed were deadlines for publishing things and making sure they had crossed every 't' and dotted every 'i' according to South Carolina statute.

Ms. Hanrahan said the three reasons they polled was that they were testing the viability. If data were to come back and only 32% of people thought this was a good idea, they would strongly recommend not to go forward. She would be shocked at that because they normally saw numbers in the mid-60s or higher. They were assessing which projects and purposes were most popular with the voters. She said Council had a finger on the pulse of that oftentimes, but they liked to confirm that. They wanted to understand different segments of the electorate, which messages resonated the strongest with which segments. Different neighborhoods may have different

focuses and needs. For example, younger Democratic women may have different values than older Republican men, so they might communicate with them differently when the time came.

Ms. Hanrahan showed an example of the kind of data they got back. It was with the same pollster they would be using in Charleston, but this one was in Berkeley County, so they did talk to some residents on Daniel Island. She said they had tested the exact ballot language which they had to summarize because the sales tax language tended to be lengthy in South Carolina. The initial data came back at 46%, but the reason they were able to confidently encourage them to go forward in reauthorizing this, and more importantly for them for adding a Greenbelt provision to protect natural lands, was that they asked questions about that and assessed that was popular in fast growing Berkeley County. She said the thing that was key in both Berkeley and Dorchester Counties was that it was not in that case a new measure, but a continuation of the same rate. The second question asked was if they knew this ballot measure would continue at the same rate which cost the average Berkeley County resident about \$55 per year over 11 years, would they vote in favor or against and that came back at 55%. She said that still didn't give them enormous confidence and so a couple of things that Berkeley County did, among other things, was that they took it from 11 years down to 7 years and they emphasized the Greenbelt portion of the program and it passed with 74% support.

Ms. Hanrahan said they would assist in getting a campaign up and running assuming that everything moved forward. She showed the Dorchester and Beaufort materials that went out by mail. They were also involved in producing videos, telephone town halls, paid ads on Facebook, popping up on YouTube videos, etcetera. She said they did help raise a lot of that money with local on the ground organizations like Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust, Lowcountry Land Trust, Nature Conservancy, and others. In a city like Charleston, they wanted to work in coalition with groups like the NAACP, Urban League, neighborhood associations, and business associations. She said Charleston was an interesting and diverse City and they needed to have an interesting and diverse campaign to represent the City.

Councilmember Parker thanked Ms. Hanrahan for all of the information as she was excited about this. She said she knew the bond referendum was Citywide, but Charleston was a very diverse City and different areas may be willing to pay more when it came to Parks and Recreation. She asked if there were ways or was there a possibility that different areas could be carved out. In thinking about the downtown area, the A-Tax money could be used for some of the park needs that people may request in their request list if they could use funds for that and then they could utilize the bond referendum for other things. She said last year's tax increase was about the same at 3 mills so about \$50 a household. Ms. Hanrahan said it was possible to do a type of taxation that affected a subset of the City. It was normally done through a mechanism like a special assessment, or they could, theoretically, do like a special taxing district. She knew there was one done in Lake Wiley, which is in the upstate, in 2018 or 2020. She thought that was actually citywide, but they could do a subset of the City that was just paying an additional amount of taxes because they were getting an additional amount of services. They could also use other mechanisms. For example, if they were building a recreation center or a rentable facility that had a pool, they could always charge fees for use. She said there was a fee in Dorchester County at Ashley River Park of \$2 every time people went in, or they could buy an annual pass. They could do an impact fee, but that was normally done to address the demands associated with new growth, so it didn't meet the needs in communities that might not be experiencing as much new growth which were often more disadvantaged communities. If the City's goal was either to meet

some greater deficits in part of the community, but that community was going to be using more facilities they could drill in and try to figure out some reasonable and legal set of options. Ms. Scheer said there were options, and she would be happy to talk about the carve-outs or what they could do in another meeting on more specifics. Councilmember Shealy said they could put that on the agenda for the next meeting. Councilmember Parker said what James Island would like to see was a new recreation center and a pool, and that was a huge sum of money that she didn't think this bond referendum would be able to facilitate. She was just curious what options were out there. Ms. Hanrahan said they could use a number of different options to cover any one facility. If a portion of a project were to come from a bond, they could also do user fees, rental fees, or tax increment district funding. They could cobble together what was necessary to make it all work. Councilmember Gregorie responded to Councilmember Parker with regard to the Island as he thought they were in the same place. He knew nothing that would prohibit them from putting their wishlist out there and working back. He was with her in terms of another recreational facility on James Island. Obviously, he was thinking about Westchester and a swimming facility. Again he knew nothing that would prohibit them putting their maximum out there and work backwards if they had to.

Councilmember Parker asked Ms. Hanrahan if the hard deadline was August or if she wanted it to be July because she knew they had to go through three readings. Ms. Hanrahan said August 15th was the State of South Carolina's statute that they could not go beyond. This was the final point in which they needed to submit the actual final ballot language that had been duly and properly adopted through Council to Charleston County for them to print the ballots. If they worked backwards from there, in terms of when Council meetings would be held and they advertised their ordinances or resolutions however the City attorney's office had them do it. She asked the pollster when they could be in the field and he said they could be in the field within a week to ten days, but then the City attorney's office needed some time to absorb all of that and to be cautious about looking at all of the language and case law. She said their attorney would help, but she was going to be out of the country the entire month of June. She would like to have at least a good draft of ballot language and get to the polling prior to June 1st if possible, and then that would give a few weeks to contemplate it and start public hearings on the actual ballot language. While that was going on, they would be meeting with people in the community to try to raise money because it was just like any one of their campaigns. They needed to raise money to put out mailers, build websites, and do ads which was entirely private. They couldn't use a single dollar of public money to do that. She said it was not unlike any of their races that if they had a weak opponent, then they might not need to raise as much money. If the data came back showing it was overwhelmingly popular with no real challenge or opposition, then they should be in good shape and wouldn't need to do as much.

Councilmember Parker hoped the Committee would decide on a date as the summer meeting schedule was approaching. Chairman Shealy said he didn't know if they needed to have another full Council meeting. He understood as there were a lot of things going on in the summertime and their meetings kind of got jammed with extra stuff because they only meet once a month. The meetings would go late, and they would get lost in some of that as they cram as much as they could into those meetings. Ms. Hanrahan said she was more than happy to follow Council's lead and Mayor Tecklenburg's lead in terms of what they thought was most pragmatic. She said one thing she loved about South Carolina was that they could have a lot of meetings to understand community priorities prior to Council with multiple elected decisionmakers which made it a little easier, but they still had to hold those public hearings and give the citizens an opportunity to

participate. Mr. Jerue said they would have to make a final decision by the July meeting and they only had a June and July meeting. Councilmember Parker said she was doing the same math and realistically they would probably need the first reading the following Tuesday at Council. Mr. Jerue said he thought first reading in June and second and third reading in July, but they would have to have everything ready for that meeting on June 20th. Mr. Kronsberg said time was of the essence for them to compile a list of projects and bring them back to the Committee in time to meet all of the deadlines, and it was going to be a challenge. He said they were going to have to have some flexibility on how they created a list of projects in not making it too finite, but not making it too infinite. He said they couldn't bring a list of 12 district-wide, 10 projects per district. Again, time was of the essence to get that information so they could draft the list, review it with the Mayor, and then figure out how to bring it back.

Chairman Shealy thanked Ms. Hanrahan for all she was doing and trying to push them along to get this taken care of. Ms. Hanrahan said she knew it felt extremely rushed and pressured, but because the City had done a lot of work already through the Master Planning process it was a City with a strong sense of self and identity. In Dorchester County, they were right up against the deadline both times. She actually kind of liked a bit of a quick campaign, but the City's staff did need time to do their work in a way they thought was legally and ethically defensible, so they needed to help them do that.

New Business:

a. Update on Municipal Golf Course – Bobby Collins, Friends of the Muni

Chairman Shealy said the Friends of the Muni had been doing a lot of work and they were a great group and they had a great website www.friendsofthemuni.com. Bobby Collins had been doing a great job directing this group and they were doing a much better job as far as the City of communicating with the Friends of the Muni. He said Ms. Yarbrough, Mr. Kronsberg, Matt Frohlich, Rick Jerue, and Mayor Tecklenburg had been out to meetings with Friends of the Muni recently just to open communications and make sure everyone was on the same page. He said it was such a gem and a beautiful place, and they needed to work together because everybody had goals in mind to make it the best possible thing for citizens. Their slogan was 'Fore Y'all' and it was for everybody. He showed a screen of the board members who did a lot of great things in the community, as well as played a short video about the Muni.

Bobby Collins said he was excited to attend his first meeting with the Committee and he wanted to share some of the things they had been doing. The new website was well done and had gotten some good attention on the activity of it. He said they had been involved in four major things that needed to be done along the lines of renovation related projects. They were in dire need of blade sharpeners to cut the grass at the Muni, and they spent \$4,000 to help fund that. He said a number of sprinkler heads were either pointed in the wrong direction or had gotten run over by mowers and that was another \$7,000 they were happy to help with. They were awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Fairways Foundation to enhance the environment, so they were going to buy about 10,000 plants and put them in the ponds between holes 12, 13, and maybe 15. It would help to create better water quality, help with flooding by absorbing more water during storms, and according to some local fishermen, the new marsh grass might give the redfish a place to hide out at the 12th tee and 13th fairway. He said it had been a fun project and they were still in the midst of getting that done. They were also helping to fund the pre-construction and permitting process for the new bathrooms. It was an idea that Mr. Kronsberg had, and they might be able to

help speed things along if they funded that portion of the project. He said the project was coming along and they hoped to have the first flush sometime in the fall.

Mr. Collins said the things they looked forward to was possibly a clubhouse renovation or possibly a turnhouse that might be combined with some shelter from the weather for youth and adult programs. Gary Bain, a local retired architect, came out to the Muni with Tony Morelli and Stuart Whiteside on their board and he asked if they had a Master Plan for the campus and the answer was no. Mr. Bain had suggested that they step back and begin that process and they did that a few weeks ago. Mr. Jerue had showed up to an informal brainstorming session to lay out some ideas. Mr. Jerue had another great idea to include Ms. Yarbrough and Mr. Kronsberg at the next meeting, so they did that at their last board meeting. They had some good healthy conversation about what the clubhouse might look like and what it might not look like. They didn't think it made sense to try to go out and raise \$5 million or \$6 million to build something they didn't need. It felt nice to have people say they didn't want to lose the character of the Muni. It wasn't that they didn't have great facilities because they did, but it was a place that people gathered from all walks of life in the community which made the place so great. They also discussed parking as well as the turnhouse. The turnhouse at the 8th or 9th hole was important so they could grab and go instead of going back to the clubhouse for refreshments which helped with the pace of play. He said if the Friends of the Muni were about anything, it was the quality of the golf experience so speeding up the pace of play would be helpful.

Mr. Collins said another thing that came up during their meeting that would be worthy of consideration was to find a new tee time scheduling software. There was software available that Mr. Frohlich had heard about, and he recommended them to come in and meet with IT. They just had to make sure that the integration would be easy and that they let the IT people help guide those decisions as well as maximum security to protect the third-party payment systems that they would be interested in. There were available software providers, and they would begin looking into that.

Mr. Collins said their job wasn't necessarily programming and that Boykin Powers at the Pro Shop had already drawn in U.S. Kids. He had a number of kids and adult programs already going on. They weren't talking about competing with First Tee and competing with Mr. Powers, but staying in their lane which was, basically, just finding people who may never have been to the Muni. They did so last fall and their friend and fellow board member Harold Hill and his friend Harold Pinckney reached out to a church on James Island. Originally it was going to be about eight kids 7 to 9 years old, but it ended up being 18 kids who were 7 to 15 years old that came to the Muni. They had lunch for them and put golf clubs in their hands, and they had a lot of fun. They hit wiffle balls through a pink hippopotamus, but they were also putting and hitting the driving range. He said that was what the Muni was all about. It was for 'y'all' as Chairman Shealy had pointed out. They were looking for ways to improve that kind of programming where they may or may not ever take up the game, but they knew that they had fun at the City Municipal Golf Course.

Mr. Collins said that one idea that Mr. Hill came up with was that it wasn't as easy as it sounded to identify and attract kids to come so maybe they could partner with City Councilmembers who probably had a better idea than the Friends of the Muni did of where those constituent juniors might be. Whether it was in a church or school setting, they welcomed them. They would set up programming and set up three pink hippopotamuses if they needed to. He said Mr. Hill was at the grocery store during the holidays and a young man asked him if he worked at the Muni. Mr. Hill told him that he was there a lot, but he didn't work there. The young man asked him if he was

there that day they were hitting balls through the hippos and Mr. Hill replied that he was. The young man asked Mr. Hill when they were going to do it again because it was a lot of fun. Mr. Collins said that was what was in their lane as they now had a new friend of the Muni, and he would always have that memory. They were trying to create those kinds of experiences.

Mr. Collins said one further thought in terms of programming was they had learned about a Workforce Development Program from the National Links Trust. They were becoming the funneled voice for municipal golf in the United States. They were located in Washington, D.C. and they were renovating three golf courses in the D.C. area. The Workforce Development Program helped create apprenticeship programs for people to come into the golf business, not as a golf professional, but in merchandising, food and beverage, maintenance crews, etc. During the Master's Golf Tournament at Augusta National, Chairman Ridley announced that Augusta National was establishing a Workforce Development Program in Augusta. Augusta National Golf Course was partnering with Augusta Technical College and the Augusta Municipal Golf Course to establish an apprenticeship program for just those kinds of jobs. He said they had been brainstorming with Trident Technical College and Ms. Yarbrough about the idea as there were 29 golf courses within a 25-mile radius of the Charleston Municipal Golf Course. He said to think about the number of jobs that entailed and think about how difficult it could be to hire people, to train, and retain those people. He said if there was an apprentice program, that might help improve the job prospects for some and the ability to retain employees.

Mr. Collins said those were the things they were working on. He thanked Council for their support particularly with regard to the restrooms that year, and would be happy to get everyone out there with some of their constituents. Mayor Tecklenburg thanked Mr. Collins for his efforts as the Friends of the Muni helped to make the renovation of the course possible. It was nice to hear about the additional support that Friends of the Muni were continuing to offer this great City facility and the programmatic side all sounded exciting. He thanked Mr. Collins for all of his involvement as it was all volunteer and he appreciated it for the City. Mr. Collins thanked Mayor Tecklenburg for being one of best friends of the Muni. Chairman Shealy thanked Mr. Collins for joining them and sharing the great things that the Friends of the Muni were doing and how they were working together in making great things happen and having a dream for what was going to happen in the future with the golf course and the programs.

Other Business:

Ms. Yarbrough said she wanted to make sure she alerted everyone on the Committee, since last year was such a challenge, that they held swim lesson registration the previous Saturday and were able to get kids and families signed up in three areas where they have pools. They were excited about that, and it was great knowing they would be back in the business of teaching swim lessons. They will also probably work with the private contractors like they did the previous year to allow them to rent pool space, but they were doing much better than this same time the previous year. Chairman Shealy said that was outstanding news to hear that they would be doing swim lessons and the pools were going to be open. He thanked Ms. Yarbrough and her staff for all their hard work to make sure that happened. Councilmember Parker also thanked Ms. Yarbrough for all of her hard work on that and getting their kids back in the pool and finding a solution to the lifeguard problem they had the previous year.

Chairman Shealy reminded everyone if they hadn't gotten their project list together to look through that and get it to Mr. Kronsberg, so they could move forward. If there was someone that they

needed to push along that wasn't on the Committee, please do that so they could get it moving forward.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

Submitted by Wanda Stepp
Clerk of Council's Office