

**IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION  
COMMISSION MEETING  
WORK SESSION MINUTES**

Crooked Creek Park

March 23 2016

6:30 p.m.

Members Attending: John Sowards, Emily Shuman, Bruce Loveless, Bill Harmon Members Absent:  
Scott Wilhide Non-members Attending: Elizabeth Taylor, Eve Mittendorf

Elizabeth Taylor presented an overview of the agenda. Ms. Taylor requested the Commission amend the agenda to include under Public Presentation an opportunity for a parent to speak regarding concerns at the afterschool site at Chapin Intermediate and also amend the agenda description under New Business VI, Item A from SSP East Tennis Courts to New Chapin Park Tennis Courts. Discussion occurred regarding presentation of the EAGLE Scout Project award. Chairman Sowards directed the Board to make a motion in General Session to amend the agenda to include an opportunity for Ms. Andi Cornelison to share directly to the Commission concerns regarding the afterschool program at Chapin Intermediate.

Discussion occurred regarding the water line for SSP East. Elizabeth Taylor stated the meters have been installed and contractors are working on connections. Ms. Taylor distributed site diagrams reflecting recommended easement access across Trevett's property for a permanent looped water system solution. Elizabeth Taylor reviewed the status of the tennis court bids for the New Chapin Park; the bids received substantially exceeded the budget. Staff asked HB Jones, current tennis court contractor for SSP East, for a per court cost at the New Chapin Park. HB Jones quoted a price lower than the bids received for the New Chapin Park tennis courts and closer to budget. Ms. Taylor stated a change order recommendation for the New Chapin Park tennis courts is on the agenda for Commission approval.

The Commission moved to General Session at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eve Mittendorf  
IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION

**IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION  
COMMISSION MEETING  
GENERAL SESSION MINUTES**

Crooked Creek Park  
March 23, 2016  
7:00 p.m.

Members Attending: John Sowards, Emily Shuman, Bruce Loveless, Bill Harmon  
Members Absent: Scott Wilhide

Non-members Attending:

Elizabeth Taylor	Eve Mittendorf	Jack Terrell	Jason White
Jay Downs	Jim Wellman	Luke Meetze	Cindy Meetze
Traci Moore	Andi Cornelison	Gretchen Dillon-Sauer	

Chairman John Sowards called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and delivered the invocation. Guests were welcomed.

**I. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Chairman Sowards submitted the March 23, 2016 agenda for approval. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER HARMON TO ADD TO THE AGENDA GRETCHEN DILLON-SAUER OR ANDI CORNELISON TO SHARE CONCERNS REGARDING THE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM AT CHAPIN INTERMEDIATE AND TO ADD THIS ITEM UNDER PUBLIC PRESENTATION IV, ITEM B. SECONDED BY BRUCE LOVELESS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**II. REQUIREMENTS OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**

The news media was notified of the meeting, it was posted on the website and a notice and agenda was posted at the park sites one week prior to the meeting.

**III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Chairman Sowards submitted the January 27, 2016 minutes as presented; there being no objections the minutes were approved.

**IV. PUBLIC PRESENTATION**

**A. EAGLE Scout Project – Luke Meetze**

Chairman Sowards presented a certificate in recognition of Luke Meetze completing his EAGLE Scout project at Crooked Creek Park. The EAGLE Scout project was to design and construct an orienteering course at Crooked Creek Park to be utilized by other local scout groups to satisfy their orienteering requirements. Chairman Sowards thanked Luke Meetze and his family for selecting an Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission park for the location of his EAGLE Scout project.

**B. Afterschool Program at Chapin Intermediate – Gretchen Dillon-Sauer**

Chairman Sowards asked which parent would like to be the spokesperson. Andi Cornelison volunteered to speak. Chairman Sowards shared that the Board received and read two communications from Ms. Cornelison and spoke to the Executive Director and staff regarding Ms. Cornelison's concerns.

Ms. Andi Cornelison stated in February her son came home and told her that a counselor had been involved in hurting children and that her son had been called into an assembly and told not to tell anyone or not to discuss it with other children. Ms. Cornelison stated she discounted the story

because children don't always get it quite right; she wasn't sure what to do until other parents started to contact her and ask if her son had the same experience; at that point parents contacted ICRC to figure out what was going on. Ms. Cornelison stated she continues to ask the program, park officials and other parents about it all. Ms. Cornelison stated it feels like she is getting the run around and not seeing any action and becoming more obvious that something is wrong with the policy behind the program; it just as been handled poorly on every level. Ms. Cornelison stated that it is not acceptable that ICRC did not notify the parents of the children who were hurt or called about the children's welfare; it is not acceptable that one of the children were suspended from the safari program; it is not acceptable that safari held an assemble on the day it happened to let the counselor tell his story and humiliate the two children and then held another the day after to tell the children not to tell what happened; it is not acceptable safari never notified parents that there was a criminal investigation that may involve other children as witnesses. Ms. Cornelison stated the reason Ms. Lively is here is because her son was a witness and she found out be circumstance at work that her son was going to be interviewed forensically as part of the process. Ms. Cornelison stated Ms. Lively contacted safari and offered her services to help develop policies and no one returned her call or involved her. Ms. Cornelison stated it was not acceptable Safari has failed to let her know if there has been any action on updating policies; unacceptable for Safari to suppress information and not being nice to the parents. Ms. Cornelison stated a situation like this demands transparency and demands accountability. Ms. Cornelison apologized for her frustration; at the heart of this she just wants ICRC to do the right thing. Ms. Cornelison stated she wants a good ongoing relationship; she works out at Crooked Creek Park every day; her children have gone to the afterschool program for years; her son plays baseball; her daughter plays basketball; we have a fantastic park system and a fantastic school system. Ms. Cornelison stated she wants someone in authority to do something; to respond; to give a notification to all the parents about what has happened; to hold responsible and accountable those counselors who misrepresented information or hide information or instructed parents or children not to share information. Ms. Cornelison stated there should be a review of the policies and procedures and people have made themselves professionally available to assist. Ms. Cornelison stated appreciation for Commission's consideration; proud of the park system; proud of the community and invite the Commission the opportunity to improve.

Chairman Sowards stated Ms. Cornelison's communication did not come across as frustrated, but a concerned citizen in our community who came openly and forthright to share concerns of which the Board is appreciative. Chairman Sowards asked the Secretary, Eve Mittendorf, if a recording was being made of the meeting. Eve Mittendorf replied yes. Chairman Sowards requested comments are to be faithfully transcribed verbatim for the record from the recording. Chairman Sowards shared the Commission does not respond to public comment in this kind of forum; that is not to imply the Commissioners did not hear what was stated or imply the Commissioners have not read what was wrote or imply the Commissioners have not been making inquiries. Chairman Sowards stated it is not to indicate under any circumstances the Commission expect that conditions or circumstances exist in any of the programs anywhere that threaten the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children or any other participant in the community. Chairman Sowards stated the exact response you are wanting may not come in as timely as a fashion as you would like or want and if disappointed with the timeline Chairman Sowards apologized and stated it is underway. Chairman Sowards shared that all the Commissioners on the Board raised their children in ICRC parks and programs and live in the community; the Board is not absentee and have some concerns about this incident; about conduct that resulted in someone being arrested. Chairman Sowards stated after canvassing ICRC records and thousands of children and almost two decades of running these programs this is the only incident staff can find that has ever occurred; that does not make it right and we are not saying that excuses this, we want make sure it doesn't happen again and if it does what is the appropriate response, what is the right timeframe, what should staff do under circumstances that are complicated. Chairman Sowards stated these circumstances are not as easily dealt with as one might think; first there are personnel matters and staff does not discuss personnel matters; in this particular case however everyone is aware of what happened and as a result that has evoked some legal action and reaction; that is a fact. In addition, law enforcement is investigating and staff is now responding to their investigators; that has never happened in the history of these parks; it is novel. Chairman Sowards asked Ms. Cornelison if she was aware of any other incident, please notify the Commission. Chairman Sowards stated the

Commission is going to continue to address with the Executive Director and staff for a response and ask they share with Ms. Cornelison and with as many parents who are interested; not sure there is going to be a meeting. Chairman Sowards stated the Commission will listen to what staff recommends and if that does not satisfy that request; so be it; reasonable people can disagree reasonably about responsiveness in circumstances like this. Chairman Sowards stated the Commission hopes to resolve the situation through discourse, dialogue, response and notwithstanding the comments about suppressing and run-around, Chairman Sowards stated he could see why she might feel that way. Chairman Sowards stated if the Commission finds out staff is doing those things, she will not have to worry about coming back to the Commission and asking for action. Chairman Sowards offered M

## **V. STAFF REPORTS**

Staff reports were submitted as presented.

Jay Downs presented an update on capital projects; there have been some challenges due to the flood. Mr. Downs shared that the landscaping at Saluda Shoals East is starting; the roadways and buildings are substantially complete; the largest delay is at the boat ramp due to the rising river; the fencing vendors are almost complete. Mr. Downs also shared that the tennis court bid is scheduled for the New Chapin Park; the phase II work continues. Mr. Downs presented an update on the flood damage and status; currently it is estimated that the flood caused approximately \$150,000 in damage; the majority of the damage was at Saluda Shoals Park and in some areas the park was under 12 feet of water. The electrical infrastructure continues to be replaced, approximately \$10,000 has been spent in soil and debris removal and an engineer was brought in to ensure the bridges were safe. Jay Downs complimented staff on documenting, outlining, prioritizing and mapping damages in the park; as a result, staff was able to provide the FEMA agents the information needed to create project worksheets for reimbursement. Mr. Downs also complimented staff on the success of Holiday Lights. Chairman Sowards thanked Mr. Downs and staff for the amount of work done to get the park operational and the success of Holiday Lights. Commissioner Loveless thanked Mr. Downs for all his efforts. Elizabeth Taylor shared an update on the clean-up of Kinley Creek; the maintenance staff examined and cleaned up the creek along the banks of the park; the River Keeper volunteered to mobilize a group of volunteers to clean-up the creek. Mr. Downs also shared some delay of the clean-up was due to the saturation of the soil and safety consideration of staff.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Preliminary FY 16/17 Budget for Lexington County Council**

A MOTION WAS BY MADE SCOTT WILHIDE TO APPROVE THE PRELIMINARY FY 16/17 BUDGET FOR LEXINGTON COUNTY COUNCIL. SECONDED BY EMILY SHUMAN. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### **B. FY 16/17 Budget Timetable**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SCOTT WILHIDE TO ACCEPT THE FY 16/17 BUDGET TIMETABLE AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY BILL HARMON. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### **C. Contractor Change Order – SSP East Landscaping**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SCOTT WILHIDE TO APPROVE STAFF RECOMMENDATION ON THE CONTRACTOR CHANGE ORDER FOR THE SSP EAST LANDSCAPING. SECONDED BY EMILY SHUMAN. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### **D. Grant Application – Baseball Tomorrow**

Elizabeth Taylor communicated the Baseball Tomorrow grant offers opportunity to expand community baseball facilities. The grant does require a 1 to 1 match; the \$100,000 match is in the budget for current development. The application has been submitted and ICRC has been selected for a site visit. If granted, the additional monies would be used for additional baseball/softball fields.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SCOTT WILHIDE TO APPROVE STAFF RECOMMENDATION ON THE GRANT APPLICATION FOR BASEBALL TOMORROW. SECONDED BY BRUCE LOVELESS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

E. Grant Application – Recreation, Trails and Parks (RTP)

Chairman Sowards communicated the RTP grant does require a \$25,000 match. Elizabeth Taylor shared the match monies are already budgeted.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BILL HARMON TO APPROVE THE RECREATION, TRAILS AND PARKS APPLICATION REQUEST. SECONDED BY SCOTT WILHIDE. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

F. Grant Application – SC Sports Tourism Advertising and Recruitment (STAR)

Elizabeth Taylor communicated the STAR LWCF program is a grant program established by SCPRT to support the economic development of communities through Sports Tourism. The grant is for \$15,000 with a \$15,000 matching fund requirement which is already budgeted.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SCOTT WILHIDE TO APPROVE THE SC SPORTS TOURISM ADVERTISING AND RECRUITMENT GRANT APPLICATION. SECONDED BY BRUCE LOVELESS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

## VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Elizabeth Taylor shared a mid-year financial and programmatic status of the Commission. Ms. Taylor stated at the end of FY 14/15 the Commission had a fund balance total of \$2.1M, which put the agency in a strong place for development, grant matches and unforeseen expenses. In April staff submit budget amendments for Commission approval that materially impact the budget; this budget year there will be three grant match amendments for approval: LWCF, PARD and SCDOT. The LWCF and PARD grants were carry overs for projects in the prior year; the projects did not get completed within that budget year and as a result require amending to include in this year's budget. The SCDOT grant was unbudgeted because staff was unaware of the grant opportunity at the time the budget was approved; the net budgetary impact is \$40,000, which will be presented in April. Elizabeth Taylor stated there will be an additional amendment presented to the Commission in April for \$25,000 for playground equipment installed at Crooked Creek Park; the \$25,000 will be reimbursed by the Saluda Shoals Park Foundation. Ms. Taylor shared the additional expense amendment of \$150,000 is due to the flood; as Mr. Downs shared, the agency may receive from FEMA up to 75% reimbursement for flood related expenses.

Ms. Taylor shared that income increased at mid-year by \$163,000; however, expenses are up by \$495,000; resulting in a negative cash flow of \$332,000. Elizabeth Taylor stated the increased revenue can be attributed to the River Center, Holiday Lights, athletics, ANS and facility sponsorships. The expense side includes capital expenditures for new facilities, equipment, flood related expenses and change in programming schedules. Discussion occurred regarding flood related expenses for repairs, debris removal and staffing. Chairman Sowards inquired if the \$150,000 flood related expenditures included the cost of operating the shelter at Seven Oaks Park. Elizabeth Taylor stated no, the shelter expenditures are not included in the \$150,000. Chairman Sowards inquired on the cost to operate the

shelter. Ms. Taylor stated hours were tracked, but most of the operations were run by exempt employees who were not paid overtime or by non-exempt employees whose schedules were adjusted. Discussion occurred regarding the operating budget, the purchase of equipment, sponsorship payments, and funding for capital items. The tax collections through November 2015 were \$64,000 which was less than last year; however, the December payment made up the deficient.

Elizabeth Taylor shared that programmatically Children's Theater is still thriving; 95 children are involved in that program and selling out performances. The success is partly due to a great relationship with Midlands Tech. Commissioner Loveless shared his appreciation for the program. Ms. Taylor shared the success of the football league that was started this year and in partnership with District V; this program offers 7th and 8th grade students the opportunity to play football; more than 90 players participated. Elizabeth Taylor communicated that John Cantey met with coaches to develop a partnership and feeder program into the School District V teams. Ms. Taylor communicated there were 78 participants in the Splash and Dash event; the participants included soldiers from Ft. Jackson. Ft. Jackson linked the Splash and Dash race to their suicide prevention program. Holiday Lights had 20,000 vehicles, 76,000 visitors; NOW were offered every night. Elizabeth Taylor communicated Sports Tourism is going well; 7 baseball tournaments and 220 games have been played with a net revenue \$15,700; the SC Soccer Association Fall Festival had 65 teams and 150 games; net revenue was \$5000; the economic impact for the community was nearly \$1M.

Elizabeth Taylor shared the administrative services department contributions, which included recruiting and hiring of 3 full time staff and 76 part-time staff; with a 1.5% turnover rate. Additionally, during the first half of the year, ICRC paid over \$640,000 in gross earnings to part-time staff; this resulted in a 16% increase in part-time payroll over the previous year. The majority of the increase in hires was due to Holiday Lights and the Afternoon and Summer Safari programs.

Ms. Taylor reported on the 2015 flood and emergency relief for the community; over 2377 staff hours and 398 volunteers were dedicated to assisting those in need. Additionally, capital projects completed in the first half of the year include construction of the retaining wall at the River Center, the deck at the Environmental Center, and installation of a new piece of inclusive playground equipment at Crooked Creek Park. Elizabeth Taylor shared appreciation of staff, the dedication of the community and the confidence of the Commission.

#### **VIII. COMMISSION RESPONSE**

The Commission shared appreciation to staff for their day-to-day contributions, support and dedication to the community during the flood and their hard work ensuring Holiday Lights was open for the public to enjoy.

There being no further business the General Session meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eve Mittendorf  
IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION