

Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission WORK SESSION MINUTES

September 27, 2023
Crooked Creek Park
6:00pm

Members Attending: Bill Harmon, Michael Cromer, Akil Ross, Laura Huggins, Gerrick Hampton

Non-Members Attending: Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf

Mark Smyers reviewed the agenda items. Mr. Smyers stated he will present, in General Session, an update on the Environmental Education Center (EEC) feasibility study and conceptual plan; the initial scope of the project was approximately \$9M; staff went back to the consultants and modified the scope to \$5.28M. Mark Smyers stated that the presentation will show the final recommendation and staff is requesting approval of the feasibility study. Discussion occurred regarding changes to the entrance of the EEC building and repurposing current spaces. Mr. Smyers shared that the adoption of the feasibility study also shows alignment and partnership with the Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission and the Saluda Shoals Park Foundation.

Mark Smyers communicated that the agenda includes two short-term bond program amendments; the initial scope of the short-term bond program was adopted in May 2023 for \$864K; the unallocated delta between what was collected and what was approved has a remaining amount of \$115,291. Mr. Smyers shared that staff is requesting authorization to allocate a portion of the remaining bond monies toward a tenant sign at Saluda Shoals Park East; this was a commitment made with Trevetts to build a tenant sign at the Bush River Road entrance in 2020; the second amendment request includes an attachment and an enclosed cab for a skid steer for an additional \$5,000. Commissioner Ross inquired the cost of a brand new skid steer with enclosed cab and attachment. Mark Smyers replied \$90,000.

Mr. Smyers shared that the agenda includes a recreation trails grant (RTP) application for Commission approval. Vice Chairman Cromer asked how the grant would be used. Mark Smyers stated the grant is for \$100,000 and requires a 25% match and would be used for paving trails at Mungo Park. Chairman Harmon stated this grant will also address the public's request regarding deteriorating trails.

Mark Smyers also shared that the agenda includes adoption of the annual report, the tenant lease agreement for The Creek at Mungo Park and an Executive Session. Mr. Smyers stated that the Executive Session can be exercised to discuss contractual or personnel matters. Commissioner Huggins inquired when the terms start on The Creek at Mungo Park lease agreement. Mark Smyers stated January 1st. Discussion occurred regarding the cost of annual tennis passes at other tennis facilities, maintenance of the courts, value of property on Lake Murray Blvd., the current market, and the shape of the facilities. Mr. Smyers shared that the determined monthly value for the facilities at The Creek at Mungo Park is \$3,000; the one-year lease agreement includes a discount resulting in a monthly lease of \$2,000.

Commissioner Huggins inquired if Saluda Shoals Park has pickleball courts. Mark Smyers stated not at this time; however, the public could play on the quick start lines; there is approximately a 2" difference. Mr. Smyers shared that there are funds in the short-term bond to add tennis and pickleball courts at Melvin Park; this would result in six (6) tennis courts, one (1) pro-court, and nine (9) pickleball courts; additionally, the conceptual plan includes some separation between tennis and pickleball as well as staff evaluating a smart gate system. Discussion occurred regarding access to facilities, software and hardware requirements, and infrastructure to address technology needs.

Mr. Smyers provided the Commissioners with 45 updated personnel policies, 11 deleted policies and 3 new personnel policies; the three new policies include Mobile Devices While Driving, Work Privacy/Computer and Internet Abuse, and Paid Parental Leave policy. Mr. Smyers shared that the Paid Parent Leave policy was included to remain competitive in the employment market. Discussion occurred regarding Commission review and timeline of approval of personnel policies. Vice Chairman Cromer and Commissioner Huggins suggested reviewing and considering for approval 15 personnel policies at each of the upcoming regular Commission meetings with an anticipated completion at the April or May 2024 Commission meeting. Discussion occurred regarding modifications, notifying staff of changes, communicating updates to the Commission, and ensuring the agency is in compliance with any updated laws. Chairman Harmon requested the Work Sessions begin at 6:00pm to allow for Commission discussion.

Mr. Smyers communicated that the audit is underway and the presentation to the Commission is scheduled January 2024. Chairman Harmon communicated that the Executive Session on this month's agenda will be eliminated. Mark Smyers communicated that all available funds in the short-term bond equaled \$1M, minus the cost of issuance, resulted in \$980K; the Commission approved designating \$864K; this leaves \$115K. Mr. Smyers shared that staff are requesting \$15,000 for maintenance equipment and tenant signage; leaving a delta of approximately \$100,000. Commissioner Huggins inquired if the remaining monies have to be spent within a certain amount of time. Mark Smyers stated no. Discussion occurred regarding strategy, the Attorney General's new ruling, the acceleration of the short-term bond timeline, future funds, collections, and forecasting.

Commissioner Ross inquired if the Federal Government shutdown effects programs. Mr. Smyers stated for the most part no; funds for afterschool feeding programs come from the State, the Council Aging monies come from the COG and are issued as one check at the end of the year.

Commissioner Huggins stated she will make a motion to amend The Creek at Mungo Park Lease Agreement under Section 11, Item C and add a sentence to Section 17.

There being no further discussion, the Commission and staff moved to the General Session.

Eve Mittendorf
Recording Secretary
IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION

Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission
GENERAL SESSION

September 27, 2023
Crooked Creek Park
7:00pm

Members Attending: Bill Harmon, Michael Cromer, Akil Ross, Laura Huggins, Gerrick Hampton

Non-Members Attending: Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf, John Cantey, Jay Downs, Alfred Comfort, Jason White, Christina Bickley, Jim Wescott

Bill Harmon called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Chairman Harmon delivered the invocation. Guests were welcomed.

I. 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 were posted at the park sites one week prior to the meeting.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A MOTION WAS MADE BY AKIL ROSS TO ACCEPT MAY 24, 2023 MINUTES AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

III. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS – Environmental Education Center Feasibility Study

A. Mark Smyers presented the Environmental Education Center (EEC) conceptual design; this included a drawing of the current footprint of the EEC and the conceptual drawing of the new design. Mr. Smyers shared that the original concept was estimated at \$9M; staff met with the consulting firm and engineers to modify in order to reduce the cost. Mark Smyers communicated that GMK, the consulting firm, provided a new design that expanded the park ranger space, provided flex space, expanded the deck, converted the exhibit hall, added a restroom, and the bistro design; what was lost was the expansion of the front entrance/welcome center area and some storage space.

Mr. Smyers shared the modifications and cost of the proposed EEC project: phase I includes the back deck, restrooms, and exhibit hall with an approximate cost of \$1.1M, phase II includes modifications to the ranger offices, flex space, and storage space with an approximate cost of \$2.2M, phase III includes the bistro and back entrance with an approximate cost of \$1.9M; the total project is estimated at \$5.2M.

Commissioner Ross asked how much was budgeted for the project. Mark Smyers communicated that staff has \$122K budgeted for the back deck; the Saluda Shoals Park Foundation has \$113K designated. The adoption of the plan is to ensure the Commission, Foundation, and staff collectively have the same vision. Commissioner Ross inquired if trees will be eliminated. Mark Smyers stated that some thinning of pines will occur, but nothing has been identified to date.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Harmon communicated that the Executive Session will not be required and will be eliminated from the agenda.

V. STAFF REPORT

Staff reports accepted as presented.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. FY 22/23 Annual Report Adoption

Mark Smyers communicated staff are requesting the FY 22/23 Annual Report be adopted by Commission as presented; Lori Shaffer, Marketing Director, and team did a wonderful job putting the report together; a new pictogram was added reflecting social media activity; there were 274K unique visitors and 40K Meta followers.

Commissioner Huggins asked how the annual report is used and shared. Mark Smyers communicated that the annual report is mailed to elected officials, staff use the information when competing for grant funding and it is also an important tool for understanding the agency's impact on the community.

Chairman Harmon inquired if the annual report is posted on the website. Mark Smyers said yes. Chairman Harmon thanked Lori Shaffer and staff for a job well done.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY AKIL ROSS TO ACCEPT THE FY22/23 ANNUAL REPORT AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY LAURA HUGGINS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

B. Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant Application

Mark Smyers communicated, if awarded, the RTP grant would go toward Mungo Park trail improvements; the grant is \$100K with a \$25K match.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY LAURA HUGGINS TO APPROVE THE RTP GRANT APPLICATION REQUEST. SECONDED BY AKIL ROSS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

C. Short Term Bond Program Amendment – Saluda Shoals Park Tenant Signage

Mark Smyers shared that staff is requesting approval to amend the budget by \$10,171.30 for the tenant sign on St. Andrews Road. The original cost that was budgeted in FY20/21 has increased; the balance would come from the FY23/24 short-term bond account.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MICHAEL CROMER TO APPROVE STAFF'S REQUEST TO AMEND THE SHORT-TERM BOND PROGRAM BUDGET FOR THE TENANT SIGN AT SALUDA SHOAL PARK . SECONDED BY AKIL ROSS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

D. Short Term Bond Program Amendment – Maintenance Equipment

Chairman Harmon shared that staff's request for additional funds from the short-term bond program is for \$5000 for an attachment and enclosed cab for the skid steer.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY AKIL ROSS TO APPROVE STAFF'S REQUEST TO AMEND THE SHORT-TERM BOND PROGRAM BUDGET FOR AN ATTACHMENT AND ENCLOSED CAB FOR THE SKID STEER . SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

E. Environmental Education Center Feasibility Study Adoption

Chairman Harmon shared excitement for the Environmental Education Center improvements.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY LAURA HUGGINS TO APPROVE AND ADOPT THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER FEASIBILITY STUDY. SECONDED BY AKIL ROSS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

F. Tenant Lease Agreement – The Creek at Mungo Park

Chairman Harmon communicated that staff are requesting approval for the authority to sign a tenant lease agreement with The Creek at Mungo Park.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY LAURA HUGGINS TO ACCEPT THE LEASE AGREEMENT WITH TWO AMENDMENTS. THE FIRST AMENDMENT UNDER SECTION 11, ITEM C. STATES 'IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 12,' IT SHOULD STATE 'IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 10.' THE SECOND AMENDMENT UNDER SECTION 17 SHOULD INCLUDE A NEW LAST SENTENCE "ANY AND ALL CONSENTED TO ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS BELONG TO, AND INURE TO THE BENEFIT OF, THE LESSOR." SECONDED BY AKIL ROSS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mark Smyers shared that the summer safari camps, and extreme teen programs had 3,559 participants; staff also hosted an additional 160 programs, athletics, nature educational classes, and outdoor adventure camps across the district. Mr. Smyers stated that in total there were 6,243 participants, which is a new summer record. Mark Smyers shared appreciation to the staff and stated that the staff's efforts enhanced the summer experience for youth in the community.

Mr. Smyers also highlighted the 'PALMETTO dinner club;' the dinner club continues to see an average of 9-11 participants per session; the TR adults have really enjoyed expanding their palates and have added salads to most nights; one of the TR participants has had high anxiety and did not eat during the PALMETTO dinner club; after 2 years this participant began eating with the other participants, which was a huge milestone. Mr. Smyers recognized staff and commended them for their commitment and strength in this accomplishment.

Mark Smyers shared appreciation to staff; through the lens of the numbers shown in the annual report, staff across the district and in a variety of ways enhance the quality of life for citizens every day. Mr. Smyers also thanked the Commission for helping to conclude

the feasibility and conceptual planning process for the Environmental Education Center at Saluda Shoals Park; this transition will help the park maximize the usage of its space and help meet the needs of the park going forward. Mark Smyers stated that the next leg of the journey is developing the funding strategy; in collaboration with the Foundation, staff will be working on developing the funding strategy.

VIII. COMMISSION RESPONSE

Commissioner Hampton thanked the Executive Director for sharing the agency update; thanked staff for all the community programs offered and communicated excitement about continuing to learn more. Vice Chairman Cromer shared that the annual report does a great job laying out all the services provided to the community. Vice Chairman Cromer also thanked staff for their contributions to the annual report and all the programs provided. Commissioner Ross echoed Vice Chairman Cromer's comments regarding the annual report. Commissioner Ross shared appreciation to the marketing director, Lori Shaffer, for a job well done; the annual report is a huge testament to the wonderful things going on at ICRC. Commissioner Ross also thanked the team for all the effort it takes to handle the growth they've seen; the planning, resources, coordinating, and staffing is a lot of work and is recognized as a victory. Commissioner Huggins shared appreciation for staff's responsiveness and courtesy to a constituent's concerns; the willingness to meet the person onsite to hear and respond is appreciated. Commissioner Huggins also shared excitement regarding the environmental education center expansion and The Creek at Mungo Park tenant agreement. Chairman Harmon communicated that the annual report highlights staff's accomplishments throughout the year and communicated excitement about the partnership with The Creek at Mungo Park. Chairman Harmon also shared enthusiasm around the environmental education center opportunities and expansion. Chairman Harmon thanked Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf, and the entire staff for their leadership.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY AKIL ROSS TO ADJOURN. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Eve Mittendorf, Recording Secretary
IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION