

**IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION  
WORK SESSION MEETING**

Crooked Creek Park

September 27, 2017

6:30pm

Attending: Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf, John Sowards, Bill Harmon, Tim Stewart, Bruce Loveless, Emily Shuman

Mark Smyers presented an overview of the agenda. Mr. Smyers communicated the Boudreaux Group will present on Nature's Theater: the original wooded site, the original wooded site at \$3M, the new pond site at the minimum scale to meet the business plan, and the new pond site at \$3M. Commissioner Stewart inquired if staff have been involved during the process. Mark Smyers stated yes, staff have worked and met with the Boudreaux Group. Discussion occurred regarding the \$3M option. Chairman Sowards asked if the presentation is for information only. Mr. Smyers stated yes. Mark Smyers shared current funds are \$1,014,075 pledges and received monies plus \$1.5M in bond for a total of raised funds of \$2,514,075. Commissioner Loveless inquired how much of the monies are received vs. pledges. Mr. Smyers stated he would ask and provide that answer. Discussion occurred regarding the business plan, the current market and fund raising. Chairman Sowards stated the Boudreaux Group was asked to reconsider the numbers on the new site; the Commission and staff will re-look at the business plan, status on fund raising, new site and costs and discuss whether to engage or disengage with the project. Commissioner Loveless advised staff to get a contractor to value engineer at the \$3M level. Discussion occurred regarding how to handle current pledges and bond monies; the Saluda Shoals Foundation would handle the pledges and offer to return pledges to donors. Commissioner Shuman communicated the importance of maintaining County Council's confidence in ICRC.

Mr. Smyers shared the 2018 health benefits; there is a \$163,000 annual savings to the agency. Mark Smyers shared the Medigap plan for retirees did increase; the current Medigap plan only covers plan D; the 2018 Medigap plan covers A,B and D, which is the reason for the increase. Eve Mittendorf communicated that the retirees have been contacted to attend one-on-one meetings to assist in communicating all the 2018 options. Mr. Smyers shared the annual report, a PARD grant application, a Target grant application, a Walmart grant application and a Palmetto Pride grant application. Commissioner Loveless inquired on the status of the trees at Melvin Park. Mr. Smyers communicated a meeting is scheduled to review the status of the trees.

Mark Smyers reminded Commissioners that there will be a retirement drop-in for Commissioner Shuman on November 8, 2017 from 6:00pm – 7:00pm. Discussion occurred regarding the new Commissioner attending the General Session at 7:00pm. Mr. Smyers shared inclusive playground information, photos and the site location; the location is next to the parking lot near the tennis facility. Discussion occurred regarding all weather parking, playground surface, turf, accessibility, and location. Chairman Sowards inquired on the total cost of the playground. Mr. Smyers stated approximately \$1.2 – \$1.5M. Chairman Sowards communicated that \$300,000 is coming from a CDBG grant. Mark Smyers communicated the Saluda Shoals Foundation is raising the remaining money. Discussion occurred regarding parking fees, user fees, and access to the playground.

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

**IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION  
GENERAL SESSION MINUTES**

Crooked Creek Park

September 27, 2017

7:00pm

Members Attending

John Sowards, Bill Harmon, Tim Stewart, Emily Shuman, Bruce Loveless

Non-Members Attending

Mark Smyers	Eve Mittendorf J	ay Downs	Jack Terrell
Jim Wellman	Jason White	Dolly Patton	Mark Baker
John Cantey	Heather Mitchell	Michael Wenzinger	

Chairman Sowards called the meeting to order at 7:15pm and 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 was posted at the park sites one week prior to the meeting.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Chairman Sowards submitted the May 24, 2017 minutes as presented; there being no objections the minutes were approved.

**III. PUBLIC PRESENTATION**

A. Nature's Theater

Heather Mitchell and Michael Wenzinger with the Boudreaux Group presented updated estimates and conceptual drawings on four options for Nature's Theater. The four options included location, theater features and estimated costs; the estimated costs included input from a general contractor; the cost numbers came within 5-10% of the original cost estimator's numbers, which helped to validate the original plan that was presented in March. Chairman Sowards asked if the contractor's estimates were higher or lower than original costs. Heather Mitchell replied slightly higher. Commissioner Stewart communicated that the original \$5.5M theater estimate didn't include parking; do these plans include parking? Heather Mitchell stated yes. Discussion occurred regarding lighting equipment, audio/visual equipment, staging; and other elements that support the Nature's Theater business plan. Commissioner Loveless asked how much the audio/visual equipment cost. Michael Wenzinger communicated the cost for audio/video, projection equipment, lighting is approximately \$840,000; the audio/video alone is approximately \$200,000. Heather Mitchell shared four theater options: the original wooded site with some cost savings, the original wooded site for \$3M, a new pond site that includes features closer to the original business plan, and a new pond site for \$3M. Heather Mitchell stated the \$3M options include a stage and site work; it does not include parking, bathrooms and does not support the original business plan. Michael Wenzinger shared that the pond site is more visible to the public and has two major cost benefits: it is closer to utilities and

parking. Mr. Wenzinger shared that the pond site option that is closer to the original business plan includes parking, a ticket pavilion, a walking path, pre-functioned space, audience services, theater support, covered stage, lawn and fixed seating, a control booth and a service driveway and access. Chairman Sowards inquired if the road is all-weather. Michael Wenzinger replied part of the service driveway and stage access is paved and could be used for handicap access. Discussion occurred regarding drainage and how the pond site is used for irrigation for the fields. Heather Mitchell shared images of the ticket booth and theater. Chairman Sowards suggested the ticket booth be located near the pump house, which is closer to the parking lot. Chairman Sowards asked if the pond site option includes climate controlled dressing rooms and does it include concessions. Heather Mitchell stated it does include climate controlled dressing rooms; but, it does not include concessions or a dedicated service area.

Heather Mitchell presented estimates on the \$3M pond site option; the items removed include the support building, theater equipment is reduced, no restroom building or control booth; this design is basically an amphitheater vs a performance venue theater. Commissioner Stewart stated that this plan appears not to meet the business plan. Heather Mitchell replied, correct. Chairman Sowards asked Ms. Mitchell to walk the Commission through the exercise of adding features back into the plan. Heather Mitchell and Michael Wenzinger shared to add the stage building is approximately \$600K and with the audio/visual equipment the cost is closer to \$4.5M. Discussion occurred regarding costs, design fees, seating, and lack of overall features that meet the business plan.

Heather Mitchell presented the wooded site option; the original wooded site plan that met the full business plan was \$5.8M, the new wooded site option is \$3M, the pond site that meets the full business plan is \$4.7 and the second pond site option is \$3M. Discussion occurred regarding the business plan, which included complex out-of-town singers and performances as well as local events such as ballet, Trustus performances, Shakespeare in the park events, etc.

Chairman Sowards thanked the Boudreaux Group for their presentation and requested copies of the renderings.

#### **IV. STAFF REPORTS**

Staff reports were submitted as presented.

Jay Downs presented an update on Melvin Park and shared photos of the development process and current facilities; phase II baseball fields and the football/utility field are completed. Mr. Downs shared the landscaping plan at Melvin Park and the resolution on some initial parking issues; pictures were shared of the new fencing around the dugouts. Commissioner Stewart inquired if the public was hanging on the netting behind home plate. Jay Downs replied that nothing has been reported. Mr. Downs also shared pictures of the new shelter in the dog park and photos of the new wetland signage funded by the Saluda Shoals Foundation. Jay Downs also presented photos of the new programming space at Seven Oaks Park; staff are continuing to work on Crooked Creek Park's additional parking needs and emergency access to the soccer field area. Chairman Sowards thanked Mr. Downs for his presentation.

## V. NEW BUSINESS

### A. 2018 Health Benefits

Mr. Smyers shared staff's recommendation on the 2018 health benefits plan; staff investigated at the approval of the Commission to look at contracting with South Carolina PEBA for health benefits in 2018; all indications appear that it is advantageous for the agency and employees to contract with PEBA; the estimated savings to the agency is \$163,000 per year with enhanced coverage options. The employees and agency share in the savings; the percent of employee cost is close to the current cost burden. Discussion occurred regarding the retirees and the increase in the Medigap coverage costs due expanding the current Medigap coverage to A, B and D.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BRUCE LOVELESS TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION ON THE 2018 HEALTH BENEFITS. SECONDED BY BILL HARMON. VOTE TAKE. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### B. FY 16/17 Annual Report

Mark Smyers presented the annual report for Commission review and approval. Mr. Smyers shared appreciation and credit to Lori Shaffer, Marketing Director, on a great product. Chairman Sowards agreed and complimented on the presentation of the annual report and the information provided; the annual report includes that the Chase Loveless scholarship fund raised \$40,000 and helped 1184 children to participate in youth athletics. Chairman Sowards thanked Bruce Loveless and Jack Terrell for their fund raising efforts and contributions to this program.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BILL HARMON TO ACCEPT THE ANNUAL REPORT AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY BRUCE LOVELESS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### C. FY 17/18 PARD Grant

Mark Smyers presented staff recommendation on the FY 17/18 PARD grant. Mr. Smyers requested an amendment to the recommendation to read FY 17/18 instead of FY 15/16.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY TIM STEWART TO ACCEPT THE FY 17/18 PARD GRANT APPLICATION REQUEST. SECONDED BY BRUCE LOVELESS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### D. Target Athletic Grant Application

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BILL HARMON TO APPROVE THE TARGET ATHLETIC GRANT APPLICATION. SECONDED BY BRUCE LOVELESS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### E. Walmart Grant Application

A MOTION WAS MADE BY TIM STEWART TO APPROVE THE WALMART GRANT APPLICATION. SECONDED BY BILL HARMON. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

F. Palmetto Pride Grant Application

Mr. Smyers communicated the Palmetto Pride Grant monies will go toward landscaping at Melvin Park.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY TIM STEWART TO APPROVE THE PALMETTO PRIDE GRANT APPLICATION. SECONDED BY BRUCE LOVELESS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

**VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mark Smyers introduced Mark Baker the new Saluda Shoals Park director; Mr. Baker has been a great addition to Saluda Shoals and the agency. Chairman Sowards welcomed Mark Baker to ICRC. Mark Baker shared that he is from Florida, obtained his Master's Degree from Ole Miss, worked with the City of Pensacola and was previously the executive director for the YMCA. Mr. Baker communicated how much he likes Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission, the staff and the community.

Mr. Smyers shared there were 127 specialty camps district wide with 1904 participants; Summer Safari averaged 3712 children at Seven Oaks Park and Crooked Creek Park during the summer. Saluda Shoals Park held a new event called "Touch a Truck," which had over 400 participants, 742 individuals participated in the challenge course over the summer and an estimated 2820 patrons were in the park for the eclipse. Staff also partnered with the Lexington County Sheriff's department in a program working with local at risk youth and introducing them to fishing, paddling and other outdoor skills. Splash band sales on both ends of the district went well; Saluda Shoals sold 9459 bands and Melvin Park sold 8426 bands. Staff will be adding a new afternoon safari program in the Fall at Seven Oaks Elementary; currently there are 676 children enrolled in all five sites; this is a 5% increase from last year. Mr. Smyers communicated that Fall athletics are underway; there is a total of 1529 participants in athletics; 376 are competing due to the Chase Loveless scholarship program; the CDBG grant that was awarded last year in the amount of \$22K for the scholarship program was unfortunately not awarded this year. Mark Smyers provided an update on Holiday Lights; displays are being installed, Chairman's Lighting will be held at the Environmental Education Center on November 19, 2017. Mr. Smyers publically thanked the staff for helping during the leadership transition; this is a great team.

**VII. COMMISSION RESPONSE**

Chairman Sowards shared appreciation for Mr. Smyers comprehensive report and thanked staff for their continued hard work; the baseball project at Melvin Park, the inclusive playground project, the TR program and all that happens each day at Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission. Commissioner Shuman thanked Eve Mittendorf and Mark Smyers for their hard work on the benefits recommendation. Commissioner Stewart commended Mark Smyers and staff. Commissioner Loveless shared appreciation to Eve Mittendorf. Commissioner Harmon thanked staff, welcomed Mark

Baker, commended Mark Smyers and offered Commission support. Chairman Sowards communicated that the next Commission meeting will include a new Commissioner and shared how much the board will miss Emily Shuman. The next Commission meeting on November 8<sup>th</sup> will include a retirement drop-in to recognize Commissioner Shuman's tenure.

There being no further business, the Commission adjourned the General Session at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eve E. Mittendorf

IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION