

Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission Work Session Meeting

September 18, 2019
Michael J. Mungo and Mary Meech Park
Meech House
6:30 PM

Members Attending: Bruce Loveless, Tim Stewart, John Sowards, Gary Boyd

Members Absent: Bill Harmon

Non-Members Attending: Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf

Mark Smyers presented an overview of the agenda items as follows:

Dr. Bob Brookover with Clemson University will present the ParkVision 2020 – 2030 task force recommendation; two public meetings are scheduled on October 1, 2019 at Seven Oaks Park and October 8, 2019 at Crooked Creek Park; staff will present the strategic plan for Commission adoption on October 23, 2019.

Mr. Smyers shared that the needs assessment survey resulted in over 1500 participants; there were three focus groups: facilities, financial and programming; stakeholder interviews were held with community leaders and census data was collected from the Council on Governments (COG). Mark Smyers stated that the task force's job was to look for overarching themes and draft the recommendation for Commission approval.

Vice Chairman Loveless asked if anyone wanted to raise millage. Mark Smyers communicated that a task force member shared that Commission should consider additional millage as an option. Commission Stewart inquired if the survey and stakeholder participants were in-district residents only. Mr. Smyers stated initially; however, staff decided to reach beyond in-district residents. Discussion occurred regarding the agency's core values directing focus to citizens in the district. Mr. Smyers shared that in the Acts of Creation, ICRC is called to focus on district residents. Commissioner Sowards shared that although the Commission and staff focus on district residents; out-of-district fees have been waived in order to be inclusive. Discussion occurred regarding identifying partners for aquatics/pool, the long-term cost, and that public pools are generally only successful with a substantial tax base. Discussion occurred regarding the purposeful language and communication to stay within the 8% bonding approach. Commissioner Sowards inquired on an existing comprehensive list of identified projects from the last strategic plan. Mr. Smyers shared that he was not aware of a list, but would research and review. Discussion occurred regarding the anticipated growth in the Chapin area and the greenway trail in the Irmo area. Commissioner Boyd inquired if there was an annual evaluation process of the strategic plan. Mark Smyers stated that there is not a specific tool; the annual report reflects programmatic growth, facilities and financial progress. Commissioner Sowards recommended that the Executive Director provide an annual update of the strategic plan in the September or October Commission meeting.

Mr. Smyers updated the Commission on the status of the Mungo Park bridges; the ownership of the land is tied up in probate in Florida; the engineering is complete and ready to be included in a request for proposal (RFP). Mark Smyers shared that the agency has a new Finance Director, Jessica Johnson; the DOT is in the design phase to include the greenway trail; Midlands Leadership Business Group is championing the greenway as their project; ICRC is partnering with the Council on Governments on the feasibility study for the greenway; the study should be complete by March. Mr. Smyers thanked the Commissioners for attending the Inclusive Playground ribbon cutting. Discussion occurred regarding Children's Theater and reducing the number of free tickets for cast members from two tickets to one ticket; a recommendation was made to remain at two free tickets and continue to encourage participation. Commissioner Boyd inquired if the public is charged for access to the

inclusive playground. Mr. Smyers stated that the inclusive playground is within the park and a parking fee is associated; however, the Saluda Shoals Park Foundation has donated a pool of money to help park visitors who are unable to pay; there will be a mechanism in which those individuals that need assistance will receive a day pass, staff will collect their contact information, if there are individuals who come on a regular basis they will be contacted to receive an annual pass.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Eve Mittendorf
Recording Secretary
IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION

Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission
GENERAL SESSION

September 18, 2019

Michael J. Mungo and Mary Meech Park

Meech House

7:00 PM

Members Attending

Bill Harmon, Bruce Loveless, Tim Stewart, John Sowards, Gary Boyd

Non-Members Attending

Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf, Jay Downs, John Cantey, Jim Wellman, Jessica Johnson, Dr. Akil Ross, Dr. Bob Brookover

Vice Chairman Loveless called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Commissioner Sowards 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

Vice Chairman Loveless submitted the May 22, 2019 minutes as presented; there being no objections the minutes were approved.

III. PUBLIC PRESENTATION

A. ParkVision 2020 – 2030 – Dr. Bob Brookover, Clemson University

Dr. Bob Brookover shared appreciation for the opportunity to present. Dr. Brookover led the needs assessment survey for the 2010 strategic plan and felt privileged to facilitate the 2020 strategic plan. The ParkVision 2020 plan process included three focus groups, a task force and a needs assessment survey; there were over 1600 people who participated in the process, which resulted in very good data. Dr. Brookover shared that the plan did not change dramatically from the previous strategic plan; the task force was happy about the process and wanted staff to continue down the same path. Dr. Brookover communicated that the Vision and Mission did not change; the Core Values remained similar, to include health and wellness for all residents, preservation of green and open space for the enjoyment and use of the community, and continued access to ample natural resources of the district.

Dr. Brookover reviewed Goal 1 – Programs to include creativity and lifelong learning, expanding wellness to include emotional and mindful wellness programs, as well as accessibility and inclusive opportunities for participants. The strategic program objective and priorities included outdoor adventure and environmental education; those two items came out on top in the needs assessment survey; fitness and wellness activities, special events, team sports and the need to balance competitiveness with fun sport activities. Discussion occurred regarding the reduction in participation in sports and the economic issues for those under a family income of \$75,000. Dr. Brookover shared that nationally outdoor adventure is increasing; the term active adults was added in the strategic plan; the recommendation also includes continuing to find partnerships for aquatic program opportunities; arts and cultural programs are desired and the importance of senior programs continues.

Goal 2 – Facilities recommendation includes anticipating growth and allocating space for demand; the Council on Governments shows growth in the Chapin area over the next 10 years; the public

wants to ensure the Commission is taking care of current facilities and continuing to maintain a high quality; trails and greenway continue to be important to the community; a desire for connectivity, expanding safe routes and passive and open space are important to the public. Dr. Brookover shared that one of the questions in the needs assessment asked the public if protection of green space was important and should the Commission actively preserve space; the public stated yes. Dr. Brookover stated that aquatics facilities are still wanted; the recommendation continues to be finding solid partners on capital and ongoing operating expenses; additional facility needs include an indoor/outdoor recreational facility in the Chapin area.

Goal 3 – Finance recommendation remained similar to the last strategic plan; continue to meet or exceed the level of expected service and quality, continue to maintain a market-based business approach and ensure as new programs or facilities are added that they are sustainable, continue to approach incremental capital investments, seek a variety of fund raising opportunities, stay within the 8% bonding capacity and continue to actively seek partnerships.

Commissioner Sowards inquired if Dr. Brookover had an evaluation tool to assist the Executive Director in annually monitoring the progress or status of the 10-year strategic plan. Dr. Brookover stated he would be happy to discuss and share with Mark Smyers different ways to measure and develop metrics. Commissioner Sowards complemented the process. Commissioner Sowards inquired if Dr. Brookover was satisfied with the consensus and diversity of thought and participation in the strategic plan. Dr. Brookover stated absolutely; staff did a good job reaching out to the public to participate in the survey, focus groups and task force. Commissioner Sowards recommended including the Saluda Shoals Park Foundation in the strategic plan; the Foundation is looking for ways to support Saluda Shoals Park and the agency. Discussion occurred regarding the Foundation assisting with scholarships, the importance in continuing to build consensus between the Commission and Foundation, partnerships and identifying specific projects. Commissioner Sowards inquired on public meetings to present the strategic plan process and recommendation. Mr. Smyers shared there are two public meetings scheduled in October on both ends of the district and a final recommendation for Commission approval will be presented on October 23, 2019.

Commissioner Stewart inquired if the survey results are ranked. Dr. Brookover shared that the survey asked how important and how satisfied is the participant and then a gap analysis was completed; the larger the gap the bigger the need. Commissioner Stewart asked Dr. Brookover's recommendation on the order of survey items and identifying those to address first. Dr. Brookover recommended working concurrently; none of the items were drastically apart in importance; there is a realistic range of 5 – 8 items.

Chairman Harmon thanked Commissioner Sowards for his input and history of the previous strategic plan; he also thanked Dr. Brookover for his presentation.

IV. STAFF REPORTS

John Cantey shared an update on the recreational opportunities throughout the agency; Summer Safari had good summer participation with 245 kids; TR Summer camp averaged 13 participants each week throughout the summer. Mr. Cantey shared that the four parks offered 143 summer program camps for a total of 1882 kids enrolled; The Neighborhood Kids is a partnership between CCP safari and St. Frances of Assisi's Church, 37 underprivileged kids have the opportunity to participate for three weeks in the Safari program.

John Cantey also shared that the Saluda Shoals Park Foundation partnered with Lexington County Sheriff's Department and hosted the Summer Adventure Squad; this program was the winner of the SCRPA programming award last year; this program provided outdoor recreational experiences one day a week for 6 weeks over the summer.

Mr. Cantey communicated that Saluda Shoals Park had a busy summer in rental sales: 282 bikes, 8639 boats, 1527 tubes, and 239 shelters; the vehicle count for 2018 was 58,261; 2019 was 88,776. Mr. Cantey stated that beginning on September 1st Saluda Shoals Park will own and operate all boat rentals; previously ICRC contracted with the River Runner who has been instrumental in helping Saluda Shoals Park establish boating access and adventure opportunities for the public.

John Cantey shared that the Sports Tourism’s fall season is under way; there are six baseball/softball events at Melvin Park, ten baseball/softball events at Seven Oaks Park, thirteen special events/tournaments at Saluda Shoals Park; the Fall athletic season has started, we have an increase in participation at Crooked Creek Park; Seven Oaks Park numbers are slightly down; Lacrosse has seen the most growth, which is up by 49 participants. Mr. Cantey also shared that Fall programming is in full swing with a host of returning programs and a variety of new ones.

Mr. Cantey communicated that Afternoon Safari is up and going, there are eight locations again this year, numbers are in line with last year’s numbers:

Chapin Elementary	131	Oak Pointe Elementary	133
CCP	101	Irmo Elementary	147
Lake Murray	153	Seven Oaks Park	100
Ballentine Elementary	140	Seven Oaks Elementary	96
Total:	1001		

John Cantey shared upcoming special events: Dance Nights at SOP, Chili Cook off, Paws in the Park, Soggy Doggy Day, Touch-A-Truck, Children’s Theatre (Dracula), Fall Movie (Hocus Pocus), Halloween at the Park, Will-O-the Wisp.

Mr. Cantey also shared that Marty Bridges was awarded the Champion for our Community Award at SCRPA.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. FY 18/19 Annual Report

A MOTION WAS MADE BY JOHN SOWARDS TO APPROVE STAFF’S RECOMMENDATION OF THE FY 18/19 ANNUAL REPORT. SECONDED BY BRUCE LOVELESS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. RTP Grant

A MOTION WAS MADE BY JOHN SOWARDS TO APPROVE STAFF’S RECOMMENDATION OF THE RTP GRANT APPLICATION. SECONDED BY BRUCE LOVELESS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Mr. Smyers thanked Bob Brookover for his help with the strategic planning process over the past year; Dr. Brookover brought a lot of great perspective on things that are happening in other communities which helped staff and other participants to process their thoughts, to get it down on paper, and ultimately get a final recommendation from the task force. Mark Smyers stated that overall he was happy with the process and with the recommendation before the Commission.

Mr. Smyers also thanked John Cantey for his presentation and covering participation throughout the agency. Mark Smyers shared that this will be Jim Wellman’s last Commission meeting. Mr. Wellman’s last day will be Friday, September 27, 2019. Jim Wellman has been the Finance

Director at ICRC over the last 14 years; we are sad to see him go, but happy for him and for his accomplishments. Mr. Smyers also shared that taking his place is Jessica Johnson; staff is excited to have Jessica as a member of the team and looking forward to getting started.

Mark Smyers thanked the Commission, staff, elected officials, the Bugenske's, and everyone else that was involved with Leo's Landing Inclusive Playground ribbon cutting event. Mr. Smyers shared that it was a very special moment for a very special project; there was a significant amount of time and passion that was poured into that play space, and really appreciated everyone's support along the way. Mark Smyers stated that since the ribbon cutting event, many have been out to enjoy the playground and staff have received a lot of positive feedback.

Mr. Smyers shared a Facebook page post: "Holly had a great time at Leo's Landing last week. We were able to make a surprise stop after her dental appt. I can't express how amazing this park is, from all the equipment Holly was able to get on with her wheelchair, to the little 4 year old princess that joined Holly on the Merry-Go-Round, to over hearing a mother talking to her child about special children. Not to mention the restroom accommodations. We were able to change Holly in the family restroom on the adult sized changing table. Yes, I mentioned changing Holly ... That is real life and that hasn't happened in a public restroom since she was a baby. Leo's Landing went over and above, and to say we had a great time is an understatement. Big thank you to all those parents that encourage their children to include special children in their play time, as well as the amazing parents that take the time to talk with their children about challenges some children face making them different. My heart is full. #GodisGreat #LeosLanding."

Mr. Smyers communicated that the agency is celebrating 50 years; staff highlighted the agency in a variety of ways, including 50 years ago, to the month, in September of 1969, the very first group of Commissioners met together for the first official Commission meeting. The meeting was held, just up the hill from this location at the old Coldstream Country Club. Mark Smyers shared that two things come to mind; the amazement that this property now lies within the offerings of the agency and that staff get to present it to the public for enjoyment and quality of life. Mr. Smyers thanked the Mungo family for their support and vision. Mark Smyers also communicated that he wondered if the Commissioners ever envisioned how far the Commission and staff would go and how much would be accomplished. Mr. Smyers stated that through the efforts of this agency; many memories and lifelong bonds have been formed over 50 years.

Mr. Smyers shared that over the short period he has been a part of the story, he has seen how the agency has significantly impacted the people in and around the district. Mark Smyers thanked the Commissioners for their service; thanked the staff for all their efforts and passion behind what the agency offers. Mr. Smyers also shared appreciation to all Commissioners and staff who came before and served the community.

VII. COMMISSION RESPONSE

Vice Chairman Loveless thanked Commissioner Sowards for all his years of service and for staff's continued hard work. Commissioner Stewart congratulated Jim Wellman on his retirement and thanked Mark Smyers. Commissioner Boyd thanked staff for their assistance of the St. Andrews Optimist Club. Chairman Harmon shared appreciation of previous Commissioners and their contributions, thanked John Sowards for fifteen years of service on the Commission, thanked Dr. Brookover for his presentation, congratulated Jim Wellman on his retirement and welcomed Jessica Johnson and Akil Ross.

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

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