

# **Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission Work Session Meeting**

September 23, 2020  
Crooked Creek Park  
6:30 PM

Members Attending: Bill Harmon, Bruce Loveless, Tim Stewart, Gary Boyd, Akil Ross

Non-Members Attending: Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf

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

Mr. Smyers shared that the City of Columbia is requesting Commission approval for a sewer line easement expansion through Saluda Shoals Park; this is part of the Friarsgate utility expansion; City of Columbia is committed to repairing or replacing anything that gets torn up. Commissioner Ross inquired on how City of Columbia will access the park to complete the expansion. Mark Smyers stated they will come through the park gates.

Mark Smyers communicated that an Accommodations Tax Grant application approval is on the agenda as well as a staff request to move the October 28<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting to the Meech House at the Michael J. and Mary Meech Mungo Park. Mr. Smyers stated that the agenda also includes Commission adoption of the FY 19/20 Annual Report; additionally, Leo's Pride will present a master plan to expand on the Inclusive Playground at Saluda Shoals Park. Chairman Harmon inquired if Leo's Pride is wanting funding at this time or is it conceptual only. Mark Smyers stated that currently the conceptual drawings have been donated by the architect and a donor has come forward to pay for the zip line.

Mr. Smyers shared an updated on the property at Mungo Park; there has been no appeal; an affidavit will be filed at the courts along with \$3000 for the owner and a court date will be set. Staff have notified an engineer to begin to prepare bid documents for the bridges. Mark Smyers also shared an update on the Meech House; additional fire extinguishers need to be added to the back hall and kitchen and the emergency flood lights were not working properly; the original electrician was notified to repair; the Fire Marshall also requested additional emergency lighting at the two front bathrooms and the kitchen. Mr. Smyers shared an update on the greenway; the contractors for the feasibility study are expecting to wrap-up by the end of November and present to the Commission at the January meeting. Mark Smyers provided the Commission a business card with the Lower Saluda Greenway QR codes for information on the survey and interactive map.

Discussion occurred regarding the landscaping plan for Mungo Park. Mr. Smyers shared that there are monies in the short-term bond fund for landscaping at the front of the park. Mark Smyers shared an update on current and forecasted financial position of the agency and the steps taken to conserve operational dollars; staff continue to closely watch the external environment due to COVID and how it impacts the agency.

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 23, 2020  
Crooked Creek Park  
7:00 PM

## Members Attending

Bill Harmon, Bruce Loveless, Tim Stewart, Gary Boyd, Akil Ross

## Non-Members Attending

Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf, Jay Downs, John Cantey, Jessica Johnson, Dolly Patton, Jason White, Meredith Bugenske, Adam Bugenske, John Farley, Morgan Grimball

Bill Harmon called the meeting to order at 7:10pm. 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 was posted at the park sites one week prior to the meeting.

### **II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Commissioner Stewart submitted for approval the May 27, July 2 and August 13, 2020 minutes as presented, Commissioner Ross seconded; there being no objections the minutes were approved.

### **III. PUBLIC PRESENTATION**

#### **A. Leo's Pride – Adam and Meredith Bugenske**

Adam and Meredith Bugenske thanked the Commission for the opportunity to present conceptual drawings for additional features at the Saluda Shoals Park Leo's Pride Inclusive Playground; the design is broken down into three new areas including a magical harp, a 20ft tree with a whimsical feel and roots to sit and climb on; shaded seating, hobbit style playhouses, hammock area, nature theme, kindness and reading zone, opportunities for brail, different themed seating, zip line and free play space. Mr. and Mrs. Bugenske shared appreciation of the architect, Morgan Grimball, John Farley, staff, the Commission and the SSP Foundation.

Chairman Harmon thanked the Bugenske's for their energy, the inspiration for the project and the thoughtful design of the playground. Vice Chairman Loveless stated that he believes in the passion and purpose of this project. Vice Chairman Loveless inquired how long after the private fundraising before a public announcement. Adam Bugenske stated it will likely be spring or summer of 2022; the Bugenske's committed to keeping the Commission informed as the project moves along.

### **IV. STAFF REPORTS**

Staff reports were submitted as presented.

### **V. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **A. Easement Request – City of Columbia**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY TIM STEWART TO APPROVE THE EASEMENTS AS PRESENTED AND GRANT MARK SMYERS THE AUTHORITY TO EXECUTE THE

NECESSARY DOCUMENTS. SECONDED BY BRUCE LOVELESS. VOTE TAKEN.  
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Lexington County Tax Accommodations Grant

A MOTION WAS MADE BY TIM STEWART TO APPROVE STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION OF THE LEXINGTON COUNTY TAX ACCOMMODATION GRANT APPLICATION. SECONDED BY BRUCE LOVELESS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. October 28, 2020 Regularly Scheduled Commission Meeting Location Change

A MOTION WAS MADE BY TIM STEWART TO APPROVE STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION TO MOVE THE OCTOBER 28, 2020 REGULARLY SCHEDULED COMMISSION MEETING TO THE MEECH HOUSE AT THE MICHAEL J. AND MARY MEECH MUNGO PARK. SECONDED BY BRUCE LOVELESS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

D. FY 19/20 ANNUAL REPORT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BRUCE LOVELESS TO APPROVE STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION TO ADOPT THE FY 19/20 ANNUAL REPORT AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY AKIL ROSS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Smyers shared appreciation to Leo's Pride for coming and updating everyone on the Concept Master Plan for Leo's Landing; the playground has been a wonderful addition to Saluda Shoals Park and has quickly risen to become one of the main attractions.

Mark Smyers stated that COVID-19 has significantly impacted the agency; due to the pandemic causing a reluctance of the public to participate in programs and rent spaces for private functions, staff have been forced to scale operations to reflect reduced revenues. Mr. Smyers shared that even with reducing expenditures it was not enough; staff had to enact a hiring freeze, spending freeze and a reduction of all full-time staff hours and pay by 20%, while also not hiring back the majority of the part-time work force.

Mr. Smyers shared throughout the summer and into the fall, under the same reductions, staff were making every effort to best serve the community. Mark Smyers recognized their efforts and shared appreciation for all that was accomplished; staff were required to wear masks, perform heightened facility cleaning, utilize summer camp pods, move as many programs and events as possible to outdoor locations, cut programs and events that couldn't be operated safely, disinfect all recreational equipment after every use, open up new full day distant learning locations for students at the parks, and maintain the parks high safety standards with less hours to do it in. Mr. Smyers shared that through it all staff remained committed to doing great things to help the community. Mr. Smyers stated that staff's passion for the community and the organization is truly amazing.

**VII. COMMISSION RESPONSE**

Commissioner Stewart thanked staff for their dedication and sacrifice; Vice Chairman Loveless concurred. Commissioner Ross shared that the Saluda Shoals Foundation is hosting a jazz series starting at 7:00pm on September 25<sup>th</sup>.

Chairman Harmon thanked staff and shared appreciation for the additional work being done; the Commission recognizes the reduction in staff pay during these difficult times and appreciates staff's dedication to the success of the agency.

There being no further business, the Commission adjourned the General Session at 7:45p.m.

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