

# Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission

## WORK SESSION MINUTES

March 25, 2026  
Crooked Creek Park  
6:00pm

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

Non-Members Attending: Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf

Mark Smyers reviewed the agenda. Mr. Smyers presented a sample of the new jerseys for Major League Soccer (MLS) Go. Discussion occurred regarding the reasons for the decline in youth sports including the rise of e-sports, travel sports and specialized sports. Mr. Smyers communicated that quality matters and for children and parents to have positive experiences. Vice Chairman Cromer asked how the MLS Go program works. Mark Smyers communicated that MLS Go is designed to provide access to soccer; the program also provides coaches with apps to assist with drills and coaching practices; additionally, a ticket to a professional soccer game is provided to every kid. Mr. Smyers shared that participation is trending up and staff are offering NFL flag in the spring and fall.

Mark Smyers reviewed the following agenda items: the park/school agreement, Commission approval on a ratification for tree cutting services; these services were expediated due to phase II Federal funding that limited tree removal due to bat nesting between April 1st and November 15th; the tree removal included a mile and a half along the trail and clearing for the road at the Gardendale property. Mr. Smyers communicated that staff are requesting approval of a budget amendment for the electric train and access control and gate house renovations for the east and west gates. Mr. Smyers shared that the access control and gatehouse renovations include a renovated west gatehouse; the East side of the park includes a new gate arm and kiosk at the upper parking lot and an exit gate at the bottom of the parking lot; there will also be new kiosks at the current gatehouse. Discussion occurred regarding signage, park entry, and user-friendly access. Chairman Harmon inquired about the Gardendale access. Mark Smyers communicated that the Gardendale property will also have the new software system. Vice Chairman Cromer asked if these changes were part of this year's budget. Mr. Smyers stated yes. Commissioner Ross asked if there are any ingress/egress concerns at SSP East gate. Mark Smyers stated that the current operations operate in this manner; if there are games at 6:00pm for example the gate will be open for 15 minutes; there are plans for the isolated moments. Mr. Smyers shared the budget amendment request for Melvin Park irrigation, Seven Oaks Park gym floor, and the Riverwalk phase I contract change orders; this includes minus and pluses due to modifications of the construction process. Discussion occurred regarding landscaping for the trailhead. Mark Smyers communicated that Lexington County is requesting a right of way easement at Mungo Park in order to manage stormwater improvements. Vice Chairman Cromer asked when the bidding for phase II of the Riverwalk will begin. Mark Smyers communicated approximately a month; ICRC has the right to move forward with Dominion, Shaw, and Vertical Bridge. Mark Smyers shared that staff are requesting removal of the following policies: they are more procedural than policy: definition of building space, supervision of areas, rental fees, hours of operation, and advisory councils.

Mark Smyers expressed his heartfelt condolences following the loss of a member of the ICRC maintenance team. Mr. Smyers communicated the master planning process was going well. Discussion occurred regarding new park facility names. Mark Smyers shared that Saluda Shoals Park (SSP) East would be called Leo's Landing entrance, SSP West would be identified as SSP Main Entrance, the Riverwalk trailhead would be called the Dreher Shoals Landing,

Phase I-III of Environmental Education Center (EEC) would be renamed as the Woodlands Center (aligned with River Center), the EEC Phase III building would be named the Trailside Retreat due to proximity to the trail and the Gardendale boat ramp would be called the Gardendale Landing.

There being no further discussion; the Commission moved into General Session.

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

**Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission**  
**GENERAL SESSION**

March 25, 2026  
Crooked Creek Park  
7:00pm

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

Non-Members Attending: Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf, Jay Downs, Alfred Comfort, Adrian Wright, Jason White, Jennifer Riddle, Mark Holcombe

Bill Harmon called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Bill 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 DR. AKIL ROSS TO ACCEPT THE JANUARY 22, 2026 AND FEBRUARY 5, 2026 MINUTES AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

**III. STAFF REPORTS** – were accepted as presented.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Park/School Agreement Renewal

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MICHAEL CROMER TO ACCEPT THE IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION AND LEXINGTON RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT V PARK/SCHOOL AGREEMENT AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY DR. GERRICK HAMPTON. DR. AKIL ROSS RECUSED HIMSELF FROM THE VOTE. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

B. Ratification – Riverwalk Phase II Tree Cutting

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. GERRICK HAMPTON TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION ON THE RATIFICATION FOR THE RIVERWALK PHASE II TREE CUTTING AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY DR. AKIL ROSS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

C. Budget Amendment - Train

A MOTION WAS MADE LAURA HUGGINS TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION ON THE BUDGET AMENDMENT FOR THE TRAIN AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

D. Budget Amendment – Access Control and Gate House Renovations

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MICHAEL CROMER TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION ON THE BUDGET AMENDMENT FOR THE ACCESS CONTROL AND GATE HOUSE RENOVATIONS AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY DR. GERRICK HAMPTON. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

E. Budget Amendment – Melvin Park Infield Irrigation

A MOTION WAS MADE BY LAURA HUGGINS TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION ON THE BUDGET AMENDMENT FOR THE MELVIN PARK INFELD IRRIGATION AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

F. Budget Amendment – SOP Gym Floor

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. GERRICK HAMPTON TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION ON THE BUDGET AMENDMENT FOR THE SOP GYM FLOOR AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

G. Riverwalk Phase I Contract Change Orders

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION ON THE RIVERWALK PHASE I CONTRACT CHANGE ORDERS AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY DR. GERRICK HAMPTON. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

H. Lexington County Right of Way Easement Mungo Park

A MOTION WAS MADE BY LAURA HUGGINS TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION ON THE LEXINGTON COUNTY RIGHT OF WAY EASEMENT FOR MUNGO PARK AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY DR. GERRICK HAMPTON. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

I. Policy Removal – OP1-OP2, OP5-OP6, OP9

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MICHAEL CROMER TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION ON THE REMOVAL OF POLICIES OP1-OP2, OP5-OP6, AND OP9 AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY LAURA HUGGINS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

## **V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Smyers shared an invitation to the Art Re-Dedication at Saluda Shoals Park on April 16<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm. Staff are reinstalling the Mike Williams fish sculptures along the trail near Rawls Creek; these are the same fish sculptures that used to hang in the wetlands; staff are excited to get the art pieces back up in the park for the public to enjoy.

Mark Smyers shared a somber note and requested to take a moment to recognize the tragic and sudden passing of one of ICRC's maintenance technicians, Deandre Dreher. Mr. Smyers stated that Deandre grew up in this community, in the parks, and later joined the team to serve on the Chapin side of the district; his dad, Dee Dreher, has worked for ICRC for many years and is currently the maintenance foreman at Saluda Shoals Park. Mark Smyers shared that Deandre had a wonderful personality and was well loved across the agency; he will always be remembered for the joy he brought to the team, and he will be greatly missed.

## **VI. COMMISSION RESPONSE**

Commissioner Huggins thanked the staff for their ongoing efforts and for ensuring the board understands the agency's financial position. Vice Chairman Cromer communicated how impressive it is to see all the things that occur across the agency and expressed excitement regarding the good things that are coming in the next couple of years. Vice Chairman Cromer commended staff for all their efforts and for having a strong team. Commissioner Hampton shared appreciation to staff for all they do and acknowledged the plans for the new entrance access solution at Saluda Shoals Park. Commissioner Ross acknowledged the trust the board has in staff regarding the service provided to the community and the vision for future growth and development. Commissioner Ross also thanked Mark Smyers for recognizing the tragic loss of Deandre Dreher; he was a student at Lexington Richland School District V and will be greatly missed. Chairman Harmon highlighted the positive developments occurring throughout the agency and commended staff for the comprehensive Commission package. He noted that every Commissioner reviews these reports and deeply appreciates the significant effort required to document the agency's extensive activities.

## **VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL MATTERS. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO ADJOURN PUBLIC SESSION. SECONDED BY LAURA HUGGINS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eve Mittendorf  
Recording Secretary  
IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION

**IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION  
EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING**

March 25, 2026  
Crooked Creek Park  
7:20p.m.

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

Non-Members Attending: Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf, Mark Holcombe

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Items related to personnel matters were discussed; no action was taken during the  
Executive Session.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION.  
SECONDED BY LAURA HUGGINS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M

Respectfully Submitted,  
Eve Mittendorf  
Recording Secretary  
IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION