

# **Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission**

## **WORK SESSION MINUTES**

March 26, 2025  
Crooked Creek Park  
6:00PM

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

Non-Members Attending: Dr. Akil Ross, Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf

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

Mr. Smyers communicated that staff are completing and filing the South Carolina biennial Special Purpose District (SPD) registration; the Commission may have received notification that it is due. Mr. Smyers provided background to the Saluda Shoals Riverwalk trailhead building; the initial bid included a line item cost; it was recognized that the initial cost for the building was over the anticipated budget; staff re-bid the building which resulted in a bid of approximately \$770K vs \$1.2M. Mark Smyers shared that there were two add-alts that helped with the reduction in cost: one included selecting a stained concrete floor instead of tile in the bathrooms and the other was installing vinyl windows instead of aluminum windows. Mark Smyers stated the apparent low bidder was Springhill Construction. Vice Chairman Cromer inquired if the overall building changed. Mark Smyers stated no. Mr. Smyers shared a conceptual drawing of the trailhead building to the Commissioners.

Mark Smyers communicated that staff is presenting a change in the original short-term bond request for the Crooked Creek Park lightpole replacement; the original request included replacement of all wood poles at Crooked Creek Park fields 1, 2 and 3; after further inspection, staff determined that only eight wood poles needed to be replaced. Mr. Smyers communicated that staff are bringing this in front of the Commission due to the change in the original scope of the project and cost; the original budget was \$82K and the change in scope resulted in the submission of a bid from Premier Contracting for \$28,820.

Mr. Smyers shared that the shade structure for Leo's playground came back higher than budgeted; staff are requesting a budget amendment to shift the savings from the wood pole project to the shade structure project. Mark Smyers communicated that the River Center roof is included in the recommended FY25/26 budget; however, the roof needs immediate replacement due to the ongoing damage that is occurring every time it rains; staff is recommending replacing the roof this budet year. Mr. Smyers shared that the cost of the roof would come out of this year's budget and be replaced when next year's short-term bond monies are received. Commissioner Huggins inquired on the age of the roof. Mark Smyers stated that it is the original roof when the building was built around 2001.

Mr. Smyers distributed a copy of the 2020-2030 Strategic Plan Refresh document for the Commission's approval; staff worked with Clemson to consolidate the current Strategic Plan objectives with the most recent community feedback. Mark Smyers also presented a new policy for Commission approval regarding Inclement Weather and Catastrophic Events; staff included the Commission's recommendation to add a window of authority for the Executive Director to approve up to 10 days of leave during an inclement weather or catastrophic event; anything beyond that would require Commission approval. Vice Chairman Cromer recommended citing in both locations of the policy 10 'working' days for consistency.

Mark Smyers communicated that the Saluda Shoals Riverwalk groundbreaking is scheduled for April 29, 2025 at 2:00pm at Saluda Shoals Park at the upper boat ramp. Mr. Smyers shared that John Cantey, Superintendent of Operations, is retiring March 28, 2025; there will be a drop-in at Seven Oaks Park for Mr. Cantey from 2:00pm – 5:00pm. Mark Smyers shared that staff is working on an art project at Saluda Shoals Park; it is funded by Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission, Saluda Shoals Foundation and the Love Foundation for a total of \$30K; staff and the Foundation are working with Bob Doster who is the artist that created the striped bass at the trailhead near the Environmental Center; Mr. Doster will be working with the children in the summer safari program at each end of the district; the art piece will be turtles on a log and will be located at the portion of the Riverwalk that enters into Saluda Shoals Park.

Mark Smyers shared a conceptual drawing of the Environmental Education Center renovation; this building is very unique in its layout and design and has been described as a "sculpture in the woods." Mr. Smyers communicated that phase I includes the following: an expansion of the deck, an additional entrance in the front to provide access to the deck, an additonal door off of the exhibit hall space, additional restrooms, and storage space. Discussion occurred regarding the size of the deck, electrical and data infrastructure, railings, and acousitics in the exhibit hall.

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

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

March 26, 2025  
Crooked Creek Park  
7:00PM

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

Non-Members Attending: Dr. Akil Ross, Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf, Jay Downs, John Cantey, Alfred Comfort, Jason White

Bill Harmon called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. 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**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MICHAEL CROMER TO ACCEPT THE JANUARY 22, 2025 MINUTES AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY LAURA HUGGINS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

**III. STAFF REPORTS**

Staff reports were submitted as presented.

**IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

No Executive Session was held. The Commission remained in General Session.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Contract Award – Saluda Shoals Riverwalk Trailhead Building

A MOTION WAS MADE BY LAURA HUGGINS TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY DR. GERRICK HAMPTON. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

B. Contract Award – Crooked Creek Park Ballfield Wood Pole Replacement

A MOTION WAS MADE BY LAURA HUGGINS TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

C. Budget Amendment – Leo's Landing Playground Shade Structure Project

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MICHAEL CROMER TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY DR. GERRICK HAMPTON. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

D. Re-allocation of Funds – River Center Roof Repair

A MOTION WAS MADE BY LAURA HUGGINS TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

E. 2020-2030 Strategic Plan Refresh

Chairman Harmon shared that Bob Barcelona with Clemson University presented the results of the 2020-2030 Strategic Plan Refresh at the January 22, 2025 Commission meeting; staff is presenting this month the final document for Commission approval.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. GERRICK HAMPTON TO ADOPT THE 2020-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN REFRESH AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

F. Policy BF 6.43 Hazardous Weather & Catastrophic Event

Chairman Harmon communicated that the Hazardous Weather and Catastrophic Event policy allows the Executive Director to give staff paid leave due to hazardous weather or catastrophic event.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MICHAEL CROMER TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION WITH ONE AMENDMENT TO INCLUDE 'WORKING' DAYS UNDER PARAGRAPH 2, SECOND LINE. SECONDED BY LAURA HUGGINS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

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

Mr. Smyers communicated that John Cantey, Superintendent of Operations, is retiring March 28, 2025. Mark Smyers shared that Mr. Cantey has served this community since 2004; like many in this agency, John swiftly maximized the full potential of the role in athletics and quickly endeared himself to the community. Mark Smyers also communicated that John Cantey shared stories of many nights on the ball fields building relationships with families, which would turn into a social network that would rival most; John improved the athletic procurement procedures and dealt with all the occasional spontaneous heated community engagements that will rise between coaches and parents, all while being focused on creating the best possible experience for the kids. Mr. Smyers shared that in 2008, John stepped into the Seven Oaks Park Director role; John did everything in his power to serve this community through Seven Oaks Park and his team; during the 2015 flood, John was at the tip of the spear serving those who had lost everything in that catastrophic event; John and his team quickly dove in to fill in gaps and served as an emergency shelter for several weeks; that moment will never be forgotten by this community and Seven Oaks Park will always be held in honor for what it did when the community needed them most. Mark Smyers also shared that in 2018, John moved up to the Recreation Superintendent role and in 2020 the pandemic hit, and staff moved into a crisis mode for the rest of the year. Mr. Smyers stated that during this time, catastrophically large agency change was rolling out on a weekly and sometimes daily occurrence, with financial distress on the agency's doorstep, staff built it all back and John was a part of all of it. Mark Smyers communicated that John Cantey took on monstrous, red tape filled situations because he knew if he could get that moment over the finish line and that it would make a difference in the lives and wellbeing of others. Mr. Smyers stated that John Cantey has a huge heart, and he will be missed; he has served us well and we wish him all the best in retirement.

## **VII. COMMISSION RESPONSE**

Vice Chairman Cromer commended staff and communicated excitement for the future. Vice Chairman Cromer thanked John Cantey for his years of service and wished him the best. Commissioner Hampton echoed Vice Chairman Cromer's comments and shared appreciation for Mr. Cantey's years of mentorship as a coach, officiant, and a leader; he has left his mark at Seven Oaks Park. Commissioner Huggins shared a quote from Maya Angelou, "people may not remember what you said, but they will remember how you made them feel." Commissioner Huggins thanked John Cantey for all he has done for the community. Chairman Harmon shared appreciation of John Cantey and acknowledgement Mr. Cantey for his years of service at ICRC and his career progression as a leader. Chairman Harmon congratulated Jason White on his new role as the Superintendent of Operations.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY LAURA HUGGINS TO ADJOURN. SECONDED BY DR. GERRICK HAMPTON. VOTE TAKE. MOTION PASSED.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

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