

Recreation Committee Meeting

March 24, 2025

A meeting of the Recreation Committee was held on this date beginning at 4:00 p.m. over video conference call.

Councilmembers Present: Councilmember Caroline Parker (Chair), Councilmember Jim McBride, Councilmember Kevin Shealy, Councilmember Keith Waring (*joined 4:17 p.m.*), and Mayor William S. Cogswell, Jr.

Staff Present: Jason Kronsberg, Director, Parks; Laurie Yarbrough, Director, Recreation; Elizabeth Dieck, Chief of Staff; Amy Wharton, Chief Financial Officer; Julia Copeland, Corporation Counsel; Magalie Creech, Assistant Corporation Counsel; Hampton Logan, Executive Assistant and Special Projects Manager – Chief of Staff; Jennifer Cook, Clerk of Council; and Wanda Stepp, Clerk of Council's Office (recording).

Also Present:

Chairwoman Parker called the meeting to order.

Chairwoman Parker opened the meeting with a moment of silence.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Councilmember Shealy, seconded by Councilmember McBride, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2025 Recreation Committee meeting.

Public Participation:

None.

Old Business:

- a. **Recreation Ordinance review/update:**
- b. **Recreation commission appointments and meeting schedule:**

Chairwoman Parker asked the Committee to direct Legal to look at the ordinance and talk about the Recreation Commission. She would like to see an appointment from each district. If every district had an appointment on that Commission, met regularly, and reported out to the Committee quarterly, she thought that could go a long way within the City. If the Committee felt that the Commission could be helpful, that was what she was looking for. She knew the Committee was the point of contact for each district, but they had a lot of parks and different people in different parks doing different things. There was pickleball, rugby, and ultimate Frisbee in all areas and the Recreation Commission could be a vital tool to help the Recreation Committee moving forward. If there was no opposition, she would like to direct Legal to look at the ordinance to see if it needed updating, discuss it with the Mayor's Office, and bring it back next month. Ms. Copeland said she would be happy to do that. She asked Chairwoman Parker if her specific request was the makeup of the Commission. Chairwoman Parker said that was correct. She knew there had been discussion as to it not being very active in the past, but people had already applied. She thought if every district could appoint someone and they could utilize those applications to where each

to get the feasibility of that and he didn't think they had heard back, but he would check on it. Ms. Dieck said she would follow up with IT. Chairwoman Parker said they would check back in April.

e. Discussion regarding status of Longborough Dock negotiations:

Ms. Copeland said they communicated the Mayor's offer to give the neighborhood association a share toward the construction. The neighborhood association spoke to their lawyer and the board had not officially met yet to discuss or vote on it, so they had not heard back from the neighborhood.

f. Status of landscaping for the James Lewis Apartments:

Mr. Kronsberg said they had added this to their list to do a landscape plan for the James Lewis Apartments.

g. Status of landscaping along Cleveland Street:

h. Request for the power washing of cinder block walls surrounding College Park on Grove Street and Rutledge Avenue:

Mr. Kronsberg said he and Ms. Copeland had spoken about Cleveland Street and it was The Citadel's frontage of the baseball stadium. It went along with item h., which was the same property, but their wall. Mayor Cogswell said he thought Councilmember Gregorie's request was a good one. They had made an inquiry to get in with The Citadel to discuss it as it was their property, but he wasn't sure if that meeting had been scheduled or not. Chairwoman Parker said she was sure there were cadets that would be happy to help with it.

i. Discussion regarding Martin Park and the ground in front of the James Lewis complex:

Mr. Kronsberg thought the James Lewis complex was the same as the landscaping status and the Martin Park project was on the TIF list for a park renovation and park house expansion.

New Business:

a. Capital Projects updates:

b. Maintenance updates:

See attached Exhibit A.

Mayor Cogswell said he had sent an e-mail that day when he had gotten an initial schematic of proposed site plans for both W.L. Stephens and Johns Island, and he wanted to land on that quickly. Mr. Kronsberg said they had box and bubble diagrams they were working through, like the full wishlist programming from the Recreation Department, to see how those test fits worked. They would have something soon to review. Mayor Cogswell asked Ms. Copeland if she had any contact with the neighboring property owner on Johns Island in setting up a meeting there. She said she had reached out to Dr. Ross's office, but she hadn't heard back since they canceled the first meeting. She would try again. Mayor Cogswell said they may send them certified mail as they seemed to be avoiding them. Ms. Copeland said she would take one more pass, but she didn't disagree.

Chairwoman Parker said in the past they couldn't offer swim lessons because of the lifeguard shortage, but it sounded like they had a great concept moving forward. Ms. Yarbrough gave Stephen Fernandez, the Aquatics Manager, a lot of credit as he was good at hiring young folks. He was able to work well with 16-, 17-, and 18-year-olds. He did the certification for them. The City offered a certification, at no cost, if they were going to work for the City. They weren't training everybody else's lifeguards throughout the Lowcountry, but they were training folks that wanted to be a City of Charleston lifeguard. She had a meeting with Mr. Fernandez the prior week and he reported that the recruitment process had gone well. They wanted to thank HR as they were interviewing, hiring, and certifying, so they were going to be ready to go. The problem they had had nationwide with lifeguards and swim instruction was, hopefully, changing according to where they were today. Chairwoman Parker said that was great and thanked Ms. Yarbrough as it was important in the Lowcountry.

Mayor Cogswell told Ms. Yarbrough he wanted to put on her agenda, particularly with the Aquatics Team, to have internal staff and the larger swim community weigh in on the schematic designs for W.L. Stephens and Johns Island. He wanted to make sure that they had input. He had been approached by a couple different folks, who he thought she knew, and he thought the design and programming would be better if they made sure those folks were engaged. He wanted to put that out there and would get with her on how best and when to do that. Ms. Yarbrough thanked Mayor Cogswell and said she appreciated that. She knew those folks would be glad to hear it. Every month when she went to the board meeting for the SMART parents, they asked where they were on those two pools. She knew they were all anxious to give input.

d. Thomas Johnson Park requests/discussion:

Chairwoman Parker said this was a small community park, but it had evolved into a great, large pickleball community. Hundreds of people were there a day, ages 5 to 90, playing pickleball together. People were coming from all around the area because they had heard it was a great community of pickleball players. She was glad everyone was utilizing the park. She said they did have a couple small requests. She asked if they could move one or two of the picnic tables over to the pickleball courts. When it rained, there was standing water. It was nicely shaded by the oaks, but they ended up with standing water, so they requested a pickleball squeegee for the court. It had been previously requested that the dominant pickleball lines be painted and there were cracks on the court. She had noticed in Mr. Kronsberg's maintenance sheet that it was on the list to be replaced. She thought that one had been resurfaced recently, so she didn't know if that was something easy where they could call the contractor to come out. She said the community would appreciate any help. Mr. Kronsberg said he got it.

e. Johns Island Recreation Center discussion (Requested by Councilmember McBride):

f. Discussion re: W.L. Stephens Aquatic Center timeline (Requested by Councilmember McBride):

Councilmember McBride said he wanted to be aggressive at putting information out to the public on the timeline of the development of the Johns Island Recreation Center and W.L. Stephens Aquatic Center, especially the public input portion. He wanted to personally be able to know as much in advance as possible. Being relatively new he wanted to see how the process worked, how the City took in public input, and he wanted to amplify it as much as he could by making sure as much of the public was aware. Generally, speaking, on all projects at all levels of government, City, County, SCDOT, a common complaint he got, and they all probably got, was that there was

Chairwoman Parker said she wanted to end on a high note, but the bond referendum discussions started back in 2022. It was tough to get it over the finish line. They made it just in time. It came to fruition, they got it on the ballot, and it passed with 80% approval. After years of requesting that they implement a strategy or next steps regarding the prioritization of some of the items listed, she felt like they fell short on it. They were great projects, but it seemed like they were eating up half of the bond for those two big projects. She would have liked to see a little more prioritization or touched on a lot of the items that were put in the referendum, so that they could show that to their constituents. She asked if \$20 million going here and \$20 million going there. Mayor Cogswell said they didn't know yet until they got a design, but they were through the RFQ process. Based on what the original breakdown solicitation that went out to the voters, they knew what the estimates were for W.L. Stephens and for Johns Island. Stephen Washington wasn't part of it. It was now, but there was an allocation in there for additional work to parks as a catchall. Those two were the ones that were most ready to go, so they were trying to expedite, and if they could get the details on the balance sooner rather than later, he was all for moving forward on them in short order. Chairwoman Parker said she understood. She just thought that they, as a Council, knew there was a need, and they may have to find other funding if those numbers didn't cover what they planned to do on Johns Island and W.L. Stephens. There was a large chunk of the referendum that they weren't going to be able to touch on some of the other items that they had hoped to touch on. She hoped that moving forward they could put some type of plan together, a consensus, as they had asked for it for a while. They hadn't really gotten any direction and then now they were opening that spigot for \$40 million on those two much-needed projects. Mayor Cogswell said for clarity it was three projects and it was plus more. Chairwoman Parker said that was what she was wondering as she didn't think Stephen Washington was part of the referendum, so that was the catchall. In talks when they initially did that referendum, that was what they were afraid of that they were going to hyper focus and put those items on the list representing that to the voters and then use the money for deferred maintenance, which was what they were doing at Stephen Washington. While that was in her district and she was grateful, it wasn't on the list. She knew that the Committee had talked about putting a prioritization list together and it sounded like they were just focusing on those two projects. Again, that was great, but she hoped that the next round of funds they could discuss spreading it a little like they had said Bears Bluff having some conceptual designs, Dills Tract having some conceptual ideas, rough ideas. Mayor Cogswell said that was the plan. Chairwoman Parker thought that was the plan initially, but they were jumping right in to get those done, which she guessed was good. Also, this item was coming to Recreation that day, but it was on the Council agenda for next night's meeting. She thought the whole reason they changed all the dates was so items could come and sit in Committee and then come, but this was bam-bam. Mayor Cogswell asked Ms. Wharton if they wanted to defer it off Council for two weeks. Ms. Wharton said she would prefer not to.

Ms. Wharton said that Stephen Washington Park was in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Chairwoman Parker said she knew that, but the way the referendum was written was open-ended. She thought those on Council understood that, but the referendum to the voters, those were the priority items listed and then some of that catchall deferred maintenance they were hoping wouldn't be utilized for that. Councilmember McBride agreed that if the referendum listed certain projects and the people voted for that, they had to be prudent to ensure that they were following through with what the referendum said even if in the weeds there were a lot of flexibility written into where the money goes. Chairwoman Parker said they had been working on it for many years. It was great that it was coming to fruition as there were some great complexes, but half of the bond was going towards much-needed projects, but the City, as a whole, \$70 million was a BB in a bucket, and they were going to be spread thin. In the second phase, she hoped they could do initially what they thought they would do which was to have a plan for those dollars moving forward.

Exhibit A

Department of Facilities and Capital Projects Recreation Committee Updates March 24, 2025

Daniel Island / Cainhoy

- Nowell Creek Bike/Ped Crossing:
 - Bids received and submitted to SCDOT for approval
 - *Update 4.15.25* – working through SCDOT Concerns, this will not be ready for council per below.
 - Construction contract to be presented to City Council in the next 60 days.
- Governors Park Drainage Improvements:
 - Still in review by DES. Design team is following up.
- Maintenance:
 - Daniel Island Recreation Center: Gym wall repaired and painted. Contractor to address falling gutter. Replaced non-functional cardio equipment with new equipment and repaired shower faucet.

James Island

- Ft Pemberton Park:
 - Contractor has installed tree protection, erosion controls and temporary construction driveways
 - Remaining demolition scope underway with site construction beginning this week
- Muni Restrooms:
 - Confirmed building set date 4/3/25
 - Rough-in inspections approved
- Harborview Ft. Johnson Road Park
 - Refining cost estimates to implement new pickleball for the originally anticipated phase 2 court construction.
- Plymouth Park Playground Replacement
 - Playground replacement complete
 - Parking lot maintenance and ADA access complete
 - Fence and bollards replaced, new park sign installed, new mulch for site and new buffer plantings complete.
- Maintenance:
 - Bayview Park: parking lot graded
 - Muni Golf Course: installed range lights
 - James Island Recreation Center: sidewalk repairs completed. Painting of concession stand, and restroom building completed. Painting of foul poles completed. Pressure washed main building. Installed new balance beam. Repaired AC unit coils in gymnastics area. New metal roof for concessions building had been ordered.

Johns Island

- New Johns Island Recreation Center:
 - Visioning Session with Mayor, design team and City staff completed.

- Hazel Parker Window Replacement: materials bid received. Pending BAR application to start work with City staff.
- Arthur W Christopher Community Center: roof leak repaired. Flush valves replaced.
- MLK: faulty shower valve replaced.

Other

- Tennis and Basketball Maintenance:
 - Indefinite delivery contract awarded to Sports Surface Pros in February. Work to commence 5/15/25.
 - Maintenance for eight facilities is scheduled for mid-May and will be completed by June for summer camps
 - Mitchell Playground: crack repair and resurfacing single basketball court
 - Mary Utsey Playground: crack repair and resurfacing two half-court basketball courts
 - Bees Landing Rec Center: crack repair on tennis courts 1-3
 - Jack Adams Tennis Complex: crack repair on tennis courts 1-3
 - Deming Park: crack repair and resurfacing basketball court
 - Alan Fleming Tennis Complex: crack repair on courts 1-4, striping pickleball on courts 1 and 2
 - Waring Senior Center: crack repair of four pickleball courts
 - Thomas Johnson Park: crack repair and resurfacing of single basketball court
- Ballfield Maintenance:
 - 233 ballfield drags
 - 29 baseball and softball games
 - Completed 89 new layouts to cover our Spring Season – more to come as season progresses over 9 athletic fields/complexes for multiage youth soccer and ultimate frisbee
 - 239 Repaints of these fields
 - Weekly inspections of Field Turf at Stoney Field, including 2 brushing/grooms and debris removal (sticks, rocks, trash, etc.)
 - Completed all pre-emergent herbicide applications for all athletics
 - Currently in the process of applying ant bait. Starting a little later to help with Mole Crickets.
 - Annual soil tests complete for current Fertilization Plan through May/June – planning to bulk test bio/green products (organics) to help reduce the volume of manmade NPK in our athletic fields.
 - Irrigation Audits continue all athletic fields and pump upgrades are underway for Governors Park
 - Mowing on all athletic fields is on a rolling schedule every 3 to 4 days to minimize clippings
 - Started calcined clay reload at James Island Rec. Will continue with West Ashley Park, Bees Landing Recreation Center, Governors Park, Harmon as we work through materials on hand

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Johns Island

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 - Visioning Session with Mayor, design team and City staff completed.

- Design team is developing architectural style ideas and test fitting full program to have concepts for community engagement.
- CMAR selection committee was held on 3/20/25
 - Committee short listed two applicants
 - Interviews for short listed candidates tentatively scheduled for 4/11/25
- Johns Island Park CCSD Ballfield Renovations:
 - TCOs were issued for field #1 (softball) and field #3 for practice and games
 - Project is not complete – CCSD is hiring additional contractors to complete work.
 - CCSD contractor will repair roadway damage from haul trucks
 - Contractor evaluating plumbing issue from construction. Restrooms currently not operational.
- Maintenance:
 - Johns Island Park: concession stand water heater replaced.

West Ashley

- New Aquatic Center at WL Stephens at Forest Park Playground:
 - Visioning Session with Mayor, design team and City staff completed.
 - Design team is developing architectural style ideas and test fitting full program to have concepts for community engagement.
 - Design Team Contract negotiations underway.
 - CMAR RFQ advertisement complete:
 - Selection Committee met 3/6/25 and short-listed two firms for interviews. Interviews tentatively scheduled for 4/11/25.
- Mary Utsey Playground
 - Refining cost estimates for potential pickleball expansion, playground replacement and parking lot upgrades.
- Parkshore Park
 - Refining cost estimates based on Councilmember feedback to add pickleball.
- West Ashley Bikeway:
 - TRC review based on stormwater comments scheduled for 4/17 meeting.
- Maintenance:
 - Bees Landing Recreation Center: roof replacement over lobby and offices complete
 - West Ashley Park: foul poles painting complete

Peninsula

- Brittlebank Park Playground:
 - Engineer and Playground Equipment Vendor continue to coordinate custom designed foundations to comply with ACOE landfill cap requirements.
- Longborough Dock:
 - City Legal continues negotiations with HOA and their attorney on a mutually beneficial deal. Last correspondence between city legal and HOA Attorney was March 19th.
- Shaw Center:
 - 60% complete – scheduled for a 6/2/25 substantial completion
- Maintenance:

- Hazel Parker Window Replacement: materials bid received. Pending BAR application to start work with City staff.
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