

Recreation Committee Meeting

May 15, 2025

A meeting of the Recreation Committee was held on this date beginning at 2:05 p.m. at 80 Broad Street and over video conference call.

Councilmembers Present: Councilmember Caroline Parker (Chair), Councilmember William Dudley Gregorie (Vice-Chair), Councilmember Jim McBride (*virtual*), Councilmember Kevin Shealy (*virtual*), Councilmember Keith Waring (*virtual*), and Mayor William S. Cogswell, Jr.

Staff Present: Jason Kronsberg, Director, Parks; Laurie Yarbrough, Director, Recreation; Elizabeth Dieck, Chief of Staff; Daniel Riccio, Section Chief, Community Services; Magalie Creech, Assistant Corporation Counsel; Melissa Cruthirds, Assistant Corporation Counsel; Katie Dahlheim, 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: Councilmember Robert Mitchell, Marshall Ormand.

Chairwoman Parker called the meeting to order.

Chairwoman Parker opened the meeting with a moment of silence.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2025 Recreation Committee meeting.

Public Participation:

Corrie Altenburg said she grew up in West Ashley playing Recreation Club soccer and for the high school. She had a family now with three children living in West Ashley who all played club or City sports. She was there with her friends, colleagues, and supporters representing the Ashley River Soccer Club. They had recently formed the Ashley River Soccer Club as a non-profit to fill a need that West Ashley had. They loved the City's Recreation Department and all their children had benefited from the tight ship that Stacey Collins ran. They had coached for the Recreation Department, and it had its purpose. There came a point that the kids wanted to level up and play club sports where they got higher quality coaching and more competition. Currently, in West Ashley there was a gap for that because their children who were outgrowing the Recreation Program were going to James Island and Mt. Pleasant clubs, paying them money, and driving across town multiple times a week to play for their clubs. They wanted to keep the kids in West Ashley to be a feeder program for their high school and wanted to do it with their stable and well-run soccer club in partnership with the City, high school, and community to keep the kids on that side of town using West Ashley City fields. The biggest obstacle often for a new club starting was having consistent access to lighted and adequate fields. They felt like that was where the City could come in and help them. She grew up playing soccer there and there weren't many greenspaces. The West Ashley Park was a beautiful facility that she thought could be used for something other than just the Recreation Program. If the City allowed them to reserve access to West Ashley Park fields, it would allow their club to keep costs down, which would allow them to

keep their fees down for the kids that wanted to play for their club. In other parts of town, not only were the fees higher, but they were often using City fields on that part of town, so they were asking for their kids to be able to use City fields in West Ashley. They had had many positive preliminary meetings with Ms. Yarbrough. She said Ms. Yarbrough knew they weren't trying to compete with the Recreation Program but be complimentary to it and be a mutually beneficial arrangement. They had talked about coaching, clinics, camps, and ways they could help each other. They weren't asking for it for free. They had spoken with many West Ashley City Councilmembers that were in support of it as well as State Senator Ed Sutton. Their big ask was for the Committee to support them moving forward in the process to allow them to use West Ashley Park and other City fields for their club. Chairwoman Parker thanked them for coming and said 53 comments had been received in support of the West Ashley Soccer Club.

4. **Old Business:**

a. **Recreation Ordinance update:**

Chairwoman Parker said they had first reading on the updates at Council on Tuesday and they would continue moving along the process. She had already spoken to some Councilmembers, but she told the Committee to think of who they would like to be on the Recreation Commission in their districts.

b. **Discussion re: QR Code at City parks for citizens to utilize and provide feedback:**

Mayor Cogswell said it was on their radar and they were working with IT on a broader platform for feedback, but specific to Recreation facilities, as well. He thought figuring out how to thread it into what would be a modified platform in the upcoming months was a great idea and would be implemented. Chairwoman Parker thanked the Mayor and conveyed that it was more of just a way for people to access their current website, as well. A lot of times their fields could be rented on RecTrak, so that was also an easy QR Code to direct them that way, but she understood if they were initiating it with a broader approach.

c. **Discussion re: peninsula basketball camp (Requested by Councilmember Mitchell):**

Chairwoman Parker said she had spoken with Councilmember Mitchell briefly, but she wasn't sure if he had already received an update. Ms. Yarbrough said she had talked with Mr. Jones twice, but they had not talked about that issue. The permit was in, and it was done, but she hadn't received any additional comments about needs that he had.

5. **New Business:**

On a motion of Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the Committee voted unanimously to take item 5.m. first.

m. **Approval of rate changes for Municipal Golf Course:**

Marshall Ormand said they were trying to make sure they were keeping the golf course in the black into the future. The model they used for their rates was typically a European-based model where they charged more for out-of-town play and had much lower discount rates for residents, even more discounts for seniors, and they didn't charge juniors under 18. Basically, the layout

would be the same. They would raise the senior rates by \$1 and with a cart would come to an even \$40, a \$3 increase across the board otherwise, and then an \$8 increase for non-residents, which they had seen an insanely ridiculous influx of demand. In comparison to other courses around them, rates were in the hundreds across the board in Mt. Pleasant, West Ashley, and anything that was accessible. He thought the Ocean Course at Kiawah was in the \$600 range. They got a lot of push their way and he thought they would get that either way. The course was in great condition. It got pummeled with traffic. They did have to make sure they were prepared if they had any necessary improvements or upgrades to make. They also had to factor in if they were to have a storm evacuation. They didn't have a membership to rely on, so they would take a much bigger hit if they didn't have traffic coming through the door. It was a safety net for the most part. Councilmember Gregorie thought Mr. Ormand had said non-residents went up by a \$1. Mr. Ormand said non-residents was anybody out of the 294 zip codes and it was an \$8 increase, so they would be looking at \$90 to ride a golf cart and play 18 holes of golf. Legend Oaks in Summerville was \$105, and Stono Ferry was about \$150. Councilmember Gregorie said it was going up \$8 for non-residents on weekdays and weekends. Mr. Ormand said they didn't differentiate weekday/weekend for tourists. Chairwoman Parker thought the increases were extremely reasonable. She said the Muni was not a for-profit golf course by any means, but just like every other area, they had seen price increases in new turf and everything they utilized. She asked Mr. Ormand if it was going to be enough to cover that. Mr. Ormand said they had looked at that and their equipment was a big one. On their budget this year, they showed a much smaller margin mainly because of that, so it was an adjustment from that standpoint. If they needed to make another adjustment, it was a minor one. It may be something to consider at this time next year or even sooner, but he thought this was a safe approach. They were looking at generating about an additional \$150,000. They hadn't had to raise rates since the renovation, which was not the plan going into the renovation. They were looking at a structure like this annually, but they hadn't had to. They hadn't had to charge juniors and seniors, and they had had plenty of opportunities to bring in youth programs. They were trying to get kids in from downtown. It was a challenge, but they made sure that they had this safety net so they could afford to do that if they got the opportunity.

Mayor Cogswell said the course looked incredible. He told Mr. Ormand what they were able to do with this limited of a budget was impressive. He appreciated them trying to keep it low, but if they did need to increase it later, then they would do that. He appreciated them keeping it lower for the locals. He complimented them for a job well done. Mr. Ormand thanked the Mayor. He said the demand in golf would show that they could go higher, but they tried to emphasize not pricing people out of golf. Chairwoman Parker said it was wonderful and she concurred that they did an incredible job, and everybody loved the course. She asked how the new restrooms were. Mr. Ormand said they just unlocked the doors for the last repairs and hopefully they would have them open the following day. Chairwoman Parker asked if there were any website updates as far as the resident and non-resident rates. She knew this was a conversation a long time ago especially with regards to fees and the outdated website. She asked Mr. Ormand if it felt like that needed to be a further discussion, or did he feel they were capturing the City versus non-City. Mr. Ormand said it was still a little bit of a manual process, but they had cleaned it up some. It was more of a day-to-day thing, and he thought there was an opportunity to clean it up more, but there were logistical curve balls all over the place. They had started putting a bigger emphasis on no-shows, so they charged for no-shows if they got any. It wasn't a huge percentage total, but it was adding up and getting the point across.

On a motion of Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the rate changes for the Municipal Golf Course.

Mr. Kronsberg said a., b., f., g., and h. were Recreation-related projects. They tried to focus on Recreation-related projects at this Committee. It wasn't all City projects.

See Exhibit A.

a. **Capital Projects updates:**

b. **Maintenance updates:**

f. **WPAL park update – (Requested by Councilmember Shealy):**

Mr. Kronsberg said they had a permit in to demolish the old house that was there that had to go through DES f/k/a DHEC. Once they got that permit, the first project would be to get rid of the old house and get the site cleaned up. Councilmember Gregorie asked if the house was historical. Mr. Kronsberg said it wasn't and that it was probably a 1970s ranch.

g. **Harmony Property update – (Requested by Councilmember Shealy):**

Mr. Kronsberg said the property had closed on April 4th. The City owned it but there was nothing more to report at the time.

h. **Lights at WAP (Requested by Councilmember Shealy):**

Johns Island/Capital Projects:

The test fits for the new recreation center and pool were nearing completion. They continued to negotiate the contracts with the design team and the construction manager at risk, so they hoped to bring it forward to Council for approval. Currently, they were working on a small purchase order to get the test fits done so they could then have a good plan to bring to the public to get information and feedback. Mayor Cogswell said he had a sneak peek at some of the initial conceptual designs and site plans for both the Johns Island Recreation Facility and WL Stephens re-do, and it looked incredible. It was exciting what was looking to come there and excited to bring it to the public and the Committee for review.

Chairwoman Parker said she was always excited to hear about all those things and it was phenomenal what Mr. Kronsberg and his staff do. Her family just got done with another spring season and the fields looked amazing. Everything they put together, Parks, Recreation, the programming, the fields, were so much fun for many families both City residents and non-residents. She would be talking to Mr. Kronsberg more about the field fertilization as she was sure a lot of people would like to hear about that. It would probably be well received because their kids played and rolled on it. Mr. Kronsberg said hopefully it would save some money so there were multiple benefits.

c. **Stephen Washington Park - CWS:**

Chairwoman Parker said she had already spoken to Mr. Kronsberg regarding tap fees specifically when they worked on their own properties and how CWS may be able to collaborate and team up. She wanted to bring it back to the table. There was nothing further to discuss at this time, but she would bring it to Public Works as well and then maybe it would come back to Recreation with some positive news.

d. Barberry Woods renaming:

Chairwoman Parker said the resolution to name the Barberry Woods Stormwater Park after beloved Dale Morris had passed unanimously at Council on Tuesday and they looked forward to it opening. She asked Mr. Kronsberg if he knew approximately when it would open. Mr. Kronsberg said he didn't, but he could check. Chairwoman Parker was sure it was a while away, but it was going to be a beautiful project and a wonderful way to honor Mr. Morris.

e. Volunteer/sponsor/referee end of year possibilities for future:

Chairwoman Parker said she would love if there was a way that the City could represent and thank the volunteers. She said maybe they could look at something like that for the 2026 budget as they were grateful for everybody that dedicated their time to volunteer. Ms. Yarbrough said that was a great idea and she made a note to put it in their budget as they would be starting their budget asks soon. They used to do something prior to COVID and had gotten away from it. She thought geographically would be a great way to do it. She knew their coaches from West Ashley didn't want to drive to Daniel Island, but they could do that within their geographic area, so she had already put it in to do an end-of-the-year for everyone. She thanked Chairwoman Parker for the idea. Chairwoman Parker thanked Ms. Yarbrough and said everyone would love it.

i. WL Stephens swim team/SMRT:

Chairwoman Parker said she had received a few questions about WL Stephens and the swim team. She asked if they were going to have to close this pool due to the construction as she thought this was where the swim team practiced. Ms. Yarbrough said it was one of the sites. She said the last four years since COVID, they had rented pool space from St. Andrews Family Fitness Center in the winter months as they didn't have the ability to swim in West Ashley indoors. They used WL Stephens up until November and they were back in the water. They were in their long course season currently. The kids had finished State at short course, so everyone was training currently at MLK Pool. She had asked Mr. Kronsberg and everyone in Capital Projects if they could keep the pool she had until they got their new pool built. She had no idea whether that would work. She suspected it would be expensive. It also depended on how the site was laid out as to whether they could keep both of those things. If they couldn't, the City would continue to rent pool space from St. Andrews. They had also reached out to The Citadel because they had an indoor pool the City could possibly rent, as well. They had 340 swimmers on their youth swim team, and they had asked their coaches during the August month which was when new swimmers got added to their team and could join, they did tryouts, not to increase their load anymore. She couldn't handle more than 340 currently with one pool and renting some other space. She expected they would at least be in that pool until November as she didn't think construction would start prior to that. They would finish out this year and go from there depending on what the construction company told them. It would be great to swim in one pool and build another one, but it was like renovating the kitchen, they still couldn't cook in it when they didn't have something. She thought that was probably where they would be. They were already planning, and their coaches and staff were aware of that. They would make sure that their kids and parents knew that. They did swim lesson registration the prior Saturday across the City and classes were full at James Island, West Ashley, WL Stephens, and downtown at Herbert Hasell, and MLK. They were fine currently at WL Stephens and the ladies would be back doing water fitness this month.

j. Solar/turf proposal (Requested by Councilmember Appel):

Councilmember Shealy asked if they would be discussing the solar turf proposal requested by Councilmember Appel or if it was a future agenda item. Chairwoman Parker said it was recommended to wait as they were going to gather more information and put it on the next agenda.

k. Continued planning/next steps re: parks bond referendum:

Chairwoman Parker said she was grateful for the great work with the referendum, but there were a lot of items that she knew the surrounding areas were still curious about as to what the next steps were going to be. While she knew there might be a phased approach to the money, she wondered if there was any planning in the works. Mr. Kronsberg said they had been working with the Mayor on the second bond issuance and a project list. They were re-visiting the cost estimates from years ago when the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was approved. Things cost a little bit more now three or four years later. The goal was to bring forward a comprehensive package of the next projects for bond issuance, but they weren't quite there yet. They were still evaluating the numbers and trying to figure out a wish list of projects that could be vetted based on the referendum vote that the voters approved. Chairwoman Parker asked if there had been any other discussions about bringing in a private entity. She knew during the bond referendum process there were firms that helped with public/private partnerships around the Lowcountry, Dorchester County, places like that had modeled things. The James Island County Park was a County/public park, but people paid to get in. She didn't know if they had looked in to speaking with any of those private entities any more or considered putting out an RFQ for those types of services. Mr. Kronsberg asked Chairwoman Parker if she meant assistance with managing projects. Chairwoman Parker said from a project management perspective, but also there were companies that went far and wide from staffing, maintenance, and things like that. She thought more of, at this point, the planning, design, procurement, and things like that. Mr. Kronsberg said a lot of that happened in the City. They had met with two different groups that provided project management services that would take a considerable amount of load off their current staff who could only be stretched so thin. They hoped to have an RFQ issued to advertise for those specialty teams that managed projects for municipalities. He didn't have any dates yet. The Town of Mt. Pleasant started using a similar type of approach two years ago, so they met with them a month ago and heard how the process worked. They were working on the request for qualifications currently. What that looked like was it ended up being an on-call list scenario where when they identified a project, did a cost estimate, established the budget, that external project manager cost would be in the budget. They would go directly to that on-call list, and they would start working, so they were in the process of that. Councilmember Gregorie clarified that they were talking about the One Charleston Plan. Mr. Kronsberg said they were.

I. James Island Recreation Center Playground Equipment:

Mr. Kronsberg said they did an inspection and there were minor issues with the playground equipment which had been temporarily repaired. They had ordered a new transfer deck bumpy climber and spring cylinder, so that work was underway.

With there being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

Submitted by Wanda Stepp
Clerk of Council's Office

Exhibit A

Department of Facilities and Capital Projects
Recreation Committee Updates
May 15, 2025

Daniel Island / Cainhoy

- Nowell Creek Bike/Ped Crossing:
 - SCDOT denied the appeal related to their DBE goals. The project will be re-bid in the next 60 days.
- Maintenance:
 - Daniel Island Recreation Center:
 - repaired emergency exit lights in stairway.
 - Rebuild of irrigation pump complete
 - VFD controller should be operational this week.

James Island

- Ft Pemberton Park:
 - Restroom structure delivered and set 5/07.
- Muni Restrooms:
 - Restroom should be open 5/16/2025
- Plymouth Park Playground Renovation
 - Playground renovation complete
 - Parking lot renovated with added accessible parking
 - All fencing and bollards replaced, new park sign installed, new mulch for site and new buffer plantings
- James Island Recreation Center:
 - Playground equipment parts have been ordered and temporary repairs made.
 - Transfer Deck
 - Bumpy Climber
 - Spring cylinder
- Facilities Maintenance:
 - Bayview Park: removed old sewer lift station for restrooms and installed new lift station with two grinder pumps and control box.
 - James Island Recreation Center: repaired one AC unit for gym. Repaired irrigation backflow leak.

Johns Island

- New Johns Island Recreation Center and Pool:
 - Test fits and conceptual building plans nearing completion
 - Contract negotiations underway with Design Team and Construction Manager at Risk for City Council agenda.
- 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.
 - Landscape
 - Irrigation

- Grading
- Paving
- Maintenance:

West Ashley

- New Aquatic Center at WL Stephens at Forest Park Playground:
 - Test fits and conceptual building plans nearing completion
 - Contract negotiations underway with Design Team and Construction Manager at Risk for City Council agenda.
- West Ashley Bikeway:
 - Pedestrian bridge replacement design completed.
 - TRC on 4/17 generated minor comments that are being resolved. Will not require a full submittal back to committee.
 - Bid process will begin upon completion of permitting, likely in June.
- West Ashley Park Lighting:
 - Design has been completed with lighting locations approved
 - Lights are expected to be installed early July and should take approximately two to three weeks.
- Facilities Maintenance:
 - Bees Landing Recreation Center: cleared intake sump line from pond to irrigation pump.
 - West Ashley Park: repaired scoreboard controller. Family toilet repair
 - Mary Utsey: replaced AC control board.
 - Charleston Tennis Center: repaired leak in AC coil

Peninsula

- Shaw Center:
 - Fire Alarm, Security systems, and the new epoxy flooring to be completed this week. Final inspection to follow.
- Facilities Maintenance:
 - MLK: unclogged men's shower drain and repaired toilet leak in lifeguard room
 - Jack Adams: toilet repair
 - Moultrie: replaced instant hot water heater under sink in restroom
 - Arthur W Christopher Community Center: unclogged sewer line between laundry room and employee restroom. Repaired mop sink faucet.

Other

- Tennis and Basketball Maintenance:
 - The contractor has pushed the start date for 2025 Maintenance back to June 15 due to challenges regarding the weather.
 - Maintenance for eight facilities as listed below:
 - Mitchell Playground: crack repair and resurfacing single basketball court
 - Mary Utsey Playground
 - Bees Landing Rec Center

- Jack Adams Tennis Complex
- Deming Park
- Alan Fleming Tennis Complex
- Waring Senior Center
- Thomas Johnson Park
- Ballfield Maintenance:
 - Completed 318 baseball/softball field drags
 - Completed the layout and setup of 75 baseball/softball/t-ball games including dragging, chalking lines, adjusting and painting bases/home plate/pitching rubbers
 - Completed layout and set up for 106 other games, including Youth and Adult Soccer, Ultimate Frisbee, Adult Flag Football
 - Repainted 343 Fields for sports listed above
 - Completed fertilization of all Athletic fields
 - Completed trial application of BioSpxtrum humate + micros on WAP, Ackerman, BLRC Multipurpose, JIRC Baseball (all), Bayview 3 and 4, and will be applying to Gov. Park next week. This is a new trial of liquid product comprised of beneficial microbes and microbiology strains to reduce the reliance of manufactured turf care products.
 - Completed weekly mowing.
 - Regular monitoring of irrigation