

Recreation Committee Meeting

August 21, 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 Jim McBride, Councilmember Kevin Shealy, Councilmember Keith Waring, and Mayor William S. Cogswell, Jr.

Staff Present: Jason Kronsberg, Director, Parks; Laurie Yarbrough, Director, Recreation; Elizabeth Dieck, Chief of Staff; 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:

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 Gregorie, seconded by Councilmember McBride, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2025 Recreation Committee meeting.

Public Participation:

1. Abby Mummert said she was the President of the College of Charleston Women's Rugby Team, a player on the Charleston Hurricanes, and a supporter of the Charleston Outlaws Rugby Club. She was there to advocate for the upgrade and official designation of Coach Stanley Chisolm Park as Charleston's rugby park. The park already held deep cultural and historical value named for a man who had dedicated his life to mentoring and uplifting local youth through sports. By making it the home of rugby in Charleston, they would not only honor his legacy, but actively continue his work using athletics as a tool to build community, character, and opportunity. As a college student and athlete, she could speak firsthand to how valuable a dedicated rugby facility would be for college-age players. Currently, their team struggled to find consistently lit and safe practice match locations. A shared rugby park on the peninsula would provide a safer playing field and training ground, encourage her team to come out and support their adults, and help bridge the gap between youth, collegiate, and adult club play keeping students engaged, active, and connected to the community throughout and beyond their college years and allowing the sports to grow at a younger level. This kind of investment sent a clear message that Charleston valued its young adults, supported athletic development, and understands the power of sport to unify and uplift. With strong community backing, youth involvement, and growing interest in rugby nationwide, it was a project with real return, socially, culturally, and economically specifically through the new stream of tourism revenue from the ability to host some tournaments and new job and volunteer opportunities that the increased park utilization could present to the College's teams.

2. Chris Maloney said he represented Charleston Rugby. He read the following: 'We have no firm base of operations. We need a reasonable pitch to play on. We're obviously thankful for whatever they could get, but they would like a better, permanent playing and practice field. Dr. Robert Galbreath, MUSC Coach for Charleston Rugby.' That was from a local newspaper article titled 'Charleston Struggles' dated September 1981. In 44 years, nothing had changed. They now had over a dozen of rugby organizations, and they still didn't have a dedicated place to play rugby. In their proposal, they sought to provide a home for rugby in Charleston as Charleston had become a rugby city. Both the men's and women's clubs had represented Charleston at a national level for the last three out of four years. They were ranked in the top 16 clubs in the U.S. out of several hundred clubs. The local high school students were State Champions. They had a large talented and dedicated rugby community. To grow, they needed the support of City leaders. They weren't asking for the opportunity to make a park better just for rugby, but for the entire community. Rugby in Charleston could not continue to grow without a proper facility and the City's support.

3. Megan Flanigan said she was a Charleston resident and a board member of the Charleston Hurricanes. She was also a Professor at MUSC where she educated South Carolina's future scientists and physicians. Rugby had been a part of the Charleston community for over 40 years. Currently, they had adult men, adult women, adult co-ed, college men, college women, and multiple youth rugby clubs that called Charleston home. One of the biggest hurdles to playing rugby in Charleston had consistently been getting access to fields for practices and matches. There were a few park facilities available for them to play regardless of age group. That was why she wanted to voice her support for the proposal to make Coach Stanley Chisolm Park a designated space for rugby in Charleston. The proposal was beneficial for both Charleston rugby teams as well as the community at large. She asked the Committee to consider working with them on the proposal, so that they could build up both the resources of Charleston Parks and Recreation Department as well as build up their rugby community, bring tourism to Charleston, and provide a place for people in the City to connect over athletics.

4. Michael Clough said he had recently retired and moved to Charleston. He could speak from his experience around the Country. He had played rugby, been a Rugby Ole Boy in Arizona, Florida, and Texas. Recently, he had met with some of the Outlaws and other rugby players in the area and it was important to have a dedicated field for the success of the rugby program. He was amazed by what the people had done in Charleston especially with the youth programs. They had six high school programs in the City. Where he came from in Austin, they only had four high school programs with a population of 1 million people. It was astounding how rugby was growing and was big in the area. Having a dedicated field would allow them to manage the damage of the field. Parks departments usually had a dim view of rugby playing on their fields and damaging fields for other sports. If rugby had a designated field, they could manage and repair their own fields and not have that problem where the field was canceled at the last minute when traveling teams had traveled three or four hours to get there.

5. Russell Reagan said he was a member of the rugby community, a small business owner, and a soldier in the South Carolina National Guard. He had been playing rugby for 21 years and the rugby community was unlike anything he had seen outside of the military itself, the camaraderie, teamwork, critical thinking skills that developed was unparalleled outside of the military. They had witnessed over the past 20 years an explosion at the youth level of double digit increases in player registrations every year. The youth had discovered what rugby had to offer

them. Those were the things that every human needed to develop a healthy mind, healthy relationships, and a healthy community. They needed to feel safe, develop critical thinking skills, camaraderie, and leadership. Their club was comprised of professionals, engineers, military service members, first responders, and educators who were pillars of the community ready to help the young people. In his time as a coach, he had to field some unsettling phone calls from people who had no one else to reach out to. They stayed with the rugby community. That was how important it was. People who had nowhere else to go came to them just like in the military. Rugby needed a physical place to live and grow. Before every home game in Dolphin Cove, they sounded off with 'Defend the Cove.' That place in their hearts was already their home and the only thing they asked was that the City make it official.

6. Scott McLaughlin said he was a lifelong Charleston resident, born and raised downtown, and currently lived on James Island. Dolphin Cove had been their temporary home for a while, and he felt that everybody needed a home. Rugby didn't have one in Charleston. As the current Vice President of the Charleston Outlaws, he had been involved with the club for almost 15 years. It was always a struggle to find somewhere to play and to practice. He appreciated the Committee's time in being able to speak in support of the movement to get Coach Stanley Chisolm Park as a permanent home for the Outlaws and the rest of the Charleston rugby community.

7. Trevor Wagner said he was the current Social and Web Media Manager for the Charleston Outlaws. He was a new player to the rugby team. In the year he had been playing with them, it had been extraordinary finding the sense of community that the guys had brought from the beginning. He reiterated their commitment to getting the field as they needed it. It would be better for all the teams around the area.

8. Julia Means said she was a board member for the Charleston Hurricanes. She lived on Johns Island, and she was a huge advocate for making a rugby space in Charleston. She supported the Outlaws and was starting a 'Little Ruggers Program' for the kids at Charleston Collegiate to get her kids and other kids involved in rugby as she loved it. She had never played the sport before. She got out of the Army, and it was the first time she had felt connected, and in the group again since getting out of the military. With the women's World Cup this year being the largest it had ever been, she thought they would see more people joining their team, more people wanting to play, and she thought they needed a space to do that.

There were three comments submitted online. Two were in support of the proposal to make Coach Stanley Chisolm Park a permanent rugby facility. One commenter asked when James Island residents would see an upgrade in their recreational opportunities for seniors and families.

Chairwoman Parker thanked everyone and said she appreciated all they did for the youth.

4. Old Business:

None.

5. New Business:

a. Recreation updates:

Ms. Yarbrough said they had had a great summer camp experience with lots of swimming lessons and meals served through the Summer Youth Meal Program as a feeder from the Free Lunch Program from the school being out. They had a lot of counselors in training which were young

people that didn't get paid but they got learning skills. They wanted to expand that program next year. Their summer pools had closed due to the lifeguards going back to school. The James Island Recreation Center pool was still open in the afternoons to James Island Charter High School who rented that pool for their high school season. Herbert Hasell had closed. They were down to two pools currently. Their swim team had just finished up registration and evaluations. Families had until the end of the month to determine if they were going to swim with the City again and they thought they would be close to that 300 number again this year. They now had over 5,300 children practicing either soccer, flag football, tackle football, softball, baseball, or girls' volleyball. All those games would be starting the second week of September except for tackle football which would start the first week of September. Mr. Kronsberg's staff had done a great job getting the fields ready. They had had a lot of rain, but fields had been very playable. They had gotten good comments from the parents and coaches. The resurfacing contractor for basketball and tennis courts outdoors was in town, so all the courts that were on the 2025 list were being resurfaced. They were working their way around the City doing courts they had identified.

Chairwoman Parker asked if they had any updates on how they were doing their field usage and how was the online portal working. Ms. Yarbrough said for field reservations it was working well and they were having all their field reservations come in that way. A lot of times they started with a phone call, someone didn't understand, and they would send them online. This particular group was renting the field that they were asking to make permanently theirs and using it for their season. They were working with them. They had a lacrosse group that also had use to it as well. Currently, without needing lights, they were accommodating both groups easily and they weren't having any problems. Lots of travel baseball. Every year a new dad decided he wanted to start a travel baseball team and they were looking for fields, but currently they had been able to send teams to places to practice and use fields throughout the City. She hadn't gotten anything negative. They might not be able to give the 6:00 p.m. timeslot on Tuesday that they wanted, but they were able to find a timeslot on some field and they had been able to do that throughout the City.

Chairwoman Parker said she was curious about the feedback for the online portal. Ms. Yarbrough said it had made the process much easier because they could see it online. They grabbed the nights they knew they were going to be using for youth. At Bayview, they grabbed Monday through Thursday night and Saturday mornings. Once they got into their schedule currently, they were getting everything done and got their registration done. They were able to release a few places. Bayview was not a good example because they wouldn't release any, but they had released some places that they didn't need and made them available for the public to rent or reserve. Chairwoman Parker said if they had fields that were not being utilized, wherever they were, she felt that they should be in that portal and available. That was why they did it was to make it easy and assessable. Hopefully, they were making sure that they opened that up to the fields that were not, and she understood that added a certain amount of workload to the Clerk's Department. She didn't know how that was working out with the timeframe commitment and having it ready in advance. Ms. Yarbrough said if it was space, it was open for the community, and they were going to let someone use it. They just never knew how many children were going to register and that was a whole different answer as to how many children they then had to program on their own fields that way. Their registration was very good. Mr. Kronsberg's staff had the schedule to do dragging. They didn't normally line a baseball field unless it was a game field. She didn't think that added any extra work to Mr. Kronsberg's crews. They were already mowing and doing those things. The City had one team that lined every field in Charleston and it was a unique position.

Mayor Cogswell asked in terms of field availability and going through the portal and registration every year on teams, was that being tracked. One of the things he was hearing was that as

Charleston grew, they needed to be prepared for more and more fields. That needed to be thought of in their 10- to 15-year strategic plans because the land wasn't getting any cheaper and it wasn't easier to find. He asked what sort of every year's information did they track and was there a source where the ratio of fields to population that would be like a standard in the industry across the United States? Ms. Yarbrough said the National Recreation and Parks Association had standards. They had backed off them, but they were still out there as far as industry standards. They said there should be one public swimming pool for every 20,000 people, and things like that. Depending on the age group may depend on the field size. They had done some unique things understanding that they didn't have any new fields currently. She had four gyms so they played little kids' basketball in the fall so the 4-, 5-, 6-, and 7-year-olds could play basketball currently so that the gym time could be used by the older kids in the winter months. They had taken certain age groups and played them on smaller sized fields so that they created more spacing. They were trying to do unique things like that, but they were confined by lights and the number of hours in an afternoon between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. as most parents wanted to get home at a decent hour and have their meals, etcetera, and then they used Saturdays. She and Mr. Kronsberg talked regularly about the number of fields they had, how they could better use them, and where could they add fields. Long Savannah was a place they believed would have new fields in West Ashley. She hoped that the First Baptist property on James Island would elicit additional field space. They knew they would be getting new fields at the Johns Island Recreation Center or at least field space that would take space off other areas. They were planning that as fast as they could, but they were not keeping up with the growth in the City.

Councilmember Shealy asked Ms. Yarbrough if outside groups were charged a rental fee over a certain amount. Ms. Yarbrough said if a group of people showed up and their desire was to use a City field for their private space, there was a rental cost to doing that. If they were happy just to go out, take their shot, and see if they could play flag football in one corner of an area, then she wouldn't run them out unless they had an organized activity there. Most groups like to know if they all showed up at 6:00 p.m. they would have a place to be. The City's ordinance said that a father and two kids could throw a football around, so then they weren't going to do anything. If six people showed up in the same shirt and there was a referee, they would be asked if they had a field permit.

Councilmember Gregorie said at the Wagener Terrace meeting, The Citadel emphasized that they did have access to College Park field. The City had not entered a formal MOU with The Citadel and he thought they should start moving in that direction as it was a beautiful field. He didn't know where they would go from there to do that, but he thought it was time to hold them to that commitment. Ms. Yarbrough said she would put kids out there next week if they could get something in place. Councilmember Gregorie said he knew she would. Ms. Yarbrough said it was across from McMahon and it was a great location. The amount of green space in that one zone was incredible and it had lights. She would be out there as soon as Mr. Kronsberg said he could mow it. Councilmember Gregorie said the issue may be safety with the stands, but he thought something could be done, not necessarily with the stands, but to prohibit. It was a beautiful field, and they were finally clearing the fence, so now they could see, and the connectivity was beautiful. He just didn't want to lose that opportunity. Mayor Cogswell said they would bring Legal in to put an MOU together. The complexity would be the stands themselves which was a little bit higher lift. So, how could they use it in the interim while that issue was addressed. He would get with Legal staff to get started on it and he would be glad to report back at the next Recreation Committee meeting. Councilmember Gregorie thought the stands were historical at this point in nature. Mayor Cogswell said they might need a variance on that. Chairwoman Parker said the good news was they had a lot of parents, adults, and kids that just wanted to be on fields. They always needed more fields, but they had a lot of green space that was not being utilized. It might

be the City's, it might be others, but whatever they could do to help get anybody on the fields, she thought they needed to do.

b. Parks updates (Capital Projects, Maintenance):

See attached Exhibit A.

Mr. Kronsberg said those were the general maintenance updates for the past six weeks from a Capital Projects point of view. Design contracts for W.L. Stephens and the Johns Island Park Recreation Center were approved in July. They had been meeting with the design team developing schedules for community engagement. He had already reached out to some of the major stakeholder groups to get those meetings scheduled so that would be forthcoming as they coordinated those schedules for the public engagement. They had contracts for Parkshore Pickleball, Harborview/Fort Johnson Pickleball. The engineers would be putting together those drawings and then they would be able to get that work bid out and constructed. Those were major milestones in the world of pickleball in the City. They finally received the permit for the Governor's Park stormwater DES permits in June, so they were working through getting the documents pulled together so they could get the project advertised and coordinate with Ms. Yarbrough and her team on how they could do that work without too much disruption. It was never easy working in an occupied facility or field. It was challenging as they didn't want to displace the citizens from the facilities.

Councilmember McBride asked Mr. Kronsberg if he knew the status of CCSD's remaining maintenance list for the John's Island Park. Mr. Kronsberg said he didn't, but they did send them additional comments the prior week. There was lots of water being held in the interior of the new work and they were still waiting to hear back from them. They did poke them weekly to see what was going on, but no response. Councilmember McBride said the grade work that was done on that park was still not fully completed and there were several dozen items that CCSD's contractors still had to do to make it complete. He thanked Mr. Kronsberg for doing all they could to grade the parking lot by the Alan Fleming tennis courts. Every time it rained it became a muddy mess and potholes were dug in which required the City to grade it periodically to maintain it. He asked if it was possible to start a discussion about getting funding for a pervious pavement so that it didn't have to be maintained all the time. Mr. Kronsberg said they could put it on the list, come up with cost estimates, and then bring it through the budget process. Councilmember McBride said okay. He thanked Mr. Kronsberg's staff to reinstall all the Ultimate Frisbee stations in the park. Mr. Kronsberg said there was a group that had offered to take a lot of that on. Mr. DeCiantis was working with them to get the frisbee golf updated in John's Island Park.

Councilmember Gregorie said he remembered when Stoney Field used to be a muddy mess and he wanted to know how that was handled. He knew they put turf down. He asked Mr. Kronsberg if it was still flooding and what made the difference. Mr. Kronsberg said it was a collaborative project working with the school district and they had surcharged the whole site for ten months, compacted all the subgrade, and then they brought the grades back up to where they were originally. There was probably 2.5 ft. to 3 ft. of sediment over the 40 or 50 years since the facility was constructed. He said it was working well and there were no current issues. Councilmember Gregorie said thinking of the Dutch Dialogues that Stoney Field would have been great retention. They didn't work that in, but he always thought it would have been a great way to take care a lot of the water at Hagood and other places to store it there. When it went down, their field was fine again.

Chairwoman Parker thanked Mr. Kronsberg and Ms. Yarbrough for the updates. She asked if the group that was helping with the frisbee golf were sponsoring some of the repairs. Mr. Kronsberg said they were frisbee golf aficionados and had just volunteered to clean fairways and adjust some holes. Currently, it was nine holes. They talked about helping and adding another set of baskets so they could play forwards and backwards giving them 18 holes, which was logical and a good way to make that happen in a tight corridor. They were just civic-minded frisbee golfers. Chairwoman Parker asked if there was a way to acknowledge their civic partners and businesses. It was something they saw Citywide. They had all those organizations that wanted to contribute something to the parks, so if they could come up with that solution. She thought MUSC might be a great partner to help with anything the City might need on their fields and she thought looking at those sponsorship opportunities were key. Mayor Cogswell said that was happening currently. They were putting together packages for that very thing, and he would get an update on where that stood.

Ms. Yarbrough said Councilmember Shealy had introduced her to Bart Altman who was a West Ashley Park disc golfer. She had a meeting with him that day at West Ashley Park and he had single-handedly taken those 18 holes and made them wider and made it so that the snakes were further back in the woods. It was amazing the folks that had a passion for something how they would come forward and help as resources were limited. The fact that Mr. Altman would meet with her once every month, tell her what she needed to know, and then come back and do it, really was a help. Ms. Yarbrough said at Chairwoman Parker's encouragement, they had put in a volunteer special thank you event for next year and hopefully that would be funded in their budget. It was a start to the way to tell the volunteers thank you. Chairwoman Parker knew no one expected recognition, but she felt, as a City Councilmember, it was great to acknowledge the folks that went above and beyond in those type of ways. She said a little sign or something that said thank you went a long way.

6. Adjourn:

With there being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

Submitted by Wanda Stepp
Clerk of Council's Office

Section of Facilities and Capital Projects
Recreation Committee Updates
August 21, 2025

Athletics Maintenance

- Completed 625 Drags of Baseball/Softball fields
- Completed Setup for 81 games for adult sports including 6v6 soccer, ultimate frisbee and flag football
- Repainted 227 fields for play and camps
- Completed work for 23 non-rec permitted fields
- Completed layout of 85 new fields for Fall sports season, this is ongoing based on the rain
- Completed grooming of Stoney Field. We are planning to brush ahead of each Home game and then stay on our regular 4-6 week schedule.
- Completed herbicide and fertilization for turf health, Nutsedge and grassy weed control
- Completed a round of fertilization using 18-0-8.
- Completed sod work at WAP and Bayview.
- Repaired Beach Volleyball Court at John's Island Park.
- Continuing to Spray and monitor for Army Worms.
- Mowing of all Athletic Surfaces at 1" height, every 4 days (as weather allows).
- Continuing monitoring and repairing irrigation for all athletic fields.

Annual Tennis and Basketball Re-surfacing

- Alan Fleming Tennis Center Courts are complete.
- Jack Adams Courts 1-3 complete
- Bees Landing courts 3&4 complete
- Mary Utsey underway
- In Progress
 - Mitchell Basketball
 - Deming Basketball
 - Waring Senior Center Pickleball
 - Thomas Johnson Pickleball color will be repainted so Pickleball line color will be white and tennis blue.

Daniel Island

- Facilities Maintenance:
 - LTP Clubhouse – repaired ice machine and completed all satellite court lights and light pole replacement

James Island

- Facilities Maintenance:
 - MUNI – repaired ice machine

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 - o Maybank Tennis – installed 3 new toilets and completed floor replacement
 - o Lowcountry Senior Center – repair roof leak, replaced fan in gym
 - o JI Rec – new scoreboards installed, completed swale to enhance drainage around the building

Johns Island Park

- Completed the regrade of gravel parking lot at courts to eliminate ponding

West Ashley

- West Ashley Park Roadway Lighting - complete
- Facilities Maintenance:
 - o Plumbing repairs – WAP, Forest Park house
 - o Willie Gains – reattached sink to wall
 - o WAP – repair broken water main to front concessions, repair water leak at ice machine, repair toilet in family restroom

Peninsula

- Facilities Maintenance:
 - o Tiedemann – repair HVAC
 - o Shaw Center – replaced AC condenser fan motor, repair new roof leak related to existing HVAC system
 - o MLK pool – repaired pool chiller, Plumbing repairs
 - o Herbert Hasell Pool – gate repair, replace domestic water pump
 - o Mall Park – landscape enhancements planted by city funded by neighborhood
 - o AWCC – repair restroom lights