

APPROVED MINUTES  
CHARLESTON COUNTY PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION (CCPRC)  
REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING  
861 RIVERLAND DRIVE, CHARLESTON, SC, 29412  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2021

**Commission Members Present:** Mr. Collin Bruner, Ms. Michelle Brandt, Ms. Lisa King (via teleconference), Ms. Mattese Lecque, and Mr. Brad Taggart.

**Commission Members Not Present:** Mr. Eduardo Curry and Mr. Teddy Manos.

**Staff Present:** Mr. David Bennett, Mr. Kevin Bowie, Mr. Charlie McManus, Mr. Phil Macchia, Ms. Gina Ellis-Strother, Ms. Christine Volousky, Ms. Patty Newshutz, Mr. Steve Hutton (via teleconference), Mr. Tommy Hale (via teleconference), Ms. Shanté Ellis, Ms. Marcie Chiappone, Ms. Lisa Knisley-White (via teleconference), and Mr. Adam Ronan.

**Legal Counsel Not Present:** Mr. Dwayne Green

**Guests Present:** None

**I. Call to Order and Welcome**

A. Introduction of Guests and Notification to Media

The Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission met on Monday, October 18, 2021 at the CCPRC Headquarters, Charleston, SC. Mr. Bruner, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Mr. Bruner informed those present that notification of the meeting was sent to the local news media and others requesting notification.

**II. Public Comments and Presentations**

A. None

**III. Approval of Minutes**

A. (ACTION) Approval of September 27, 2021 Regular Commission Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the September 27, 2021 Regular Commission Meeting was made by Ms. Lecque, seconded by Ms. Brandt, and approved by the Commission. (#020-2122)

**IV. Old Business**

A. None

**V. New Business**

A. Planning and Development (P&D) Update

Mr. Bowie presented an update on the following Commission approved Capital Projects:

- Sk8 Charleston hosted their first event called Grind for Life on October 2. Staff are looking forward to hosting the event again next year. This event travels throughout the US and is a 501(c)(3) that raises funds for those that have cancer and covers travel expenses for treatments. The founder of the event is a two-time cancer survivor. Ms. Lecque noted that she saw a large crowd as she drove past SK8 Charleston that weekend. Mr. Macchia noted that it was a fantastic

event with a large turnout. He noted that the event host stated that this event holds their record for the most pre-registered participants. Mr. Bennett asked if the event had any injuries. Mr. Macchia confirmed that no injuries were reported. Mr. Macchia mentioned that it was pretty impressive to watch a recent 14-year old Olympic Skater that was also at the event.

- **Publicly Advertised Bids:**

- Request for Qualification -
  - Consulting Services for the New Park Center Design at North Charleston Wannamaker County Park
- Invitation for Bid (IFB) -
  - Construction of the Folly River Paddle Sport Access at the Folly River Boat Ramp
- Request for Proposals (RFP) –
  - Old Town Creek County Park – Phase I Development

- **Folly Beach Fishing Pier**

- The new diamond pilings are underway. Staff are pleased with the project and weather is cooperating.

- **Comprehensive Plan Consultant – Recreation for All 2033**

- The consultant contract has been signed and meetings are underway.

- **Highway 41 Corridor Improvements**

- The new traffic circle hugs the boundary of Laurel Hill County Park (Laurel Hill Parkway heading towards Dunes West). This project will overtake a small edge of Laurel Hill. The roadway will be a two-lane instead of the four originally proposed. Staff have had successful meetings with the County. Staff have spoken with the highway project's consultant to discuss the viability of the park entrance and determine options on Highway 41 or Laurel Hill Parkway. Mr. Bruner asked to clarify where the roundabout is located and the highway at the bottom of the map. Mr. Bowie noted that the roundabout is on the outskirts of the park on Laurel Hill Parkway and the bottom highway is Highway 41. Mr. Bennett stated that this was certainly the best option that was on the table for the county park. Ms. Lecque asked how this will impact the Phillips Community. Mr. Bowie stated that this is the compromise to the major four lane highway going through the Phillips Community. He noted that there are some community impacts, but it is a lot less than what was originally proposed. Mr. Bowie reminded the Commission that the agency does not own Laurel Hill County Park. He stated that it is in a trust with Wells Fargo. The trustees are Newberry College and the Franke Home. The agency is about 10 years into its 100-year lease on the property. As the County continues to pursue this project and the condemnation process, they will be in talks with Wells Fargo. However, there is a little piece of CCPRC land involved with the change. This small portion of land was donated to us via a developer.

- **Isle of Palms ADA Project Phase 1**

- Mr. Bowie stated that a motion will be brought in the Finance section of the meeting to discuss bringing on a consultant to oversee the construction administration of Phase I & II approach of an ADA project at the Isle of Palms County Park. Phase I will create more ADA parking spaces, stairs, and ramp to restrooms. The consultant would hold the construction vendor accountable to their drawing/design. Phase II intends to create accessible showers and enhance beach access. The permits are currently in review because staff are asking Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) to be more flexible

with their current regulations to accommodate the current ADA standards. There is a natural conflict between how they manage the beach and how CCPRC wants to give people with accessibility needs access to the beach. Folly Beach currently has an exemption, but IOP and Beachwalker County Park do not have a similar exemption. Mr. Bennett noted that this is the first major ADA Transition Plan Project and staff will diligently pursue all options to accommodate and enhance access to all of the agency's facilities. Ms. Brandt asked if the Commission were to get sued for lack of beach access, would the agency be liable or OCRM? Mr. Bowie clarified that the defense would be that we pursued a permit to grant access, but it was denied. He noted, however, the results of the case would be unable to be pre-determined. Mr. Bennett confirmed that PRC could be a party to the suit.

## B. Financial Report

Mr. McManus presented and reviewed the checks over \$7500 and financial reports for the month of August. There was a much better start to the first quarter compared to last year. One change in fund balance is due to the month when the transfers were done compared to last year. There were no further questions from the Commission.

### a. (ACTION) Change Order – Isle of Palms (IOP) ADA Improvement Project

Motion to approve a change order with Collins Engineering, in the amount of \$37,280.00, with funds coming the approved CIP budget was made by Ms. Lecque, seconded by Ms. Brandt, and approved by the Commission. (#021-2122)

### b. (ACTION) Contract Award - IOP ADA Improvements- Phase I

Motion to enter into a contract with MedPro Systems, LLC for the construction of Parking and Park Center ADA Improvements- Phase I in the amount of \$151,045.66 with the funds coming from the approved CIP budget was made by Mr. Taggart, seconded by Ms. King, and approved by the Commission. (#022-2122)

## C. (ACTION) Fees and Changes

Mr. Bennett and Mr. Macchia noted that the staff are trying to maintain the 50/50 balance of the budget with revenue and taxes. Mr. Bennett noted that the agency is following the market/industry standard in addition to offering accessibility options via the Foundation. Mr. Macchia noted that the largest change is at the beach parks moving the weekend fee from \$15 to \$20. Mr. Macchia noted a \$5 increase to the Gold Pass due to 4-5 new facilities and more recreational opportunities being added to the pass. Mr. Macchia noted that Ms. Ellis-Strother gathered the data on how much the rate would be to pay for every opportunity individually and the fee was astronomical. Mr. Macchia noted that the waterpark admission fee will increase by \$2. Mr. Bruner inquired about offering a waterpark family day pass. Mr. Macchia noted that this option has been researched and reviewed by staff for several years, but ultimately determined not to be the best practice. Ms. Lecque asked for clarification about the Gold Pass partnership with the Charleston County Library (a program managed by the Foundation). Ms. Ellis-Strother stated that the Foundation purchased five Gold Passes for each of the county libraries that can be checked out for one week. Ms. Brandt asked when the last time the fees have changed. Mr. Macchia noted that the answer depends on the item, but noted that all fees are reviewed annually. Mr. Bowie noted that the access to the park's basic amenities (fishing docks, playgrounds, trails, etc.) has only been raised once in 50 years. Ms. King noted that the agency held strong on the dollar per person

for years. Mr. Bowie stated that Mr. Macchia is reviewing staff wages via the budget process due to the part-time wage market challenges that are being faced. Mr. Taggart inquired about the vacancy rate on the pull-thru campsites that caused the recommendation for the rate increase of \$4. He asked if there is an opportunity to increase and charge more. Mr. Macchia stated that to stay competitive the rate is raised over the years rather than a drastic increase. Mr. Bruner noted that campground visitors are spending more while they're staying within the park and amenities. Ms. King noted that she was on her 17<sup>th</sup> campground experience in two months and noted that the prices vary greatly based on location and prime calendar dates.

Motion to approve the proposed fees and changes was made by Ms. Lecque, seconded by Ms. Brandt, and approved by the Commission. (#023-2122)

#### D. Baker Site Discussion

Mr. Bruner noted that Mr. Bennett will review the Baker site history and current status. Mr. Bruner noted that the site continues to garner lots of public interest in a public private/partnership. Mr. Bennett noted that Baker is an undeveloped site +-98 acres and it's sitting in a high development area and has access to water. The site was donated by the Speedwell Foundation to turn it into a public park with clear direction from the Commission to develop without spending any tax dollars. However, at the time, staff determined that the only way to do anything with the property is to enter into a public/private venture. Under the Commission's direction, staff pursued a public request for proposal for a joint venture that stipulated that the winner of the bid would have to develop the land and pay CCPRC for a land lease for maintenance and upkeep. Two bids were received US Performance Center and Top Golf. Top Golf required a devoted exit ramp to their location. After Executive Management met with the SCDOT, this partnership wasn't considered viable. US Performance Center won the original lease and agreed to pursue the master plan of the site in return for a portion of the property to pursue some other goals. Ultimately, after a few years the US Performance Center plan and financing did not work out. The contract was terminated. The property returned to the Comprehensive Plan queue for further evaluation. It has been less than a year since the contract was dissolved and there has been lots of interest in the property. Mr. Bennett stated that the Commission can provide staff updated direction. Staff have not met to re-discuss or evaluate the property. Staff don't have a recommendation at this time. It is being considered in the future master planning queue of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Bruner and Mr. Bennett agreed that it could take 3-5 years to develop. Ms. King asked the Commission to keep in mind the citizens of West Ashley and their requests for a county park near Bees Ferry Rd. Mr. Bennett noted that we've gone through multiple development cycles and while the development of Old Towne is underway a West Ashley County Park has been on the discussion table for a while as a priority. Mr. Bruner asked if Bulow is out of the agency's control at this moment. Mr. Bennett and Mr. Bowie agreed that the Bulow County Park legal roadblocks are starting to ease. Mr. Bruner stated he views Baker in a different light as it can have a public/private venture. Ms. Lecque noted that the Commission must not forget the donors intention for the land to have public access. Ms. Brandt asked for clarification on who decided that the land couldn't be developed with tax dollars. Mr. Bennett confirmed that it was a stipulation of the Commission at the time of the land donation acceptance, but noted this direction can be changed at any time. Mr. Bruner and Mr. Bennett noted that the Baker site is undeveloped land currently and the decision was to not spend tax dollars at that time to develop the property if accepted as a donation. Mr. Bennett noted that there are at least two options on the table currently; pursue a public/private venture or leave the land in the Master Plan queue. Mr. Taggart stated that after a few tries of the public/private venture maybe it's time to consider allowing it to come through the queue. Mr. Bennett stated that staff have learned a lot during those public/private attempts RFP and land lease. Ms. Newshutz noted that the Commission based their decision on the limited funds that were available prior to the Bond funds and the agency's current financial profile. Mr.

Bennett stated that financial profile changes will always exist. Mr. Bruner clarified his question of whether the Commission wants staff to develop an RFP to review to determine whether or not the Commission wants to pursue a public/private venture again; or if it isn't a desire to look into it as an option. Ms. Brandt asked if the facility is managed by the private sector how would the agency manage public access. Mr. Bruner and Mr. Bennett clarified that it would be stipulated in the agreement. Mr. Bennett noted the challenges of putting out an RFP during the holidays. The Commission gave staff the direction to bring back information on lessons learned with Baker and an update on Bulow during the November meeting.

#### E. Commission Highlight: Cemetery Management Plan Update

Ms. Newshutz, Planning and Development Director, introduced the agency's Land Resource Planner, Mr. Adam Ronan. She noted that Mr. Ronan is responsible for managing natural and cultural resources during the development of a facility. Mr. Ronan reviewed his current project – CCPRC's Historic Cemeteries. Mr. Bennett reminded everyone that protecting natural and cultural resources is a part of the agency's vision. Mr. Ronan noted that preserving natural and cultural resources falls under the agency's stewardship core value. He noted that the agency's Site Specific Cemetery Management Plans and Cemetery Preservation Management Plan developed by New South Associates, Inc., PRC's consultant, were recently completed and added to the Cultural Resource Management Plan. The new Cemetery Management Plan will offer broad recommendations on preserving, managing, and maintaining the agency's cemeteries. Mr. Ronan noted that the agency has eight cemeteries (Six Mile County Park's cemetery is a privately owned outparcel) including Bulow (Bulow Tract), Bethel AME Church & Unnamed Probable Enslaved (Caw Caw Interpretive Center), Louisa Seaborn (Laurel Hill Tract), McLeod Plantation (McLeod Plantation Historic Site), Old Towne (Old Towne Creek County Park), Red Top (Red Top Tract-Edisto Island Park), and Cooks Old Field (Rifle Range Road Tract). The cemeteries are primarily associated with historic African-American communities/churches. Mr. Ronan noted that most of the cemeteries are naturally protected in the wooded sections of the facilities, but have seasonal ornate plantings that indicate a burial site. CCPRC plans to engage the public and family descendants in any future site-specific cemetery projects. The Bulow Cemetery is associated with the Red Top Community and parks phosphate era mining village. It is a contributing cultural resource to the Ashley River Historic District and is four acres with 15 known marked graves and over 300 depressions which are indicative of burials. Bulow is the only cemetery with funerary artifacts such as pitchers, bottles, vases, and other items associated with burials. The McLeod Cemetery is associated with the McLeod Plantation and James Island African-American Community. It is seven acres and an early survey identified 34 marked gravesites with an additional 99 unmarked graves. The last known internment was in 1965. Staff have prioritized the McLeod Cemetery as the first site-specific cemetery project with work to include boundary delineation, burial mapping, ground penetrating radar, and collection of oral histories. The importance of historic cemetery preservation/management has been recognized by South Carolina's Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) through two 50/50 matching grants awarded in 2020 and 2021. 2020's Federal Preservation Grant project totaled \$22, 834 and assisted with the development of the CCPRC Cemetery Preservation Management Plan. The 2021 Federal Preservation Grant's estimated cost is \$47,160 and will be presented for Commission consideration in November 2021. The 2021 grant project would entail specific cemetery work for McLeod Plantation Historic Site.

## VII. Next Meeting

Regular Commission Meeting, Monday, November 15, 2021, 5:30 pm at CCPRC Headquarters, Charleston, SC

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Collin Bruner", written above a horizontal line.

Collin Bruner, Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Shanté Ellis", written above a horizontal line.

Shanté Ellis, Executive Administrative Manager