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Public input process to start this winter for Charleston County Parks' North Charleston Ashley River Site

[CHARLESTON] – The Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission (CCPRC) recently entered into a public-private partnership at its Ashley River site, also known as the former site of Baker Hospital, with the locally-owned Sea Fox Boat Company.

Charleston County Parks will continue to own the entire property. Charleston County Parks and Sea Fox have executed a 90-year lease, and the future public park on the site will be funded by tenant Sea Fox, allowing Charleston County Parks the ability to develop the park without taxpayer funds. The rent paid by Sea Fox and its dry stack marina will also offset operations and maintenance of the future park.

The future park at the property will be approximately 46 acres in size, pending a site survey. Sea Fox will use the land it leases elsewhere on the site, approximately 11 acres, for boat manufacturing. The company is currently in a due diligence phase, which includes governmental permitting, before any site work will begin.

Charleston County Parks will hold public engagement meetings in early 2024 to gather public input and learn what the community would like to have in this future park. However, possibilities that could be suitable amenities and features at the Ashley River Site include:

- Open greenspace
- Fishing/Crabbing Dock
- Trails
- Playground
- Splash Pad play area
- Shelter that may be suitable for camps or other programs
- Special events, yoga, children's programming
- Spectacular sunsets and waterfront views

Charleston County Parks encourages members of the community to provide their opinions on what they would like at the park at upcoming public engagement meetings. Specific dates for these meetings will be forthcoming and scheduled in early 2024. For updates, please visit CharlestonCountyParks.com and follow Charleston County Parks on social media, where dates will be announced soon.

“Sea Fox Boats and the Renken family have been creating access to leisure on the water for a combined 65 years. Charleston County Parks is the perfect partner, with our shared goal of providing opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. Together with Charleston County Parks, we are approaching this project with a ‘live, work, play’ mentality where members of the community will have new job opportunities, their children have a safe place to play, and families will have water access,” said Sea Fox Boats Director of I.T. and Marketing Tanner Renken.

Locally known as the site of the former Baker Hospital, the property is located just south of Cosgrove Avenue and west of I-26 on the Ashley River – a unique location in the center of the Peninsula south of I-526. The Baker site was donated to CCPRC in 2015 through funding support from Charleston residents Michael and Jenny Messner of The Speedwell Foundation and their business partner Paul Shiverick and his wife Betsy. Tax funds were not used in attaining the site.

In addition to being the former site of Baker Hospital, the property was the site of a phosphate processing plant. The site's history created a brownfield, which requires environmental efforts to make the area suitable for recreational use.

For updates on the Ashley River Site and future public meetings, please visit CharlestonCountyParks.com (direct link: <https://ccprc.com/3723>).

The mission of CCPRC is to improve the quality of life in Charleston County by offering a diverse system of park facilities, programs and services. The large park system features over 11,000 acres of property and includes four land parks, three beach parks, four seasonally-lifeguarded beach areas, three dog parks, two landmark fishing piers, three waterparks, 19 boat landings, a skate park, a historic plantation site, a climbing wall, a challenge course, an interpretive center, an equestrian center, cottages, a campground, a marina, as well as wedding, meeting and event facilities. CCPRC also offers a wide variety of recreational services – festivals, camps, classes, programs, and much more. For more information on CCPRC, visit www.charlestoncountyparks.com or call 843-795-4386.