

**The Town of Hilton Head Island
Parks & Recreation Commission
Thursday, November 14, 2013
3:30 p.m.**

Members Present: Theresa Bennett, Peter Keber, Fred Lowery, Janet Noonan, Heather Rath, Andrew Schumacher, Michael Weaver

Members Absent: none

Town Council: William D. Harkins, Mayor Pro-Tem

Town Staff: Jennifer Ray, Teri Lewis, Heather Colin, Shawn Colin

Other: Frank Soule, *Executive Director for Island Recreation Association*

I. Call to Order

Chairman Rath called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

III. Freedom of Information Compliance

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

IV. Swearing In of New Member. Mayor Pro-Tem Harkins performed the swearing in of new Parks & Recreation Commissioner Mr. Michael Weaver.

V. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Special Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting of October 24, 2013 were approved as presented.

VI. Appearance by Citizens – None

VII. Reports

a. Update from Island Recreation Association. Mr. Frank Soule reported on the following:

- The Hilton Head Island Senior Center opened in September with many new programs and expansion of existing programs.
- The parking lot at the Island Recreation Center officially opened.
- Pool dome was set up last weekend. The air quality has improved 100%; no complaints on air quality – it is better than it was two years ago. Hosted several swim meets this Fall. The Creative Arts School added a second round of swim lessons.
- Have seen growth in the Youth and Teen programs. Soccer numbers are strong, have added a girls softball clinic and we are continuing with lacrosse. Roller hockey and youth football are very busy.
- Turkey Trot is coming up on November 28.

- Special events were well attended: Oyster Fest, Wingfest, Burgers & Brew which is a partnership with USCB.
- Community Outreach Program: working with the Boys & Girls Club, Native Island Churches – trying to reach out to everyone. The school district has created a new policy that prohibits sending informational flyers home in the children’s backpacks. We are still talking to the Administration in the hopes they will reconsider. It is a challenge to get kids registered.

VIII. Unfinished Business - none

IX. New Business

- a. **Proposed Chaplin Linear Park – Schematic Design Plans:** Mrs. Jennifer Ray, Urban Designer stated that in August of 2012 Town Council authorized staff to move forward with design, permitting, and construction for the park based on a concept plan that included gateways to the Broad Creek and the Atlantic Ocean, a linear park trail connecting the Shelter Cove area with Collier Beach Park, upgrades to Collier Beach Park, upgrades to Chaplin Park, pedestrian enhancements and crossings, enhanced parking, and additional signage. Staff recommends that the P&R make a recommendation to Town Council to approve the Schematic Master Plan for the Chaplin Linear Park to be used to further develop detailed plans for permitting and construction.

Mr. Chris Darnell of JK Tiller stated that JK Tiller Associates was hired by the Town of Hilton Head Island to provide detailed design, permitting, and construction phase services for the Chaplin Linear Park. The Schematic Master Plan has been developed based on the concept plan approved by Town Council. The linear park will connect the proposed Shelter Cove Community Park and the existing Veterans Memorial Park on Broad Creek to the existing Chaplin Park and Collier Beach Park on the Atlantic Ocean.

Key features of the park include a 16’ wide paved trail that follows the edge of the marsh; parking and restrooms; fishing & observation piers; a pedestrian bridge at the Broad Creek inlet; a tree house/observation tower and canopy walk; connections to existing park trails and pathways; a marsh-edge boardwalk; a nature pavilion; restrooms, changing rooms, and additional beach parking; a boardwalk across the folly connecting Chaplin Park to Collier Beach Park, and site furnishings and signage including trail head and information kiosks, interpretational signage, and way-finding.

The elevation of the tree house is above the existing canopy. There will be a gentle ramp up to the first level. A public forum was held a few months ago and we received a lot of input from the public.

Commissioner Bennett stated she is concerned about the stopping point of the pathway going to US278. There is not enough room for two people to walk side by side let alone bicycle riders. How can you keep people safe on that side of the road – there is no ability to make the pathway wider because it does not have adequate setback for the single family house located there.

Commissioner Bennett stated that the parking on Burkes Beach Road should be a priority. People should be able to stay on a trail that allows access to the beach from Burkes Beach Road.

Commissioner Noonan recommended that when this goes out to bid, a three year maintenance plan should be included in all bids. Mrs. Ray replied that Mr. Julian Walls of Facilities Management is working into his budget maintenance line items.

Chairman Rath: open to public comments.

Mr. Peter Ovens suggested all stopping places have a roof to provide shelter from the rain. Mr. Ovens added that parking as a priority is a good idea.

Mr. David Bennett, member of the Planning Commission, stated that he strongly urges the Parks & Recreation Commission to make the 300 foot segment along US278 - the boardwalk - a priority. Safety is a concern for people using that part of the trail. Mr. Bennett suggested that the stopping point for the trail on Burkes Beach Road extend as a hard path so bicycle traffic could continue out to Burkes Beach.

Chairman Rath stated she was in favor of a hard bike path so it can to be a true trail, something different from our current leisure path.

Mr. Frank Soule stated that parking at the end of Burkes Beach should be a priority. A parking lot there could have an impact today.

Chairman Rath stated that in the future when this park is being built, we need to create a dynamic naming opportunity. Chairman Rath stated that the pedestrian overpass needs to be approved quickly and needs to be safe and link the parks quickly. Chairman Rath stated that the tree house is a dynamic thing for Hilton Head Island to have and would be a great draw for picture taking.

Chairman Rath inquired if the tree house will be part of the first phase. Mrs. Ray replied that it would not, based on overall budget estimates building the trail is priority and anything else in phase one is a bonus.

Chairman Rath stated the following Priorities:

- emphasize to Town Council that the boardwalk be built behind houses to deter people from going right onto US278;
- push to go across the street to connect to Chaplin immediately;
- burkes beach parking lot

Commissioner Keber made a motion to approve the Proposed Chaplin Linear Park Schematic Design Plans as presented keeping in mind the concerns the Parks & Recreation Commission voiced. Commissioner Noonan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

X. Park Updates - none

XI. Park Commissioner Comments - none

XII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Eileen Wilson

Approved by: approved on 1/9/2014
Heather Rath, Chairman