

**The Town of Hilton Head Island
Parks & Recreation Commission
Thursday, January 8, 2015
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: Mayor Bennett, Bill Harkins, Mayor Pro-Tem

Town Staff: Charles Cousins, Scott Liggett, Marcy Benson, Jennifer Ray, Shawn Colin, Heather Colin, Susan Simmons

Other: Frank Soule, *Executive Director for Island Recreation Association*;
Frank Babel, *Cycling Advocate*

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. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting of October 9, 2014 were approved as presented.

V. Appearance by Citizens - none

VI. Reports

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

- Fall sports, soccer, girls' softball, roller hockey, boys' lacrosse all doing very well. Gator football won the championship.
- The Recreation Center hosts all three swim teams: Hilton Head high school, Christian Academy and Hilton Head Prep. The dome has been put up.
- Over 25 kids from middle school coming to the recreation center on a daily basis. A leader's club has been created and they participate in community service.
- Recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Senior Center. Senior Programs are doing very well; membership is over 600.
- The Island Recreation Center will be partnering with the Special Olympics. Kathy Cramer, the Co-Director of the Special Olympics and partner Julie Harris is starting a group called "Special Olympics Activities and Recreation", or S.O.A.R., to help serve everyone with special needs in the Lowcountry.

Mr. Soule listed four challenges for 2015:

- Develop and design Island Recreation Center enhancements and expansion. Mr. Liggett reported that Town staff has solicited responses from qualified professional design firms and has narrowed the list down to one firm and will begin negotiations. Mr. Liggett stated that the first phase may be underway in the next 12 months; it is a very challenging and aggressive schedule.
 - Develop programs for sailing and rowing center. Mr. Soule stated that he has met with several groups and organizations to promote programs. He has ongoing conversations with the rowing group.
 - Develop operations for Shelter Cove Community Park. Mr. Soule stated that the community events are moving from a location that is wide open and easily accessible to a new location that is not easily accessible for setting up and there will be new partners and new neighbors therefore they will be having ongoing communications to make the transition go smoothly.
 - Work with Beaufort County to reinstate \$75,000 in funding for pool operations.
- b. **Update from Bicycle Advisory Committee.** Mr. Frank Babel reported that the Town staff does a great job maintaining the condition of the pathways – very responsive. Sea Pines has invested \$225,000 in fixing up their pathways. Mr. Babel stated that the BAC is focusing on reapplying for the Bicycle Friendly Community designation.
- c. **Summary from Town Council Workshop.** This item has been postponed until the Town Council officially adopts their goals for the year.

VII. Unfinished Business - none

VIII. New Business

- a. **2014 Mid-year Grant Summary.** Ms. Marcy Benson presented a summary of grant activity for the 2014 calendar year. The summary includes grants awarded, grants reimbursed, grants applied for and grant applications that were denied or declined.
- b. **Park Upgrades Recommendations.** Commissioner Keber stated that he and Commissioner Lowery met with Town staff to compile a list of park upgrades and rate the projects from high priority to low priority in a timeframe. Commissioner Keber stated that they came up with a list based on needs, usage and input from the public. Mr. Scott Liggett stated that the Parks & Recreation Commission would help prepare “an annual listing of priority projects for consideration by the Town Council prior to their preparation of the capital budget.”

Commissioner Bennett stated that she did not care for the format of the proposed priority projects; it is confusing when something is a priority 10 years out. Commissioner Bennett stated that the 2012 online survey by the Island Recreation Association was a good exercise to obtain the needs and desires of the community. Commissioner Bennett stated that we need to find out how many actually use a particular park. Commissioner Bennett suggested using volunteers to conduct a point of impact survey for heavily used parks.

Chairman Rath asked about the Parks & Recreation Commission asking the Town Council about a comprehensive recreation study. Commissioner Bennett replied that would certainly lend creditability to what we recommend to Town Council. Commissioner Bennett would like to see availability funds to do a recreation survey.

Commissioner Noonan stated that she agrees with talking to users of the parks and finding out the needs of the community. Commissioner Noonan stated that it is important to establish what has the most economic impact for the Town as well. If Chaplin Park had field lighting, more tournaments could be hosted at that facility bringing in visitors that would also be using restaurants and hotels.

Commissioner Weaver stated that he would like to see Chaplin Park projects moved to the high priority category and move other parks projects to a lower priority.

Commissioner Lowery stated that if some of the parks become over utilized, then maintenance of those parks will be needed at a much faster pace than if usage was spread out to other parks.

Commissioner Keber made a motion to approve the proposed priority projects upgrades as stated in the packet. Commissioner Lowery seconded the motion. The motion failed with a vote of 3 in favor and 3 opposed.

Commissioner Bennett stated she would like to see a project list that contains only high priority projects and a consensus on what we could do in the near term period. Commissioner Bennett stated she did not feel comfortable with not having enough information except for the 400 people that responded to the 2012 survey and would like to have a “ballpark” cost associated with each project.

Commissioner Bennett suggested conducting another survey stating that there is a lot of opportunity to spread the word about parks and what is available at the parks. Commissioner Bennett suggested the survey be at point of use when the parks are being heavily used.

Commissioner Noonan made a motion to remove the Chaplin Park field lighting and the re-conditioning soccer fields from medium priority and place in the high priority category and remove the Old School House Park items from the high priority category. Weaver seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-1 (Commissioner Lowery opposed).

IX. Park Updates.

- a) **Coligny Plan Update** – Ms. Jennifer Ray stated that this plan was unanimously approved by the Planning Commission and the Town Council and Town staff has been directed that the Phase I priority is the park and playground. Town staff is working with the consultants to get that project going.
- b) **Shelter Cove Community Park Project Update** – Ms. Jennifer Ray stated that Town staff was meeting with the contractors regularly to get an estimate of project completion. Ms. Ray stated that the fountain was underway and everything is coming together and will be a fantastic place for festivals as well as day to day activity.
- c) **Update on management & maintenance of Island parks** – Currently, the management and maintenance of the island parks is split among the Town, PALS and the Island Recreation Association. Having one group in charge could streamline operations and cause less confusion for the public. Under a new arrangement the County would have the Town and Island Recreation Association manage parks and programs. County staff is working out details of a financial arrangement which would

begin with the start of the next fiscal year this July. The County and Town must determine how much the County would pay the Town to cover maintenance on parks and facilities. Mr. Liggett stated that this issue has many tentacles. Chairman Rath requested that the County come to a special Parks & Recreation Commission meeting here at Town Hall in February to explain their process and what direction they are going in.

X. Park Commissioner Comments

Chairman Rath thanked Commissioner Keber for attending the sailing and rowing center ribbon cutting on December 1, 2014. Chairman Rath stated that there may be a need to call a special meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission.

XI. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:45p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Eileen Wilson

Approved by: April 9, 2015
Heather Rath, Chairman