



**Town of Hilton Head Island
Parks & Recreation Commission
Special Meeting
Thursday, November 16, 2023 – 3:30 p.m.
MINUTES**

Present from the Commission: Chair William Zurilla, Vice Chair John Parsons, Jack Daly, Charles Quigg, Michael Manesiotis

Absent from the Commission: Christina Kristian and Thomas Dowling

Present from Town Staff: Josh Gruber, Deputy Town Manager; Ben Brown, Senior Advisor to the Town Manager; Bryan McIlwee, Director of Public Projects & Facilities; Erik Ladd, Project Manager; Teresa Haley, Public Projects & Facilities Administrator

Present from Town Council: None

Consultants Present: Jasmine White, Spark Formation; Brian Witmer, Witmer Jones Keefer

1. Call to Order

Acting Chair Zurilla called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

3. Swearing in of Reappointed Commissioners Michael Manesiotis and William Zurilla, and New Commissioner Charles Quigg – Josh Gruber performed the swearing in.

4. Roll Call – See as noted above.

5. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Acting Chair Zurilla asked for a motion to elect a Chair. Commissioner Parsons moved to elect William Zurilla as Chair. Commissioner Manesiotis seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 5-0-0.

Chair Zurilla asked for a motion to elect a Vice Chair. Chair Zurilla moved to elect John Parsons as Vice Chair. Commissioner Manesiotis seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 5-0-0.

6. Approval of Minutes

a) Regular Meeting of June 8, 2023

Vice Chair Parsons moved to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2023 regular meeting. Chair Zurilla seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 5-0-0.

7. Appearance by Citizens

There were no public comments submitted on the Open Town Hall Portal. There were no public comments offered during the meeting at this time.

8. Unfinished Business – None

9. New Business

a) Patterson Park Master Plan

Erik Ladd introduced himself and project team members Jasmine White of Spark Formation and Brian Witmer of Witmer Jones Keefer. The project team presented an overview of the work process to date and a thorough review of the park, including: project background, funding sources, master plan process, community and Town Council input, historical and cultural findings, and a review of the preliminary concept plan.

The Commission made comments and inquiries regarding: recommend the playground be fenced in and there are adequate parking spaces; concern crosswalks will be challenging especially considering the speed limit on Marshland Road; the distance of the park from Mathews Drive; intend the primary user of the park to be neighborhood residents; guideline or standard for neighborhood parks as it relates to parking; support pedestrian/bicyclist access to the site is separate from vehicular access; current policy or guidelines for what is permitted and prohibited in neighborhood parks; be consistent with standards for all parks as it relates to grilling, oyster roasting, etc.; Ms. White will continue to provide input on the interpretive features and opportunities for learning and for play; the interpretive features will be more defined in the final design phase of the project; concern for expense of the foot bridge going across the wetlands; the purpose of the foot bridge is to connect the entire site and make it more of a destination than a mere connection; concern for high tides coming in to the observation platform; the observation platform will be reviewed by a civil engineer as the plan develops; the observation platform will be another point for storytelling and learning; suggest the location of the gate be moved closer to the intersection point; current gate location based on emergency vehicle access and maneuvering requirements, however, the team will review the requirements to see whether there's room to move the gate; picnic tables will be another detail for development in the final design stage.

Following the discussion, Mr. Ladd noted the next steps for the project include presenting to Town Council for approval in December 2023, final design and permitting in calendar year 2024, and construction in calendar year 2025.

At this time, Chair Zurilla indicated the Commission would invite public comment on both Patterson and Taylor Family Parks at the conclusion of the presentations.

b) Taylor Park Master Plan

The project team presented an overview of the work process to date and a thorough review of the park, including: project background, funding sources, master plan process, community and Town Council input, historical and cultural findings, and a review of the preliminary concept plan.

The Commission made comments and inquiries regarding: support of the pecan tree; concern for maintenance of the garden area; suggestion to add a pecan tree or a native fruit-bearing species at the garden; clarification that garden is a working term and mindful of maintenance concerns; restrooms will be built into the pavilion; there could be space for a food truck near the pavilion if that's desired; suggestion to explore community groups to maintain the garden; contact Honey Horn and/or gardening clubs for information; discussion of options for the garden such as native plants that require less maintenance or faux plants for the purpose of an educational opportunity; consideration of renaming the park to McKnight-Taylor Park; overall support of the proposed plan.

Following the discussion, Mr. Ladd noted the next steps for the project include presenting to Town Council for approval in December 2023, final design and permitting in calendar year 2024, and construction in calendar year 2025.

With no further discussion, Chair Zurilla moved to recommend forwarding the Patterson Family Park Plan to Town Council for approval, along with the comments to address safety concerns. Commissioner Parsons seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 5-0-0.

Chair Zurilla then moved to recommend forwarding Taylor Family Park Plan to Town Council for approval, along with the recommendation that both families, Taylor, and McKnight, are honored for their historical significance. Commissioner Parsons seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 5-0-0.

Chair Zurilla then invited public comment on the parks. Taiwan Scott, owner of property adjacent to Patterson Family Park site, expressed appreciation for the Commissioners comments in support of calming traffic. He expressed the desire to see better connectivity from his property to the park and that it be closer to his property. He also noted the Patterson's would take their farmed products through the waterway in that area and suggested incorporating that into the park.

Stephanie Quigg expressed her concern for excessive speeding on Marshland Road and recommended adding a fence for the purpose of keeping children within the park and to better maintain safety.

10. Commission Business

a) Proposed Parks and Recreation Commission 2024 Meeting Schedule

Upon discussion of the proposed schedule, the Commission asked staff to explore alternate times and bring those back for consideration at the December meeting.

11. Park Commissioner Comments

The Commission complimented the project team for today's presentation of the park plans.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Submitted by: Teresa Haley, Public Projects & Facilities Administrator

Approved: 12-14-23