

**Recreation Committee**  
5:00 p.m., Monday, February 4, 2019

The regular meeting of the Recreation Committee was held at 5:00 p.m., Monday, February 5, 2019 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmember Smith and Past Chair Buckhannon, Interim Administrator Fragoso, Recreation Director Page and Clerk Copeland; a quorum of members were present to conduct business. Councilmember Moye was absent.

1. Chair Buckhannon called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

**2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Chair Buckhannon nominated Councilmember Moye as Chair, and Councilmember Smith seconded. Councilmember Moye was unanimously elected Chair.

Chair Buckhannon nominated Councilmember Smith as Vice Chair, and Councilmember Smith seconded. Councilmember Smith was unanimously elected Vice Chair.

**3. Citizens' Comments**

Jamie Zazella, 104 Forest Trail, attended this meeting because a discussion of the fee structure for classes and programs offered at the Rec Center was to be discussed. She stated that residents and non-residents got an amazing value in the classes and programs offered at the Rec compared to the actual charges. She opined that, if any financial shortfall occurred, it should be made up by non-resident charges for Rec programs and classes.

Marshall Depass, 28 – 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue, approached the Committee representing Carolina Salt Surfing and noted that they are interested in providing individual surf lessons, but not a surf camp. He reminded the Committee that Kyle Busey has been a part of the franchise program at Folly Beach, which he described as “too saturated” because the Town offered too many franchises. Mr. Busey thought the franchise proposition was good if properly regulated. Mr. DePass stated that Wild Dunes was repeatedly asking them to offer surfing lessons which they could advertise as another amenity offered by the resort. At this point, Carolina Salt Surfing was only asking to be approved to offer surfing lessons on the beach in Wild Dunes in the vicinity of the Boardwalk; they were not interested in offering surfing camps on the IOP beach.

**MOTION: Chair Smith moved to discuss the item under old Business related to franchise agreements for surf camps at this time; Councilmember Buckhannon seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**5. Old Business**

**Status of the beachfront franchise agreements for surf camps**

Interim Administrator Fragoso stated that the draft RFP has been crafted, and it attempts to identify qualified vendors who could meet the City's needs, whether for surf camp or another activity that might seek a Front Beach franchise. She reported that she spoke with the Administrator for the Town of Folly Beach and that the IOP RFP mimics the one issued by Folly

Beach that has four (4) active franchise agreements. As in other RFPs, the RFP contains certain requirements that must be met in order to qualify for a franchise agreement, such as meeting the liability insurance limits and naming the City as an “also insured,” having workers compensation insurance, being certified in CPR, lifeguard and life-saving, having one (1) instructor for every five (5) students, etc. The Interim Administrator noted that to offer and approve any franchise agreements would open the beach up to more commercial activity which would be diametrically in opposition to the existing City Code that prohibits commercial activity on the beach, except for a professional photographer for one (1) hour; this is a decision that Council must make. In addition, she noted that a franchise agreement would be another contract that the City staff would track and manage; the agreements would be for one (1) year giving the City the opportunity to make revisions, if needed, before negotiating a renewal. The RFP does not designate an area of the beach where they would be allowed to operate; that would be negotiated after the proposals were received and evaluated. The RFP includes that no advertising or solicitation would be allowed on the beach or on the access path and that all financial transactions must be made off-site. Those responding to the RFP would be required to submit a work plan and a business plan.

Indicating that he was willing to think out-of-the-box, Councilmember Buckhannon opined that, since this would be a new venture for the City, it should be limited to fewer than four (4) franchises. He felt that the City was also being pushed by Wild Dunes, and he questioned that the RFP could restrict the classes and/or camps to the Wild Dunes area of the beach.

Mr. Busey said that he prefers to give private lessons and to offer a camp with no more than fifteen (15) kids possibly through the Rec Department giving the City more control. He thought that the Wild Dunes’ operation would be smaller.

The Interim Administrator commented that the City could not issue an RFP that appears to favor one (1) vendor and that the City needs to move forward ensuring fairness and transparency.

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Although the surfing camps were offered as a small revenue stream in a budget meeting, she thought it should be promoted only as a way to bring surfing to the Isle of Palms. Vice Chair Smith suggested that two (2) camps, not four (4), should be offered initially and that they could be held outside of Wild Dunes for IOP kids.

Mr. Depass stated that Wild Dunes was involved to the extent that they would handle the financial end their operation and that, yes, they would be catering to their guests, but the lessons would not be limited to Wild Dunes’ residents or visitors. And, he reiterated that Mr. Busey was interested in offering private lessons.

In Interim Administrator Fragoso’s opinion, the next step would be for this Committee to make a recommendation to City Council to get their support for this activity on the beach before issuing the RFP.

#### **4. Departmental Report – Director Page**

Having reduced the information in the monthly report a couple of years ago at the request of a Committee member, Director Page stated that she has re-introduced some information because of the questions she was being asked.

Adult athletics are now registering for play to begin in March. One hundred sixty-five (165) youths, making up nineteen (19) teams, are participating in the basketball program that will end in

February. One hundred twenty (120) youths have registered for the youth baseball program, and seventy-five of them live on the Isle of Palms or Sullivan's Island.

The Director reiterated that IOP youths always get preference, but, in athletics, off-island youths are needed to insure enough kids register to form the number of teams need for league play. No Isle of Palms' or Sullivan's Island youths are left on a waiting list, unless they register after the teams have been formed. She also noted that fees for non-resident youths were increased in January with basketball registration.

As Director Page moved to programs and classes, she explained that some of the classes might appear to have very low participation that may be the maximum number that the instructor would take. The numbers for the dog obedience classes remained strong, but the Director was confident that not all were island residents. She was pleased to report that the "Spanish: Travel and Leisure" classes filled up quickly.

Upcoming Special Events are Doggie Day at the Rec on Saturday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, the Front Beach Fest on Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, the annual Yard Sale on Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup> and the always-popular Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. As in the past, residents can get rabies vaccinations for their dogs and City dog licenses at Doggie Day. The bands who played for the Holiday Street Festival have been invited back to play for the Holiday Beach Festival due to the rain for the December event, and the arts and crafts vendors who were invited to the Holiday Street Festival were given the first right of refusal for the Front Beach Festival.

**6. New**

**A. Consideration of a handicap swing**

Director Page reported that the Rec Department has one (1) swing set that can be used with a handicap swing and the purchase is in the works.

**B. Consideration of rental alternatives for the Recreation Center, fields and courts and associated costs**

The Director stated that she had distributed the schedules just before the meeting started. She believed that the use of the fields would be the most popular choice because of the needs of travel teams that are not affiliated with a school and, therefore, have no fields on which to practice. She added that the City must be careful to provide time for the fields "to rest." She said that she has matched the fees Mount Pleasant charges for its field rentals because the Department would be overwhelmed with requests if it were to charge less.

Since Chair Moye was absent and since he asked for this information, Councilmember Buckhannon suggested that the discussion be postponed until the March meeting. He also cited the fact that, if space at the Rec Center was rented to one (1) group, it would have no basis for denying rental to any other group. Under the current practice of denying use of the building or grounds by any group, the Department has avoided any circumstance where it could be accused of favoritism or discrimination. Director Page said that, if Council decided to rent space in the building, it would need supervision and an investment to make it more secure.

When the Director gets requests to rent out space in the Rec Center, she typically directs the group to the Exchange Club or the local churches. On the other hand, she frequently gets requests for use of the Rec Center's fields, which she denies.

**C. Discussion of policy changes to encourage residents to use the Rec Center**

The consensus of the Committee was to delay this discussion until the Chair was present.

**D. Discussion of number of residents and non-residents who participate in Rec programs and athletics**

Director Page noted that the numbers for January were in the report.

**E. Discussion of a community garden at the Recreation Center**

Interim Administrator Fragoso recalled that a resident attended the January meeting advocating for a community garden; she told the Committee that she reached out to the Charleston Park Conservancy, a group that establishes gardens in the Charleston area, in hopes of garnering their support. She wants to gather more information after selecting a space for a community garden at the Rec Center, as suggested, or another spot on the island.

Director Page suggested that this might be a good project for an *ad hoc* committee. She added that a community garden was addressed in 2010, but the conclusion was that there was no space on the Rec property for one (1), and no one came forward to be the primary caregiver, to keep it watered or to keep it weeded, etc.

The Interim Administrator opined that the Committee needed to determine if the community would commit to support such a project, because no City employees had time to dedicate to a community garden.

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Vice Chair Smith offered two (2) thoughts:

- 1) Talk with Ms. Rosenthal, who brought up the idea of a community garden last month, to learn if she had discussed this with other members of the community who might be interested in pursuing it; or
- 2) Touch base with the IOP Garden Club to see if they might be interested in spearheading the project (Vice Chair Smith was informed that the island no longer has a garden club).

**F. Discussion of fee structure for classes and programs**

Councilmember Buckhannon said that he had asked that this be on the agenda because Council kept bringing it up. He recalled that the Committee has gone through the fees structure and made changes to sports and athletic programs and doubled the fees for non-resident participants.

The Vice Chair also remembered that Ms. Rosenthal had mentioned the cost of classes and programs offered at the Rec Center.

Director Page responded that Ms. Rosenthal was comparing the IOP Rec Center fees to those of the Mount Pleasant Senior Center and pointed out that the Mount Pleasant instructors were paid a flat rate for teaching their classes. Mount Pleasant Senior can pay their annual enrollment fee and the classes are made available for five dollars (\$5); they also provide the coffee and pastries with employees dedicated to that function. The IOP Rec Center cannot be compared to the Mount Pleasant Senior Center; they are worlds apart in funding and how that allows them to operate. Although the unwritten policy is for participants to pay before taking a class, Director Page reported that often someone will come up to the desk stating that they attended only eight (8)

classes in the month and will pay for those eight (8) classes then. Being a small Rec Center serving a small community, things like that can be allowed to happen – the IOP Rec Center caters to its patrons.

**G. Discussion of FY20 Recreation Department operating budget**

The FY20 budget presented is attached to the historical record of the budget.

All of the departmental FY20 budgets contemplate a two and a half percent (2.5%) merit pool and could be refined as the process continued; overtime has been reduced as a percent of wages. Interim Administrator Fragoso pointed out that the “Rents and leases” expense has been reduced by twelve hundred dollars (\$1,200) with the removal of the pay phone; the “Adult Sports” line has been reduced by one thousand dollars (\$1,000) based on actual expenditures. Earlier in the year, the City chose to go to a higher deductible on its property and liability insurance, but, at this point, the analysis has not been completed, so the FY20 budget reflects the same as the FY19 budget until that work has been completed.

In the Capital Projects budget, “Non-capital tools and equipment” has been reduced by thirteen thousand dollars (\$13,000) because no replacement of cardio equipment is planned for FY20.

The only item in the Municipal Accommodations Taxes fund is the installation of WiFi for the building and the grounds at eighty-six hundred dollars (\$8,600).

A replacement golf cart for six thousand dollars (\$6,000) should be the expenditure for FY20 in the Hospitality Tax Fund; the Special Activities funded through Hospitality Tax funds are the Holiday Street Festival, the Front Beach Fest, and the Sand Sculpting Contest.

The ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) in the FY20 State Accommodations Tax Capital Outlay is the replacement of a piece of playground equipment or an outside scoreboard, only if a failure occurs. State ATAX contains funds for the Connector Run, the Easter Egg Hunt and the spring music event.

The fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) from the Rec Building Fund will go toward the Connector Run.

**7. Miscellaneous Business – none**

Next Meeting Date: 5:00 p.m., Monday, March 4, 2019 in the Conference Room

**8. Adjournment**

**MOTION: Councilmember Buckhannon moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:15 p.m.; Vice Chair Smith seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland  
City Clerk