

RECREATION COMMITTEE
4:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 14, 2012

The regular meeting of the Recreation Committee was held at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 14, 2012 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmember Thomas and Ward, Chair Bergwerf, City Administrator Tucker, Recreation Director Page, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland. A quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Chair Bergwerf 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. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

MOTION: Councilmember Ward moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 8, 2012 as submitted; Councilmember Thomas seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments

Bev Ballow of 3009 Waterway Boulevard suggested that the Committee consider holding a fair or celebration related to fun and learning about the Barrier Islands and natural history and habitat of the island in the fall of the year. She indicated that talks and programs relative to natural systems in the beaches, island and marshes, species that thrive year-round, what exists and what has been lost, resident and migratory birds and other animals, geographic features such as beach erosion, flora and fauna, etc. Examples of possible presenters were the Turtle Team, Native Plant Society, Birds of Prey Center, biologists from the Aquarium, Citadel, and College of Charleston, representatives from DNR, etc. Ms. Ballow noted that she had stolen the idea from Dave Kynoski who held a similar event several years ago; she also volunteered to assist.

4. Department Report for February 2012 – Director Page

Director Page reported that the ballet classes were going very well; the dog obedience classes are always well-attended. The success of the Keenagers group was well documented in *The Moultrie News* that was published today. Although participation started out low for the Little Dragons Karate class, it has picked up of late. Dodgeball drew thirty-one (31) children who were out of school for the day on Monday, February 20. Due to the popularity of the Semi-Personal Training class, a second class was added to the schedule.

Chair Bergwerf asked how many people have submitted photos for the photography contest; when the report was generated, three (3) people have submitted photos in each category. Chair Bergwerf offered to serve as judge.

Sixteen (16) people are registered for the table tennis league.

Councilmember Ward related that he had gotten calls from residents who work who cannot participate in the table tennis league at 10 am, but would welcome an opportunity to do so after regular work hours. Director Page stated that she knew of several people who fall into that category and was going to try to arrange another time.

The Lowcountry Blues Bash was a big success; nearly five hundred (500) people paid for admission. Eleven (11) children decorated Valentine cards for their loved ones. As always, Doggie Day at the Rec was a huge success; eighty (80) dogs competed for the various titles. One hundred thirty-one (131) dogs received rabies vaccinations. On March 15th, children will have the opportunity to decorate St. Patty's bags and search the grounds for gold coins. The Easter Egg Hunt is planned for Saturday, April 7 from 10 a.m. until noon; last year the event hosted eight hundred (800) children. The annual Yard Sale will be held on Saturday, April 21st; spaces rent for five dollars and some remain available.

Co-ed volleyball will conclude March 13th with a double-elimination tournament. Adult spring softball and Adult 3-on-3 basketball will begin in mid-March. The First Pitch Half Rubber Tournament will be held Saturday, March 24th, and the 14th Annual Half Rubber Tournament will be held Saturday, August 18th. And, as youth basketball is winding down, youth baseball is ramping up with opening games scheduled for March 31st. Eleven (11) girls from the Isle of Palms and Sullivan's Island have signed up to play softball with the teams from the Mount Pleasant Recreation Department. A new event has been added to the Isle of Palms Beach Run scheduled for Saturday, July 28th; in addition to the 10K run and Youth Fun Run, this year there will be a 5K Run/Walk.

The Recreation staff will begin creating the white line on the right-of-way for Palm Boulevard Thursday, March 15 to indicate the appropriate distance from the road's edge for parking.

The Wellness Program is holding its own version of "The Biggest Loser" contest; sixteen (16) employees agreed to participate. The winner will be proclaimed at the Fall Wellness Fair and will be the person who has lost the greatest percentage of weight rather than actual pounds lost.

Director Page wanted the Committee to know that, in addition to her regular duties, Shelia Redmon had made several sets of new palm tree stencils for the garden club.

The Recreation Building was available three hundred fifty-three and a half (353½) hours in February.

5. Prioritization of Projects Greater than \$250,000

After each member of the Committee recited his/her individual prioritizations, they opened up a dialogue to come to a consensus list.

Chair Bergwerf asked whether the City had cost estimates for the electronic message boards at Breach Inlet and the foot of the Connector; Administrator Tucker indicated that the most expensive element of the electronic message boards was running a communication line between the boards and City Hall; typically these boards are located within close proximity to the control source. Chair Bergwerf pondered about the possibility of using a laptop on-site, rather than running a cable.

Councilmember Ward stated that he thought that the goal for the disaster recovery fund was too low; considering the CPI, he was of the opinion that the disaster fund goal should be three and a half million dollars (\$3,500,000).

Based on discussions at the previous meeting, Director Page went back to the lighting contractor and someone to refurbish the ball fields for updated estimates of the work being proposed.

At this meeting, they have not responded with figures; another component needing attention is the fencing.

MOTION: Chair Bergwerf moved to assign first priority to the 42nd to 52nd Avenue drainage project; Councilmember Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION: Councilmember Ward moved to assign second priority for the increase of the disaster recovery fund; Chair Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION: Councilmember Ward moved to assign the third position to the replacement of the ball field lights at the Recreation Department; Chair Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION: Councilmember Ward moved to assign the fourth position to electronic message boards at the foot of the Connector and at Breach Inlet; Chair Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Bergwerf mentioned that she had not been in the public restrooms at Front Beach in quite a while and asked for an honest appraisal; Administrator Tucker described them as “utilitarian and Army barracks-like” and indicated that they were not to today’s standards. The Administrator noted that they get a tremendous amount of wear-and-tear, but are kept clean.

MOTION: Councilmember Ward moved to assign the fifth priority to the gymnasium renovation to include stage/performance area; the motion DIED for lack of a second.

Councilmember Ward asked the Administrator if she had a cost estimate for “beach restoration other areas;” she speculated that the cost could run between six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) and one and a half million dollars (\$1,500,000) depending on the volume of sand to be moved.

MOTION: Councilmember Thomas moved to assign the fifth priority to beach restoration other areas; Chair Bergwerf seconded, but the motion FAILED on a vote of 1 to 2.

MOTION: Councilmember Ward moved to assign the fifth priority to the island-wide beach access parking management system; Councilmember Thomas seconded.

Chair Bergwerf expressed the opinion that the parking management program will come to fruition and does not need to be included as a priority.

VOTE: The motion FAILED on a vote of 0 to 3.

The Chair stated that she was unaware of the condition of the public restrooms until this meeting, and she believes that the balance of Council is also unaware. If the Committee were to list it as a priority, the decision would serve to highlight the need and make it a priority to others.

MOTION: Councilmember Ward moved to assign the fifth priority position to rebuilding the Front Beach public restrooms; Councilmember Thomas seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. New Business

A. Consideration of Charges to Committee from Joint Meeting

- 1. Provisions for Bike Racks and Golf Cart Parking**
- 2. Bike Path from Breach Inlet to 57th Avenue**

Chair Bergwerf commented that people do not ride bicycles to the beach but on the beach; Councilmember Ward expressed the opinion that the issue should not be pursued at present.

On the topic of golf cart parking, Chair Bergwerf expressed the opinion that golf cart parking was a part of the parking plan, but it will fall into place as the plan is devised. Director Page suggested that a first step would be to determine which access paths are wide enough to accommodate golf cart parking. Councilmember Ward voiced his opinion that the access at 25th Avenue is a good model of golf cart parking.

Administrator Tucker recalled that the City had submitted a request to Charleston County Transportation Sales Tax Committee for consideration for funding the engineering for a regulation bike path from Breach Inlet to 57th Avenue. The Administrator cautioned the Committee that if the City is successful at constructing this bike path, the City must simultaneously consider its parking plan to ensure that the parking system does not conflict with the bike path. Chair Bergwerf agreed that the City should not pursue a bike path until the parking issues are resolved despite the consensus of support for a bike path the length of the island.

B. Review of Operating Budget for FY 2012-2013

Administrator Tucker commented that the Recreation Department budget does not contain many changes; global to all City budgets are a three percent (3%) merit pool, fuel at four dollars twenty-five cents (\$4.25) per gallon and a state-mandated increase to employees' retirement. The overtime budget is constantly being refined; the part-time salaries include the instructors and after-hours people. A rate increase of six percent (6%) has been anticipated for the health insurance based on dialogue with the State Health Plan. Vehicle maintenance and electricity and gas have been reduced based on actual expenses. The monthly radio user fee is included

in the telephone and cable line; Charleston County is increasing the fees by twenty-four percent (24%) effective January 1, 2013. Other reductions are in water and sewer and non-capital tools and equipment. The maintenance and service contracts line includes expenses related to the cardio equipment, ball-field lights, HVAC, playground, fields and buildings.

Chair Bergwerf asked Director Page how soon she would begin the replacement of the ball-field lights if she were given the go-ahead from City Council, and she indicated that she would begin as quickly as was feasible. The existing telephone poles would be replaced with concrete poles.

Administrator Tucker stated that, if the City is intending to replace the ball-field lights imminently, staff needs to re-visit the Capital Budget for the Recreation Department. The Administrator also expressed concern that the City has amassed enough of a reserve fund to accomplish the task of replacing the lights; the reserve is currently four hundred twenty-five thousand dollars (\$425,000). Director Page indicated that she would have current figures for the project in about a week.

Due to the viewership of special events on the City's website, an additional one thousand dollars (\$1,000) has been added to the line for special activities and events. Funds for summer camps were increased based on actual expenses.

Chair Bergwerf queried that the fees for the summer camps offset the cost for the camps; Administrator Tucker remarked that "(IOP) is the best deal going in summer camp in the entire region." An increase in the fees would impact island residents and could create an issue for families with multiple children participating; staff could get the exact revenue amount. Director Page noted that the wages for the camp counselors is not in this line, but included in the line for wages. As a side note, Director Page related that island residents were on a waiting list last year, so the maximum number of campers was increased and an extra counselor was hired to include them.

Overall, the Recreation Operating Budget for FY13 has an increase of one percent (1%) over the FY12 budget. Director Page pointed out that the Rec Department has used about one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) the amount of gas that she did the previous year; she wanted the Committee to know that she cannot promise that she can do the same in the coming year.

C. Donation of Water Fountains at the Dog Park

Chair Bergwerf explained that citizens have stepped forward to donate funds for water fountains at the dog park, and she asked Director Page to provide the details.

Director Page related that the couple has lived on the island for fourteen (14) years and have two (2) labridoodles that visit the Bark Park frequently; the came to the Director indicating a need for water fountains at the park and offered to donate ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for fountains and a couple of pieces of agility equipment for the dogs.

MOTION: Councilmember Ward moved to accept the donation and move forward with the fountains and equipment; Chair Bergwerf seconded.

The Director related that she has spoken with the City's liability insurance carrier and has been told that the City will not have a liability with the addition of equipment to the dog park.

VOTE: The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Miscellaneous Business

Councilmember Ward offered to give the Committee an update on the Crabpot Players and their volunteer work at the Recreation Center. The Councilmember explained that the issue was whether his volunteer work of donating royalties, costumes, sets, etc. and the City receiving the proceeds from ticket sales was a conflict of interest under the Master/Servant doctrine of South Carolina Law. He reported that he has discussed the matter with the Ethics Commission who did not see a problem; in January 2012, Councilmember Ward wrote to the South Carolina Attorney General for an opinion. He received a seven (7) page response in late February from the Attorney General that he shared with Administrator Tucker and the City Attorney; they all agree that his volunteer theater productions at the Recreation Department could continue, but that a problem could arise, under the Master/Servant doctrine if he were to continue to conduct classes. In addition, copies of the Attorney General's opinion have been distributed to all members of City Council.

Chair Bergwerf commented that she had visited the Crabpot Players' website and noticed that the group is registered as a 501(c)3 entity; she asked whether the paperwork for the 501(c)3 was on-file with the City. Councilmember Ward responded that the website needs to be updated because the 501(c)3 is inactive and, since the group generates no revenue, he is not required to file the paperwork, but takes the expenses as a charitable donation on his personal taxes.

Referring to the Master/Servant doctrine, the Chair acknowledged that the City Council ultimately is the boss over the Recreation Director. Hypothetically, a situation could arise where Councilmember Ward is putting on a production at the Recreation Center and he something that happens the Director feels compelled to correct. Chair Bergwerf expressed discomfort with the fact that, as a Councilmember, he could ignore her request.

Councilmember Ward said that he would never put Director Page in an uncomfortable situation; he repeated that he has done everything possible to ensure that his actions are "on the up and up" between the City and himself.

Councilmember Ward concluded that he loves theater, loves the kids and is happy that Crabpot Players will continue.

Next Meeting Date: 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 11, 2012.

8. Adjourn

**MOTION: Councilmember Ward moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:28 p.m.;
Councilmember Thomas seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk