

RECREATION COMMITTEE

9:00 a.m., Tuesday, September 9, 2014

The regular meeting of the Recreation Committee was held at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 9, 2014 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmember Buckhannon, Chair Carroll, City Administrator Tucker, Director Page, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban, Assistant Director Ferrell and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business. The absence of Councilmember Harrington was excused.

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

2. **Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes**

MOTION: Councilmember Buckhannon moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 7, 2014 as submitted; Chair Carroll seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **Citizens' Comments** – None

4. **Departmental Report for August** – Director Page

According to Director Page, August was a “wind-down” month and September is a “start-up” month. The fall ballet class has eleven (11) participants; it is the largest class recorded for this activity. Dog obedience classes continue to be popular, like gymnastics that starts in September with eight (8) youths participating. Middle school dances will resume in January 2015. A new afternoon pre-school program, called Mini-Minnows, began on September 3rd; it is very much like Tiny Tots and currently has five (5) attendees. Youth tennis, especially for three and four (3-4) year olds, remains extremely popular; participation in the beginner and intermediate classes is also good. Director Page reminded the Committee that yoga classes are held morning, noon and night six (6) days a week. The Director complimented Andy Sinwald, the newly hired Special Events Supervisor, on the Wacky Golf wellness event; he had some very creative ideas. The Keenagers had their first meeting on Wednesday, September 3rd, and fifty (50) seniors played Bingo and socialized. Upcoming events for which staff is preparing are:

- The Community Wellness Fair on Thursday, September 25th from 7:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.; free blood work available for both residents and employees;
- Ghostly Tide Tales on Friday, October 24th at the 28th Avenue beach access between 6:30 and 7:30 p.m.;
- The annual Halloween Carnival on Friday, October 31st beginning at 5:00 p.m.; and
- The 3rd Annual Holiday Street Festival on Saturday, December 6th from 2:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

The 16th Annual Half Rubber Tournament as held on Saturday, August 16th from 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The captains' meetings will be held tonight for adult basketball, softball and soccer; adult table tennis will begin today at 10:00 a.m. Soccer practices for youth of all ages begin this week; a certain degree of improvisation will be required this year since the fields are being rehabilitated.

Since volleyball season is in full swing in the schools, participation in Spike Nights will pick up; the first session was Thursday, September 4th. All of the athletic camps went well. In addition, all of the Recreation Department's staff participated in Darkness to Light training. Nick Bako painted and installed new plastic strips on the message boards, painted the white lines on Palm Boulevard every Thursday and, responding to a call for assistance from the Public Works Director, pressure-washed the shower area at the Front Beach restrooms.

Referring to the incident at the last middle school dance, Chair Carroll asked whether changes have been contemplated as they resume. Director Page responded that staff has decided to follow Mount Pleasant's policy of selling tickets in advance, but they continue to brainstorm, taking advantage of the new perspectives available.

Chair Carroll also asked how the two (2) new supervisors were doing, and the Director answered, "They are doing awesome!" Director Page reported that they are asking good questions and that procedure outlines have been developed for every event and for all sports in an effort to make the job easier for new personnel.

On the subject of the ball fields, the Director reported that they have been stripped and sand has been brought in; she expects the next tasks to be to level and crown the fields before the irrigation is installed. Overall, the work is going as planned.

5. Old Business

A. Discussion of IOP Connector Run

The race will begin promptly at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 4th; packet pickup this year will be on Friday in the Lobby of East Cooper Medical Center, one of the bigger sponsors, from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Registration and packet pickup on race day will be at the Public Safety Building beginning at 6:00 a.m.

B. Update on Social Media

Administrator Tucker reported that the City has launched on both Facebook and Twitter and has been live about two (2) weeks.

Assistant Dziuban noted that social media works best when it get lots of attention, i.e. when people make comments that are responded to, when there are after work or weekend stuff. She assured the Committee that the City staff will do the best job possible, but it will not be the kind of job that would be done if the City had a media team or a dedicated employee. She encouraged Committee members to prompt her when they think useful.

Chair Carroll recalled that the primary purpose in the City's getting into social media was to be an information giver about what is being done throughout the island.

6. New Business

Discussion of Recreation Department Goals

Chair Carroll stated that he had requested that this item be placed on the *Agenda* for all Committee members to be aware of what the immediate and future goals of the Department are, despite the fact that they may not be funded in the near future.

Director Page located the Master Plan for the Recreation Center that was developed in 2002 and provided copies for Committee members; copies are attached to the historical record of the meeting. The conceptual drawing includes the gymnasium, but does not include a swimming pool which has been discussed over the years.

The Director recalled that work began on the Master Plan in 1998; the City broke ground in 2003; and the expansion was completed and occupied in 2004. Presumably due to cost, the gymnasium was not built, and the hallway was constructed to be wider than planned in anticipation of future construction of a gym. Director Page did not hesitate to state that the biggest need is a new gymnasium; the Department has so many teams in youth basketball and volleyball that there is little space for practices and games, such as 3-on-3 adult basketball. The original idea had been to turn the existing gym into an auxiliary gym/multi-purpose room; currently the Palmetto/Magnolia Room is used as the multi-purpose space, and frequently it is not large enough to house things the staff would like to do.

Additionally, there is recurring chatter about constructing a swimming pool; in the Director's opinion, pools are great things, but they are very expensive to maintain. She stated that many municipalities have abandoned pools because of the expense and evolving DHEC regulations.

Administrator Tucker pointed out that the pool is included in the colored drawing of the vision for the Recreation Center; she asked for clarification on whether it was to be a regulation-sized pool or a lap pool. Councilmember Buckhannon stated that it was to be a twenty-five yard (25 yd.) pool

Councilmember Buckhannon, who has two (2) teenage sons who swim competitively, reported that the short-course season runs from about now until May, so they travel the state because there are not enough twenty-five yard (25 yd.) pools to manage meets. Each meet is a huge revenue-maker to the local municipality from those who travel putting "heads in beds" in those locations. Since he has become involved in the swimming community, he has supported having a pool because it would bring considerable income to the island's hotels and restaurants in the off-season. These events are typically three or four (3-4) day affairs.

Chair Carroll asked whether communities charge residents a fee for access to the pool; Director Page said that she has seen it done both ways. She added that a fine balance exists between swim teams using the pool and residents using the pool.

Chair Carroll asked if the Recreation Department had any immediate needs and was there anything that residents have been asking about a lot. The Director responded that, if a resident wants a particular activity or program, staff tries to provide it if possible; sometimes these new

programs are well-received, but sometimes they are not. She was not aware of any requests from residents and noted that the most frequently asked question from newcomers is about a pool.

Administrator Tucker asked for clarification on certain points Councilmember Buckhannon had made earlier; she inquired about a short-course. The Councilmember stated that there are both short- and long-course seasons; a long-course is a fifty meter (50 meter) pool and typically supports a year-round swimming program.

Director Page reported that the Charleston County Parks and Recreation Department is discussing having one (1) aquatic facility to serve the county; a major issue is deciding who the partners would be.

Questioning whether normal IOP accommodation rates would be conducive to drawing families to the island if the City had a pool and hosted swim meets in the off-season, the Administrator asked Councilmember Buckhannon what he has found to be typical rates for accommodations when he travels with his family to meets throughout the state. The Councilmember responded that the lowest he remembers paying is one hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125) per night, but has paid as much as two hundred twenty-five dollars (\$225) per night in larger, metropolitan areas.

Administrator Tucker continued by inquiring whether the pools were enclosed, and the Councilmember replied that some are, but others, like Hilton Head and downtown Charleston, have a bubble added in the winter months.

Administrator Tucker indicated that the ability to put "heads in beds" in the off-season has not been a factor when, in the past, consideration has been given to constructing a pool.

Both the need for parking and the popularity of the dog park were mentioned as factors to take into account.

Chair Carroll acknowledged the fact that the City had contracted with Lloyd's for flood insurance for the Recreation Center, and, since the City has proven that the structure is flood-proof, he asked whether the other insurance company was re-evaluating the situation for the future. The Administrator reported that staff is now addressing the same issue with Fire Station 2; in her opinion, it is a "Catch 22" between three (3) entities in that:

- The designer will state that he designed the building to be water-tight, but he does not know that the builder built it according to his design;
- The builder will state that he built it according to the design specifications;
- But neither the designer's nor the builder's insurance companies will allow them to make the statement that the building is water-tight.

The City is, therefore, in the middle of a liability battle while FEMA has said that they will only accept a statement that the building is water-tight, and they prefer to have it from the engineer whose legal counsel will not allow them to make the statement.

What the City did for the Recreation Building was to get both the builder and the engineer, on the engineer's letterhead, to write letters stating "I designed it that way" and "I built it that way," and FEMA has not accepted them.

Administrator Tucker stated that she understood that a congressional inquiry on FEMA that was launched by Representative Sottile's phone call to Congressman Tim Scott's office about the problem. The Administrator speculates that this is a way that FEMA and insurance companies are trying to unload what they think is a risk policy.

The message this experience has sent to the community is to elevate every time; it is better to go to the expense to elevate to insure a flood-proof structure for insurance purposes or the City must initiate a program to self-insure for flood coverage.

Chair Carroll stated that he could not imagine having an elevated Recreation Center with as many people passing through the doors every day, especially children and the Keenagers; he expressed the opinion that an elevator would probably be necessary.

7. Miscellaneous Business

Discussion of Appreciation Event

Administrator Tucker commented that the Holiday Street Festival has become very successful and the City wants to continue to build on that success, but it comes about the same time that the City has typically held the appreciation event in December. Holding the two (2) events so close together takes a lot of City resources at holiday time when employees want to be with their families. Staff's alternative proposal is to continue focusing on making the Holiday Street Festival as successful as it can be, and, in lieu of the kind of event held at the Windjammer, the City look to have some kind of appreciation event for Council and Boards and Commission members in the fall that is much smaller than the December event has been. Attendees would be Councilmembers and their families, boards and commission members with their families, and what staff is needed to support that.

The Administrator pointed out that attendance at the holiday party has fallen off, and it is a lot of work for only light participation. She noted that many employees hold second jobs and must take a night off of they choose to attend the holiday party at a time of year when the extra money is needed.

Staff is proposing an hor d'oeuvres kind of gathering; an event on a much smaller scale than those at the Windjammer, one where there is no need to transform the facility and can accommodate the group to keep the focus on the street festival.

Councilmember Buckhannon stated that the typical holiday party asked employees to come back to the island after a days' work, and many cannot afford to rent a room for the night, but must drive home afterward.

Administrator Tucker explained that the City does provide each employee with a gift card at the holidays; she suggested increasing the cards from thirty-five dollars (\$35) to fifty dollars (\$50).

Chair Carroll stated that he loved the Holiday Street Festival that was open to all residents of the island, children to seniors, and, in his opinion, the festival was more important than having a party for elected officials and members of boards and commissions that few employees attend. He supported the idea of increasing the value of the gift card. The Chair recommended that this item be on the Ways and Means Agenda for discussion by elected body.

Next Meeting: 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, October 7, 2014 in the Conference Room

8. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Buckhannon moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:43 a.m.; Chair Carroll seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland