

RECREATION COMMITTEE
4:00 p.m., Thursday, January 6, 2011

The regular meeting of the Recreation Committee was held at 4:00 p.m., Thursday, January 6, 2011 at the Recreation Center located at 24 Twenty-eighth Avenue, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bergwerf, Buckhannon and Duffy, City Administrator Tucker, Recreation Director Page, Police Lieutenant Wright and City Clerk Copeland. A quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Past Chair Buckhannon 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. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Councilmember Duffy nominated Councilmember Bergwerf for the position of Committee Chair; Councilmember Buckhannon seconded and the nomination was approved unanimously. Councilmember Buckhannon nominated Councilmember Duffy for Vice-Chair; Chair Bergwerf seconded and the nomination passed unanimously.

3. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

MOTION: Councilmember Buckhannon moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of November 3, 2010 as submitted; Vice-Chair Duffy seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Citizens' Comments – None

5. Departmental Reports for November and December 2010 – Director Page

Director Page reported that activity was in full swing as winter sports winded down and registrations were continuing for spring sports. According to the Director, the newest activity, Hoops and Hoop Basics, a form of dance fitness using the hula hoop, has attracted a large number of participants. Twenty-two (22) Keenagers made their annual trip to California Dreaming for dinner and a trip through the Festival of Lights at the James Island County Park. The final Middle School dance of 2010 drew two hundred (200) young people. All of the Department's School's Out Activities have been a huge success; activities in December included decorating a ginger-bread house, basketball and dodge ball, as well as a day of relays and tag. For the employee Wellness Program, fitness miles winners were Laura McLellan for October, Russell Roper for November and Rhonda Gibbons for December; the November Lunch and Learn informed employees about diabetes and, in January, will discuss workplace injury prevention. The first half-rubber tournament in the area will be held Saturday, March 26th. Youth basketball games begin this week; the Department held a free-throw competition in December that attracted twenty-four (24) youths. In December, seventy (70) children enjoyed the cookie decorating activity, and Director Page believes that the largest crowd ever took part in the tree lighting ceremony on Front Beach. The Recreation Department productions continue to get better and better; "Miracle on 34th Street" was sold out for all four (4) performances, and plans are underway to present "Peter Pan" in the spring. Upcoming events include the Lowcountry Blues Bash the first weekend in February, "Doggie Day at the Rec" the last weekend in February and the Easter Egg Hung on Saturday, April 23rd. In conclusion, Director

Page reported that Community Specialist Carol Keller has resigned; therefore, the Director is reviewing resumes and scheduling interviews.

6. Old Business – None

7. New Business

Discussion of 2011 East Cooper Triathlon

Administrator Tucker explained that the event began when Sullivan's Island and the City were approached by Mount Pleasant to hold a triathlon east of the Cooper River; Gary Santos, a Mount Pleasant Councilmember, Tom O'Rourke of Charleston County Parks and Recreation and Paul King, race director, were among the key supporters of the event. As the years have passed, the bulk of the responsibility and liability for the event have fallen to the City of Isle of Palms in that the swimming, biking and running take place here. In each of the last three (3) years, the after-action reports done by the Police Department detail activities observed during the event indicating that the event presents too great a risk to the City to be continued. (The referenced after-action reports are attached to the historical record of this meeting.)

The Administrator related that, two (2) years ago, the City had appealed to the organizers prior to the race for changes to be initiated to provide better safety measures for the participants; among the requests made to the organizer was for participants to stay in the breakdown lanes when traversing the IOP Connector, whether biking or running, and was to limit the number of participants to one hundred eighty (180) people. When the race occurred, participants biked in the vehicular lanes, indicating that the race officials had not impressed this issue upon the participants, and over two hundred (200) participants were counted.

Based on what has happened over the years, Administrator Tucker stated that the best scenario would be for the City to withdraw its support from the triathlon completely. If that is not possible, the second best scenario, in the Administrator's opinion, would be to explain the problems that have occurred, require that the race planners devise a route that does not involve the risk factors or the City will cease to participate. Presently the race begins in the County Park, the runners leave and return to the island over the Connector, the same thing occurs on bicycles, and, all the while, cars are coming to and leaving the island; the swimming segment concludes on the Isle of Palms, as well.

Administrator Tucker noted that, as the time for the race has approached, she has contacted the other entities involved; Andy Benke of Sullivan's Island has indicated that Sullivan's Island cannot handle anything more than the biking portion they participate in currently. A meeting is scheduled for early next week with Eric DeMoura, Mount Pleasant City Administrator, and Ken Ayoub, Recreation Director; the Administrator wanted to get input from this Committee and the Public Safety Committee on the City's position about continued involvement in the East Cooper Triathlon to discuss at the meeting with the Mount Pleasant officials.

Lieutenant Wright added that, originally, the municipalities agreed to hold the event for five (5) years, but it has continued for six (6) years with the seventh scheduled to occur in 2011. The Lieutenant stated that he and Chief Buckhannon agree that the Connector and part of 14th

Avenue must be closed if the event is to continue as it has in the past, although closure would not be advisable at the beginning of the tourist season.

Due to the number of participants, all Police Department personnel, except the three (3) officers who worked the night before, are activated to manage the event; the Fire Department also has additional personnel on duty.

Councilmember Buckhannon asked about the number of public safety personnel sent from Mount Pleasant to supplement the City's personnel. Lieutenant Wright responded that more assistance was available from Mount Pleasant in 2009 and 2010, but, due to the level of risk, he does not think the event is covered by enough public safety employees. He reported that one year Mount Pleasant had sent a Boy Scout troop to assist.

Lieutenant Wright informed the Committee that the person who organizes the East Cooper Triathlon makes his livelihood organizing various races in the Lowcountry; this event is a for-profit enterprise, not a fund-raiser for a local charity.

Director Page remarked that, when an event is not sponsored by the community, the best interests of that community are not recognized.

Lieutenant Wright stated that the recommendation from the Police Department was that the City no longer sponsors the event.

MOTION: Councilmember Duffy moved for the Isle of Palms to cease its involvement with the East Cooper Triathlon based on historic events and the lack of adherence to changes requested for the safety of race participants; Councilmember Buckhannon seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ken Ayoub, Mount Pleasant Recreation Director, arrived explaining that he had the meeting time as 4:30 p.m., not 4 p.m.; he apologized for his tardiness.

Administrator Tucker informed Mr. Ayoub of the Committee's decision to withdraw from the event and reminded him of the Public Safety Committee meeting of Tuesday, January 12 at 5:30 p.m. in the Public Safety Building where the subject of the City's participation in the East Cooper Triathlon will be discussed again.

8. Miscellaneous Business

Next Meeting Date: 4:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 1, 2011.

9. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Buckhannon moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 p.m.; Councilmember Duffy seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:
Marie Copeland, City Clerk