

# **Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission**

## **WORK SESSION MINUTES**

May 22, 2024  
Seven Oaks Park  
6:00PM

Members Attending: Bill Harmon, Michael Cromer, Dr. Akil Ross, Laura Huggins, Dr. Gerrick Hampton

Non-Members Attending: Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf

Mark Smyers presented an overview of the agenda items as follows:

Mr. Smyers shared that Andrew Cheatham with KBS will present an update on the Saluda Greenway trail; this includes cost estimates, funds, refining design to include a removal of a pedestrian bridge, lease lighting, conduit, and contractor adjustments. Mr. Smyers communicated that concessions were made in order to meet the budget; the 12-foot width is needed in the high congested areas; the non-congested areas will reduce to 10-foot width. Discussion occurred regarding the cost of lighting; currently ICRC park trails are not lit. Mr. Smyers shared that the point of tonight's presentation is to bring the Commission up-to-date on the status of the Greenway trail; the timeline includes that contracts could potentially be in place by Labor Day. Discussion occurred regarding lighting at night, operational hours, entry points onto the Greenway Trail, camera opportunities, kiosks, and the lease timeline for lighting. Mark Smyers shared that staff continue to work with the architects and engineers to fine tune the project and stay on target with budget.

Mr. Smyers stated that the budget adoption and budget amendment are on the agenda for Commission approval; additionally staff is requesting to move two years of reserve funds from fund 10 to fund 15 (\$1.4M). Commissioner Huggins asked what rate does the agency receive on the reserve funds. Mark Smyers stated that the funds are in a money market and in two years the agency earned approximately \$61K. Vice Chairman Cromer stated the rate is in the high 3s and collateralized. Mr. Smyers shared that the agenda includes an Executive Session to discuss a contract for the purchase of property. Discussion occurred regarding LWCF and mitigating a federal requirement under LWCF by purchasing property for public use. Mr. Smyers shared that in order for LWCF to accept the mitigation submission the Commission minutes must read, "the acquisition of said property will be utilized to satisfy the LWCF property conversion." Vice Chairman Cromer asked if a contract had been signed. Mr. Smyers stated no; the closing will likely be in June 2024.

Mark Smyers discussed policies and shared policy change recommendations from the Commission. Discussion occurred regarding the policy on personnel files, the performance evaluation policy, the anti-harassment policy, and the dress code policy. Mark Smyers shared that policy BF-6.25 is replaced by the media relations policy; discussion occurred regarding recommended changes to the termination policy. Mr. Smyers communicated that the employment at will policy is no longer needed; the employment at will statement is included at the top of each personnel policy.

There being no further discussion, the Commission moved into General Session.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eve Mittendorf  
Recording Secretary  
IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION

**Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission  
GENERAL SESSION**

May 22, 2024  
Seven Oaks Park  
7:00PM

Members Attending: Bill Harmon, Michael Cromer, Dr. Akil Ross, Laura Huggins, Dr. Gerrick Hampton

Non-Members Attending: Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf, Jay Downs, John Cantey, Alfred Comfort, Andrew Cheatham

Bill Harmon called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. Chairman Harmon delivered the invocation. Guests were welcomed.

**I. REQUIREMENTS OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**

The news media was notified of the meeting; it was posted on the website and a notice and agenda was posted at the park sites one week prior to the meeting.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO ACCEPT THE APRIL 24, 2024 AND MAY 15, 2024 MINUTES AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

**III. PUBLIC PRESENTATION**

A. Andrew Cheatham, KBS – Saluda Greenway Phase I Update

Andrew Cheatham presented the Lower Saluda Greenway Project 1 update including maps, survey and budget information; all survey work is completed for project 1 from Hwy 6 to Saluda Shoals Park; project 2 runs from Saluda Shoals Park to Gardendale; the geotechnical studies are completed; the alignment and wetlands analysis is being refined; the wetlands are either being avoided, or a boardwalk will be built with the intent for minimal impact. Mr. Cheatham shared that project 1 total allocated budget for construction is \$5.77M; the estimated cost came in at \$9.9M; after a professional estimator reviewed the estimate and with changes was able to find \$700K - \$800K in savings. Andrew Cheatham communicated that some of the overage was due to an 8% per year increase in costs since 2020; also, the feasibility study did not include electrical and lighting. Mr. Cheatham stated that there are two options, ICRC can lease the lighting from Dominion for \$60K per year in perpetuity or purchase for approximately \$2M; the electrical, fiber and cameras are not included in the \$6M; at a minimum it is advisable to add the conduit infrastructure for future use. Mr. Cheatham shared by reducing the trail to 10ft at non-high traffic areas, changing the location and re-aligning a bridge resulted in reducing the size of the bridge from 125ft to 50ft, which has saved money; additionally the cost of the trailhead restrooms was not included in the feasibility study.

Andrew Cheatham also shared with the Commission the location of the gates, maintenance building, office, and restrooms; the purpose of the long driveway is to get the cars off of Bush River Road. Mr. Cheatham discussed the grade, entrance points, fencing and the permitting required from the EPA; the waiting period for the permits could be six months to one year; additionally DNR requires the trail to be 25ft away from the scenic river. Mark Smyers shared

that the feasibility study includes a 10% contingency (\$6M); this amount is above the allocated budget of \$5.7M.

Commissioner Huggins inquired if the budgeted amount includes the add-ons. Andrew Cheatham stated the budgeted amount does not include lighting, wood bridges, nor site amenities such as benches, picnic tables, trash cans, etc. Mark Smyers stated that the staff's goal is to get close to the budgeted amount and then work with the contractor on opportunities to make changes.

Andrew Cheatham communicated that the project 1 timeline includes design and engineering by August 1<sup>st</sup>, permitting completed by September 30<sup>th</sup>, contract negotiation and award by November 4<sup>th</sup>, notice to proceed by November 15<sup>th</sup>; and complete in 18 months.

Chairman Harmon thanked Andrew Cheatham for the presentation.

**IV. STAFF REPORTS** – were accepted as presented.

**V. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PROPERTY AND CONTRACTUAL MATTERS. SECONDED BY LAURA HUGGINS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

The Executive Session was called to order by Bill Harmon at 7:15pm.

Items related to contractual and property matters were discussed; no action was taken during the Executive Session.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION. SECONDED BY DR. GERRICK HAMPTON. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

A. FY 23/24 Budget Amendment

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO ACCEPT THE FY 23/24 BUDGET AMENDMENT AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY LAURA HUGGINS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

B. FY 24/25 Budget Adoption

A MOTION WAS MADE BY LAURA HUGGINS TO ACCEPT THE FY 24/25 BUDGET ADOPTION AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

C. Emergency Reserve Fund Transfer

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION REGARDING AN EMERGENCY RESERVE FUND TRANSFER. SECONDED BY LAURA HUGGINS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

D. Property Purchase

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO APPROVE THE ACQUISITION OF SAID PROPERTY WHICH WILL BE UTILIZED TO SATISFY THE LWCF PROPERTY CONVERSION. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION APPROVED.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO APPROVE THE SALE OF THE PROPERTY DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION. SECONDED BY LAURA HUGGINS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

E. Policy Approval: BF-6.36 through BF-6.38, BF-6.41, and B-6.42

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO APPROVE BF-6.25, BF-6.36 THROUGH BF6.38, BF6.41, AND BF-6.42 AS EDITED. SECONDED BY DR. GERRICK HAMPTON. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION APPROVED.

## **VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Smyers thanked the Commission for their support and for approving the proposed budget; staff have put in a lot of work pulling the plan and budget together. Mr. Smyers also thanked Andrew Cheatham for his presentation and the time and effort taken to get to this point in the process; the greenway project is going to be a significant milestone in this community's history. Mark Smyers shared that summer is gearing up to be very busy; early reports on camp registration and Summer Safari show that all three parks are filling up quickly. Mr. Smyers communicated that the Slip, Slide, and Splash event is moving to Seven Oaks Park in mid-June.

Mr. Smyers shared that Mungo Park is seeing a facelift to its front entrance. Mr. Smyers communicated that The Mungo Foundation has been working hard over the last month; the permits are in place to improve the sight lines, install a front split rail fence, install an irrigation well and lines, and begin to install new entry and exit road curbing; additionally, The Mungo Foundation have partnered with The Creek to remove and replace the old dilapidated fencing, clear out the overgrown areas, and start to landscape. Mark Smyers also communicated that The Mungo Foundation are planning to repair the asphalt road, finish the landscaping and install a new moment sign out front of Mungo Park; all of this has been a donation to the park and will greatly improve the park's ability to be inviting to our visitors and draw people in. Mr. Smyers communicated that the Mungo's and the Mungo Foundation have been tremendous in helping ICRC create something special and staff cannot thank them enough for what they are doing and all they have contributed.

## **VII. COMMISSION RESPONSE**

Commissioner Huggins thanked staff for the monthly reports provided in the Commission package; amazing information is tracked, monitored and presented. Commissioner Huggins thanked Andrew Cheatham for the update on the greenway trail; this is an exciting project, and the public is going to be thrilled when completed. Commissioner Ross thanked the staff and echoed Commissioner Huggins' comments on the greenway trail. Vice Chairman Cromer shared excitement on the progress of the greenway trail; the parking, building and trail head look fantastic. Vice Chairman Cromer thanked staff for their hard work on the policy updates. Commissioner Gerrick shared excitement about the greenway trail and commended the Executive Director and staff on their ability to pivot and adjust to change when needed. Commissioner Gerrick also commended staff on the slip, side and splash special event. Chairman Harmon stated that it is great to see the greenway plans come together. Chairman Harmon shared appreciation to Alfred Comfort for monitoring the finances and maximizing the dollars. Chairman Harmon also thanked Mark Smyers on the successful property acquisition and thanked staff for all they do.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:43 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eve Mittendorf, Recording Secretary  
IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION