

Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission
SALUDA SHOALS RIVERWALK SITE TOUR
WORK SESSION MINUTES
May 27, 2026

Saluda Shoals Riverwalk
Site Tour
5:30pm

Seven Oaks Park
Work Session
6:30PM

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

Non-Members Attending: Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf

Site tour of the Saluda Shoals Riverwalk was conducted by Mark Smyers, Executive Director. Discussion occurred regarding the Riverwalk; no business or action was taken.

A work session was held at Seven Oaks Park. Mark Smyers reviewed the May 27, 2026 agenda. Discussion occurred regarding audit process, request for approval of the budget and accuracy of the accounting systems. Commissioner Huggins asked if staff are confident about the accuracy of the budget. Mr. Smyers stated yes that staff are confident that the budget and numbers for the year are correct; the auditors are reviewing the previous year. Mark Smyers shared that previous year's budgets are considered in the budgeting process, but staff build the annual budget from the ground up each year. Vice Chairman Cromer inquired about the completion of the audit. Mark Smyers stated that a final date has not been given. Commissioner Ross asked if there are any regulatory reporting issues regarding the completion of the audit. Mr. Smyers stated the audit must be completed before debt can be issued. Commissioner Huggins stated that she will abstain from agenda items regarding the Phase I Springhill Change Order and the Budget Amendment for the Meech House Tea Room Floor. Commissioner Ross stated that he will abstain from the ICRC & Lex Rich School District V Land Lease Agreement Addendum.

Mark Smyers reported that the original EDA grant application for the RV/Campground project excluded a restroom due to floodway building restrictions. While a subsequent feasibility study identified an option to add a restroom within the existing David House building, this addition fell outside the grant application original scope of work and was excluded. Mr. Smyers noted that staff appealed to include the restroom as part of the grant request, but the appeal was denied, resulting in an additional \$495,000 expense renovating the trailhead building, gate operations and restrooms. Discussion occurred regarding a strategy to fund the additional expense.

Mr. Smyers distributed conceptual drawings of a pedestrian bridge; discussions occurred regarding location, design, and partnerships. Mr. Smyers shared a conceptual drawing of the Trailside Retreat at the Woodland Center (aka Environmental Education Center). Mark Smyers distributed the FY26/27 budget sheets for funds 10, 20 and 40. Commissioner Huggins inquired about the increase in fringes. Mr. Smyers replied that wage and fringe increases reflect the salary study recommendation and new position. Vice Chairman Cromer asked about the \$450,000 capital outlay not included in the current budget. Mark Smyers explained that the amount reflects transfer into the emergency reserve. Commissioner Ross communicated that the percent of the salary and fringe seem low. Mr. Smyers replied that the agency runs lean.

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 27, 2026
Seven Oaks Park
7:00PM

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

Non-Members Attending: Mark Smyers, Eve Mittendorf, Jay Downs, Adrian Wright, Jason White, Andrea Harris, Debra Hudson

Chairman Harmon called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. 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 in accordance with Freedom of Information Act requirements.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO ACCEPT THE APRIL 22, 2026 MINUTES AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY LAURA HUGGINS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

III. STAFF REPORTS – were accepted as presented.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. ICRC & School District V Land Lease Agreement Addendum

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MICHAEL CROMER TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY LAURA HUGGINS. DR. AKIL ROSS ABSTAINED FROM THE VOTE. MICHAEL CROMER, DR. GERRICK HAMPTON, AND LAURA HUGGINS VOTED TO APPROVE. MOTION PASSED.

B. Ratification – St. Francis Outreach Grant Approval

Chairman Harmon stated staff is requesting approval to apply for the St. Francis Outreach Committee Grant; the award is typically between \$2000 - \$5000.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY LAURA HUGGINS TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY DR. GERRICK HAMPTON. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

C. Ratification – Chapin Woman's Club Funding Grant

Chairman Harmon stated staff is requesting approval to ratify and accept a \$1500 grant award from the Chapin Women's Club.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY LAURA HUGGINS TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

D. Saluda Shoals Riverwalk – Phase I Springhill Change Order

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. GERRICK HAMPTON TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. LAURA HUGGINS ABSTAINED FROM THE VOTE. MICHAEL CROMER, DR. GERRICK HAMPTON, AND DR. AKIL ROSS VOTED TO APPROVE. MOTION PASSED.

E. Saluda Shoals Riverwalk – Phase I Wiley Easton Change Order

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MICHAEL CROMER TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY LAURA HUGGINS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

F. Budget Amendment – Meech House Tea Room Floor

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. LAURA HUGGINS ABSTAINED FROM THE VOTE. MICHAEL CROMER, DR. GERRICK HAMPTON, AND DR. AKIL ROSS VOTED TO APPROVE. MOTION PASSED.

G. Budget Amendment FY 25/26 – Short Term Bond

Chairman Harmon stated staff recommends allocating \$92,000 of the undesignated FY 25/26 short term bond funds to the approved projects as presented.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MICHAEL CROMER TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY DR. AKIL ROSS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

H. Budget Amendment FY 25/26 – Operational Contingency

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. GERRICK HAMPTON TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY DR. AKIL ROSS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

I. Budget Approval – FY 26/27

Chairman Harmon stated staff is requesting approval of the final combined budget of \$16,156,928 for FY26/27.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Smyers shared that staff transitioned from afterschool safari operations to summer programs; the community centers are packed with kids participating in Summer Camps and Summer Safari. Mark Smyers communicated that Saluda Shoals is gearing up for tube and kayak rentals, busy weekends, and more camps; staff have put in a lot of work planning and preparing team members for the summer.

Mark Smyers shared that the ribbon cutting for Phase 1 of the Saluda Shoals Riverwalk is scheduled for August; the bid for Phase 2 of the Riverwalk has been posted, completion of Phase 1 of the Environmental Center is underway, the new turtle art sculpture at Saluda Shoals Park had its debut, and the master planning conversation across the district continues. Mr. Smyers shared that staff are aiming to host the Mungo Park public meeting on June 16th and also host a Lake Murray Pedestrian Bridge Public meeting sometime later in the summer. Mark Smyers stated that the progress of the agency will be monumental and serve the community for generations to come.

Mr. Smyers thanked the Board for their support and for the approval of the budget; staff put in a lot of work developing the plan. Mr. Smyers stated that ICRC has wonderful people and wonderful leaders and thanked them for their effort every day.

VI. COMMISSION RESPONSE

Dr. Akil Ross expressed appreciation for the extensive work done on the budget, noting that it positions the district well for future growth while remaining mindful of costs; and extended

his gratitude and "hats off" to leadership and staff for their dedication. Dr. Gerrick Hampton echoed Dr. Ross's sentiments, expressing excitement for the district's trajectory and the newly presented budget. He also commended staff for their ongoing effort in assisting the public. Michael Cromer shared his appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the Chase Loveless golf tournament, praising it as a well-run event for a worthy cause, and added his thanks to the team for their work on the budget. Laura Huggins noted that she is looking forward to the upcoming "Corks and Kayaks" event and reported that plans for the August ribbon cutting are exciting. She also highlighted the success of the turtle art project and thanked Alfred Comfort for his contributions to the budget. Chairman Harmon expressed his eminent trust in the staff, emphasizing how well the team pulls together to implement and finalize amazing initiatives. He also noted positive excitement surrounding recent social media feedback.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:33pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Eve Mittendorf, Recording Secretary

IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION