

BEAUFORT COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

County Council Chambers
Thursday, August 5, 2021
2:30 PM

Board Members Present:

Bruce Yeager, *Chairman*
Bill Brown, *Military Representative*
James Mack, *Hilton Head Island*
Erac Priester, *Bluffton*
Mike Manesiotis, *Hilton Head Island*
Phil Kaiser, *Bluffton*

Board Members Absent:

Ronald Campbell
Carlos Cave
William McCullough

Staff Members Present:

Matt Watts, *Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation*
Antoinette Binette, *Aquatics Manager, Parks and Recreation*
Ethan Harris, *Beaufort Athletic Supervisor, Parks and Recreation*
Justin Petock, *Bluffton Athletic Supervisor, Parks and Recreation*
Kevin Reynolds, *Bluffton Athletic Supervisor, Parks and Recreation*
Darrell Ketola, *Bluffton Athletic Supervisor, Parks and Recreation*
Evan Christian, *Athletics Manager, Parks and Recreation*
Frank Soule, *Executive Director, Hilton Head Island Recreation Association*
Dave Hofmann, *Senior Softball, Founder and Coach*
Rick Trenary, *Senior Softball, Coach*
Chuck Atkinson, *Beaufort County Development & Recreation Division*
Shannon Loper, *Director, Parks and Recreation*

Guests Present:

Jason Smalls, *Citizen*
Kamal Wigfall, *Gullah Geechee Initiative Foundation*
Ayanna Washington, *Citizen*
Geraldine (last name inaudible), *Citizen*
Gary Sterling, *Citizen, St. Helena Island*
Tayvon Barnwell, *Citizen, Beaufort*
Jeremiah Barns, *Citizen*
Candice Wilson, *Citizen*
City Brannon, *Community Leader, St. Helena Island*

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by **Bruce Yeager**.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were completed.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mike Manesiotis moves to approve agenda. **Eric Preister** seconds. **James Mack** says that he was not marked present on the minutes from the last meeting despite being in attendance. Bruce Yeager notes and acknowledges this. **Motion carries to make change and approve agenda.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment is limited to three minutes per person.

- **Kamal Wigfall** introduces himself for public comment, on behalf of the Gullah Geechee Initiative Foundation. He asks if there are any plans to restore the bathrooms at Gloria Potts, Broomfield, and Scott Community Centers. He reminds the board that according to a Ballard King study completed in 2013 and according to board minutes of February 29, 2016; the board is asked to encourage private and nonprofit organizations to provide recreation programs and services at county facilities. He, along with 300 signatures from citizens, asks the board why there is not yet a proposal request to facilitate programs at the Northern Beaufort County Centers. He thanks the board for their continued service.
- **Gary Sterling** introduces himself for public comment. He expresses great concern that the Scott Community Center is not being utilized. He would like the youth in his area to be able to use the facility in order to encourage them to stay away from risky behaviors. He states other than a sports camp last week, the facility is not in use. He states that \$400 per day rental fee is exorbitant. He suggests that the St. Helena community at large are willing to help with cleaning and upkeep, and to give the people a chance to own the center. He thanks the board.
- **Jason Smalls** introduces himself for public comment. He is a retired first sergeant that grew up utilizing the Scott Community Center. He echoes the sentiment that the facility is not being used so that the kids have somewhere to go. He is gravely concerned about the safety of kids in his community who are not using the center.
- **Ayanna Washington** introduces herself for public comment. She echoes concern of other public commenters and states that certain communities are being neglected all over the county. She states that she met with Shannon Loper and councilman Gerald Dawson, completed an informal community survey, and submitted to Gerald Dawson a detailed program agenda request with purpose and expected outcomes included.

- **Tiana Parker** introduces herself for public comment. She has concerns about the accessibility of programs for the children in St. Helena, Sheldon, Seabrook and Dale areas. These children are not yet driving and often must go all the way to Burton Wells for programs. This is difficult because often both parents are working. If more programs cannot be offered at areas of concern, then offering transportation should be discussed.
- **City Brannon** introduces herself for public comment. She is a community leader and educator. She asks for a unified response to fighting crime and deaths of black and brown youth. She states the need for basic recreation to help children.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF JANUARY MINUTES

Bruce Yeager offers corrections to minutes. Page five, under truck fees, the third sentence should say “host free events”. Under “deputy director’s report” the word “profits” should be changed to “\$45000 in revenues or fees”, not “profits”. **Bill Brown motions to approve January meeting minutes. Mike Manesiotis seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.**

ISLAND RECREATION UPDATES

Frank Soule speaks. Great summer, despite staffing struggles. Summer camp and special needs camps were full. Successful basketball, volleyball, and fencing camps. Cheer and karate camps were full. There was a full pool schedule. Did water aerobics, lessons, and open swim. Memberships are going up. There is a new free community yoga. Many are taking advantage of Well Beats. Senior Center was busy with a slight drop off due to Covid resurgence. Lowcountry Celebration Park had very successful events over the summer. Fall program registrations are underway. Found that adult basketball is extremely popular. The Town of Hilton Head will be doing a master planning of three parks: Mid Island, Chaplain, and Crossings. He thanks **Matt Watts** and **Shannon Loper** for making Barker Field available, as well as thanks county council for funding pool operations. States concern that Covid may impact fall program registrations. Also has staffing concerns. States that fees will likely have to go up. Over \$250,000 in scholarships have been given out.

SENIOR SOFTBALL LEAGUE

Dave Hofmann introduces himself and **Rick Trenary** for public comment. **Dave Hofmann:** This program began in November 2020. In four months, a league of six teams (comprised of 90 senior players) was begun, with the help of six sponsors. The program is open to anyone 55 and over, and those who show up will be included in the batting order and time in the field. Program is positioned for expansion in the fall. Database of potential players is approximately 240 seniors. **Rick Trenary:** He states that a larger budget is necessary from the County Council for recreation for the people. **Dave Hofmann:** We have a standing meeting once a month with **Evan (Christian)** and **Justin (Petock)** to help coordination of hopefully 120 players this fall. Both **Dave** and **Rick** are willing to volunteer with the county for parks and recreation.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Shannon Loper:

- **Software Update-Rec Desk:** Rec Desk is running and being utilized for fall registrations. MaxGalaxy is still up and is being used for memberships and pool admissions. Additional training set for next week and everything should be moved to Rec Desk by October 1.
- **Master plan update:** Contract was signed and sent to legal.
- **Tennis Court Update:** Downtown tennis court renovation will be put out to bid for next week. Estimated down time is November through May.
- **Pickleball Update:** Shell Point and South Side courts are being converted; half pickleball and half tennis.
- **Buckwalter Update:** Master plan must be reapproved through the Town of Bluffton, then permit can be pulled. There are staffing issues; engineer and surveyor are six to eight weeks out. This is for additional soccer fields and beginning tennis courts.
- **Budget:** Each board member was given the budget in their packets.
 - Shannon requests the board review the subject of memberships that were extended due to a 19 week Covid shutdown. The board discusses and concludes that we will not extend memberships beyond the original 19 weeks, which are expired. The facility has been open and available. **Erac Priester motions to no longer extend memberships due to covid beyond the 19 weeks that has already been available. Bill Brown seconds the motion. Motion passes.**
 - Regarding pool inflatables, the idea is to open Battery Creek pool on Saturdays and Sundays for inflatables use only, to increase pool usage. Suggested entry fee is \$5.00. Board discusses that perhaps a \$5.00 entry

fee is insufficient, and that \$5.00 fee include a two-hour session. **Mike Manesiotis** motions is made to charge \$5.00 for pool usage on a two-hour rolling basis, and this will be on a trial basis for a minimum of 30 days. Motion is seconded by **Bill Brown**. Motion passes.

- Regarding food trucks, the rates charged to truck owners vary. For large established events, charge is between \$150 and \$300. For new events, charge is \$100 to \$150. For small events, i.e., soccer games, charge is \$50-\$100 or a percentage of sales. Food trucks would be used for large events or when concession stands are not available. Board agrees that a flat rate should be charged of \$250-\$300 and that the be properly licensed and insured. **Phil Kaiser** motions, after amended per discussion, for a flat \$200 fee for all events and proper insurance be carried by food truck owners. Motion seconded by **Bill Brown**. Motion passes.
- Concerns have been brought up regarding Parks and Rec Director having the ability to approve the reduction of fees for certain events i.e., terminally ill children, vehicle accidents, etc., because the length of time between Board meetings is too lengthy. **Erac Priester** makes a motion that **Shannon Loper** has authority to waive a one day event fee for any facility, without approval, for the purposes discussed in the meeting. Anything above and beyond that will need to be emailed to the board. Records must be kept that state to whom the fee waiver was given and for what purpose. In the case of a fee waiver or in the case of board approval of further waiver via email, records will be brought to the board at next meeting to be ratified. The motion is seconded. Motion passes.
- Lind Brown, Beaufort, and Bluffton pools have been resurfaced. Battery Creek is yet to be done. Bluffton pool has been closed most of the season, and there has been a wait due to the contractor. Hopeful that today Parks and Rec will receive the go-ahead to reopen the Bluffton pool.
- A slide is displayed of sports camp data. There were camps in the Dale and Scott area, with the Scott area having better participation. **Ethan Harris** states that there has been an effort to offer programs and camps to outlying areas. Included in this effort are weeklong sports camps, with about an hour provided for each age group. All kids are given flyers with information on scholarship funds that are under-utilized, as well as information on other related programs. **James Mack** suggests that he and **Mr. Wigfall** become involved and assist with volunteering and coaching to bring programs to St. Helena, in order to increase usage for the youth in that area.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Matt Watts:

- **Registration Numbers:** A slide is displayed with participation numbers. Summer registration numbers increased. Adult baseball numbers are steady. Church softball numbers remain steady. Adult kickball numbers increased. Fall sports numbers are higher than normal, and registration is not yet complete. Bluffton participation has increased. Youth softball numbers have increased. Fall numbers will be available at the next meeting.
- **Tournaments:** Two tournaments have occurred this summer at Burton Wells. Softball State tournament went well and looking forward to hosting again with the program growing further. Dixie Boys State tournament went well, but number are down across the organization. Hoping for more tournaments next year. **James Mack** asks if other modes of registration are being used, aside from online registration and Facebook. **Matt Watts** explains that previously cards had been distributed to area businesses, and the plan is to do that again. He states that flyers at schools would be beneficial, but that the cost is very high and is done through a service (usually Peachjar). Phone calls are made, and events are attended as well, to get the word out. **Shannon Loper** states that there is a new full time marketing person who will hopefully be able to come up with further solutions. **James Mack** offers assistance in distributing flyers. **Shannon Loper** states that a computer is brought to the camps in order to help facilitate registration. **Bill Brown** states that advertising to churches brings turnout, especially on St. Helena and Lady's Islands. **Shannon Loper** states that the forever calendar has been instrumental, because the dates are the same each year. **Bruce Yeager** encourages public to attend meetings so that the board can respond to the needs of the people.

AQUATICS

Antoinette Binette:

- **Program Updates:** Battery Creek pool offers Boga, group swim lessons, swim team practice, and school swim lesson. At the Beaufort pool, Boga classes, group swim lessons, school swim lesson, and swim team practice are offered. At

the Bluffton pool (once reopened), swim team practice, and FINS swim team will be offered. At the Lind Brown pool, a lifeguarding class is scheduled, and a dog day is scheduled. At all other times during normal business hours, pools are open for open swim. There is a current search for water aerobic instructors.

EMPLOYEE UPDATE

Shannon Loper: The County compensation study has resulted in an expansion of opportunities for new staff. Three full time aquatics assistants are available, two have been offered to individuals and one spot is open. There are six full time and six part time lifeguard openings available. There are seven maintenance positions open. There are four rec aide positions to fill.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next board meeting is Thursday, September 2, 2021 in Beaufort.

QUESTIONS

Phil Kaiser asks if there is anything that can be done to address issues brought to the board today by community members. **Shannon Loper** states that some of these issues are being addressed by administration and worked through. The study will be instrumental in furthering changes and improvements. **James Mack** asks why money is being spent for an expensive study rather than putting money where the needs are; the needs that we already know exist. **Bruce Yeager** expresses the need for hard numbers, via this study, in order to help those people and facilities that require assistance. **Chuck Atkinson** states that many facilities need maintenance immediately. He feels that in the past, the board did not plan far enough ahead. He states that the master plan will give a better overall view, so that we can better plan for the future.

ADJOURN

Erac Preister makes a motion to adjourn. **Bill Brown** seconds the motion. The motion is passed, and the meeting is adjourned.