



Town of Hilton Head Island
Special Workshop
Parks & Recreation Commission
and Parks & Recreation Task Group
Thursday, February 13, 2020 at 2:30 p.m.
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers
MEETING MINUTES

Present from the Commission: Ray Kisiah, Paul Boes, Caroline Rinehart, Jack Daly, Thomas Dowling, Jerry Okarma

Absent from the Board: Mike Ray

Present from the Task Group: John Brighton, Mary Hall, Wes Kitashima, Mike Manesiotis, John Parsons, Pete Savarese, Frank Soule, Pat Zuk

Present from Town Council: Mayor McCann, Glenn Stanford, Tom Lennox, David Ames, Tamara Becker

Present from Town Staff: Marcy Benson, Taylor Ladd, Jennifer Ray, Shawn Colin, Steve Riley

1. Call to Order

Chairman Kisiah called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

3. FOIA Compliance – Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and mailed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

4. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of December 12, 2019

The minutes of December 12, 2019 were approved as presented.

5. New Business

- a. Presentation and discussion with LOSE Design Consultants for the Draft Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Chairman Kisiah started by reading the Parks & Recreation Commission Mission Statement and the Powers and Duties of this Commission. Chairman Kisiah stated the Town's "Recreation and Open Space Plan" was completed in 1995 and outlined parks and recreation facility improvements to be constructed over a period of 20 years.

Chairman Kisiah asked the LOSE Consultants to explain how the plan fulfills the requirements of the contract as stated in the project scope so we can compare what we are getting from LOSE Design and what we asked for.

Chris Camp introduced himself and Will Huger stating this is step one of a multi-step process for Hilton Head Island to improve facilities and delivery of service. Then the next step level will be to master plan each park then determine the priority projects.

Lose Design was hired by the Town to prepare a Parks and Recreation Master Plan based on a process that included stakeholder interviews, focus group meetings, open houses, and a public opinion survey.

Project Overview

Mr. Camp reviewed all six Goals and Objectives. Mr. Camp stated Hilton Head Island is blessed with natural beauty.

Community Profile – Hilton Head Island has a unique community profile consisting of a lot of second home owners, tourist season and an aging demographic.

Sports tourism opportunities can exist but should be developed around facilities designed for the community first. Paddling sports have had significant growth in America. Need to provide access to waterways and offering basic classes in swimming and kayaking.

Pickleball facilities and sand volleyball were identified by public engagement efforts as facilities that are needed by the community. Pickleball is provided at public and private venues across the island, however, public pickleball courts are provided in small numbers which do not allow for large groups to use for informal tournaments.

Sand volleyball also received interest from the community, which is a sport with a relatively small footprint. The design team identified only two sand volleyball courts that are available to the public. Ideally, five to eight courts would be developed to facilitate practices and small tournaments.

Programming Assessment Recommendations:

- All programs should be evaluated on an annual basis.
- Create a guide or policy to be followed when adding or deleting programs.
- Conduct short surveys with participants at the completion of each activity/program to ensure the programs are staying relevant and meeting the needs of the participants.
- Expand alternate non-sports programming for youth and adults.
- Develop a broader offering of adult programs for both young and older adult age groups.
- Study the Three Pillars of NRPA, especially the Conservation area, and look for ways to expand nature-based programs and introductory classes for water-based activities.
- Track participation numbers and analyze three years of data when conducting program evaluations.
- Develop a facility use agreement and review the current facility rental agreements.
- Explore development of senior sports leagues and other senior programming opportunities.
- Expand and make improvements to existing facilities to provide improved programming opportunities as outlined in the facility evaluation section of this master plan.

Staffing recommendations:

Fund a park maintenance supervisor who is an Island Recreation Association employee. The parks maintenance supervisor will be responsible for working with Town and County employees who provide park and greenway maintenance to ensure that maintenance activities are provided at a higher level than current levels. They will work to establish maintenance policies and standards that will be used to establish annual maintenance budgets and capital projects for each park.

Fund an outdoor recreation coordinator position to focus on expanding non-traditional outdoor recreation classes and programs. This staff member would work to implement recommendations covered in the program recommendations.

Update staff organization charts to provide titles that are more consistent with parks and recreation agencies. Current staffing titles use the term director for three levels of staffing. Consider using the title of director only for the Executive Director and change direct reports to the Executive Director to Assistant Director or Superintendent. Director reports to the Assistant Directors or Superintendents should be managers or coordinators.

Budget Assessment:

General Fund Support - This is well below the national average for general fund spending for parks and recreation services.

Generated Revenue - Island Recreation Association should continue to look for ways to maximize revenue production to expand recreation programs and events.

90% of survey respondents indicated they would support or strongly support the Town prioritizing funding of increased quality parks and recreation facilities and programs.

Island Recreation Association revenue recovery is considerably higher than the national average.

Island Recreation Association is generating revenue at a rate comparable to the upper 25% of agencies serving a similar population.

This indicates that current fees and charges are acceptable to the citizens and visitors who use Island Rec facilities and programs are viewed as being a good value.

Recommendations:

- Increase funding from the Town of Hilton Head Island general fund budget to allow for improved maintenance of existing park facilities.
- Continue to look at alternative methods of increasing self-generated revenues to expand programming and special event opportunities.
- Develop a tiered revenue policy to guide fees for programs and events.
- Increase per capita spending so the recreation facilities and programs on Hilton Head Island better reflect the best-in-class image of the island.
- Provide additional funding for Island Rec staff as new park facilities are added to the system.
- Consider other funding alternatives such as naming rights and beverage rights agreements to increase overall per capita funding.

Maintenance Recommendations:

To improve quality of maintenance & consistency:

- Add a Maintenance Manager to Island Rec staff to coordinate with Town and County maintenance crews to ensure higher quality results to meet public expectations.
- Adopt maintenance policies and standards to establish annual maintenance budgets and capital projects

Public Comments:

The following is compilation of comments shared by the public:

- Budgets should be increased to facilitate development of a best-in-class park system.
- Crossings Park received money for building but not for maintenance.
- Many spoke in support of the need for pickleball courts and facility.
- Youth do not have a place to have fun on bicycles – pump park.
- More marketing needed for parks and promoting events.
- Many spoke in support of the need for more public access to waterways.
- Neighborhood parks to walk to.
- Regional approach for larger recreational facilities.
- Rental and onsite storage of kayaks.
- Many spoke in support of the need for outdoor swim facility.
- A need for more physical accessibility/ADA standards – move past minimum.
- Staffing should not be just based on 40,000 but on what our visitor swell numbers are.

Task Group comments:

- County maintenance facilities still an issue even with addition of staff.
- Recommend full department
- Looking for vision and drive, how it ties together
- Get rid of debris management in the parks
- 400 acres of open space not addressed
- Use a cultural resources classification or passive or natural resources or conservation areas to address Town-owned property.
- Aquatics facility
- Alternate funding for maintenance
- Beach parks are in need of additional parking and/or shuttle service.

Comments from Commission:

- Commissioners stated this was a good first start to the plan.
- More programming needed at the north end of the Island.
- Regional /sports tourism; statistically valid.
- Initial recommendation should not be in the Appendix.
- Need a vision; hoping to see several models.
- What about program analysis.
- Regional partnerships.
- Island Recreation Association does a great job but are not in the maintenance business.

Chairman Kisiah wrapped up the meeting stating there is a lot of information and feedback that needs to be absorbed. The Commissioners will work with staff to revise this draft, then present it at another Parks & Recreation Commission meeting, make final revisions to prepare a final plan that will then be recommended to Town Council.

Summary of the Draft Parks & Recreation Master Plan Recommendations from Lose Design:

Recommended Improvements

With these findings in mind, the following recommendations are suggested:

- It is recommended that a few larger specific projects be selected for improvement so to have something substantial in the outcome rather than sprinkling a small amount of money across the whole park system.

Crossings Park

- Consolidate baseball and softball facilities at Crossings Park.
- Retain the three baseball fields at this location.
- Build 2-3 additional baseball fields at Crossings Park to address identified inventory deficit.
- Additional parking to support this expansion.
- Add a significant playground amenity to add community park recreation features to this property.

Chaplin Park

- Develop a new masterplan for Chaplin Park for a more efficient and user-friendly design
- Three multisport fields for soccer, football and lacrosse: two multisport synthetic rectangular fields and one natural surface multisport field.
- Replace support buildings (concessions, bathroom buildings and shelters).

Pickleball Complex

- Develop a significant pickleball complex to include: lighted courts, provide for support facilities such as restrooms and concessions.

New North Island Community Park

- New community park on the north end of the island to include: bike trails (away from roads), disc golf and adventure play area.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Submitted by: Eileen Wilson, Secretary

Approved: March 12, 2020