

MINUTES
CITY OF BEAUFORT PARK AND TREE ADVISORY COMMISSION
March 24, 2016 3:00 pm
Planning Department Conference Room, City Hall – 1911 Boundary Street
Beaufort, South Carolina

In accordance with South Carolina Code of laws, 1976, Section 30-480(d), as amended, local media were duly notified of the time, date, place and agenda of this meeting.

Members present

William Waskiewicz
Leah Palumbo
Michael Brock

Staff present

Eliza Hill, Planning Department

CALL TO ORDER

William Waskiewicz called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

William Waskiewicz made a motion, second by Ms. Palumbo, to approve the minutes of January 28, 2016 as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

SOUTHSIDE PARK PROGRESS REPORT

Barb Chemsak said the Friends of Southside Park Facebook page is up.

Ms. Chemsak reported that on February 13th, 40 students from Beaufort High School, Chairman Fariior, Vice Chairman Waskiewicz, Ms. Palumbo, and Ms. Hill had a volunteer work day to clean up the dog park at Southside Park. On March 19th, a neighbor with a tractor tilled the dog park area to improve soil conditions; will also make final grading easier. She would like to schedule another work day to clean up the rubble uncovered in the tilling process. Vice Chairman Waskiewicz said he can help with cleanup. Ms. Chemsak reported the area outside the dog park remains trashy. She had suggested the city should prevent entry to dog park until the cleanup and grading work was completed. She had reported some hazardous items which were removed by Public Works but piping and construction rubble remain to be removed. She said the City reported that they didn't want to discourage people from using the dog park since use had already begun.

Ms. Chemsak said that Ms. Hill has gotten quotes for final grading of area and wants to use some of the stockpiled soil as may be needed to correct some drainage issues. Vice Chairman Waskiewicz said a layer of topsoil above all of the debris is warranted. Ms. Hill also received a quote for hydroseeding but cost was too high. She hopes to work with Public Works to seed the area after final grading. The park will need to be closed to public use once seeding work is done.

Also on March 19th, approximately 15 BHS students worked on the trail area in the Southside Blvd. buffer to rake back organics in preparation for excavation and placement of stockpiled asphalt millings by BJWSA.

The City has submitted two grants to the SCPRT for the full trail at the park and also for a restroom in the Depot building on the Spanish Moss Trail.

Ms. Chemsak met with **Robert Semmler** and a Kiwanis Club representative about the CMP playground proposed for the park. She hopes development of the playground will create interest in the park. Finishing the dog park, then the walking trail, and then getting money in for the playground, she said, are the priorities. She has been reminding people about Beaufort Pride of Place and informed Kiwanis about it.

Ms. Chemsak and **Gail Westerfield**, a member of Friends of Southside Park, discussed the Seeds of Change grant application with the PTAC members. It would be for a community garden in Southside Park.

PARKS CIP PROJECTS – FY 2017

Ms. Hill said the city is going through its budget process. Mr. Brock and Ms. Palumbo had generated a statement of probable cost for the playground at Southside Park. She relayed information from a meeting with the Kiwanis Club. There was general agreement in the club to support the playground project.

Ms. Hill said she had told **Lamar Taylor** that this statement was not a \$400,000 request for the playground. Rather a quantification of request by PTAC for an increase in the SSP budget from \$25K to \$100K.; a way to give council an idea of what developing this CMP program element would cost. The Office of Civic Investment (OCI) had suggested that developing *all* of Southside Park would cost \$2+ million. Ms. Hill suggested that the \$400,000 budget could be presented to council, and they could be told that PTAC supports it. She said the PTAC members should decide if the trail (which will be built if grant is awarded) and the playground (which could be funded by Kiwanis) are the next program elements that should be done at Southside Park.

Ms. Chemsak and Ms. Hill discussed the list of planned program elements for Southside Park. Ms. Chemsak asked where the proposed area for the basketball courts is. Ms. Hill showed her on the master plan. Ms. Chemsak said “additional tennis courts” are on the list, and the tennis courts are maintained by the county. Ms. Hill said they’re also on county property; she feels they should “forget” them for now. Ms. Chemsak said she agreed and felt that they shouldn't be on a city list. Ms. Hill said that was OCI’s idea. Ms. Chemsak said the courts that are there aren’t used much. Mr. Brock said the county might close the space up and give it to the city, which could then use it for something else. Ms. Hill said if it’s “just more green space,” the city won’t want it, but if they acquire it and it’s developed, they might. Ms. Chemsak said that people have approached her wondering about putting in a soccer field in Southside Park for pick-up

games; she suggested that they might have a neighborhood basketball court like the one at the Greene Street gym for kids, or convert a basketball court into 3 pickle ball courts. Ms. Chemsak said she's told those who have asked that the tennis court area is owned by the county. Ms. Hill said that the results of numerous public meetings and surveys as generated over several years by the SSPAC showed the neighborhood wanted the park to remain in passive use; they did not want any active recreation such as 'permanent' baseball or football areas. But the scale of a pickle ball court might be acceptable.

Ms. Palumbo asked if the stormwater drainage improvements that Ms. Hill mentioned needed to be done in Southside Park should be requested as a CIP in this budget. In order to use the central green, which is almost 4 acres, as an active recreation area, storm drainage and grading plans need to be generated. Storm drain pipe, 100+ loads of soil and seeding are the primary needs, Ms. Hill said. She asked if PTAC feels they should continue to "do pieces and projects in the park" or if they should be recommending design and installation of stormwater and infrastructure.

Mr. Semmler suggested BJWSA be contacted about pipe and soil additions as part of the in-kind work remaining. Ms. Hill said that **Joe DeVito** had told her that BJWSA will perform in kind work but this does not include any purchases of pipe or soil. Mr. Semmler said BJWSA should have to return the land to the state it was in when they got the sewage treatment plant from the city. Ms. Hill said if that were the case, then the sewage facility elements would still be there as this was the condition of the area when BJWSA took over the facility from the City. Mr. Semmler said its still worth approaching BJWSA to try to get them to agree to it, possibly speaking to **Ed Saxon**, the general manager. Ms. Hill suggested that most likely would be a conversation between Mr. Saxon, the City Manager and the Mayor.

Ms. Hill said the trail is ready for BJWSA to begin work as they did in the same buffer area several years ago with removal of trees. The agreement when the property reverted back to the City was for \$154K of in kind work. Ms. Hill stated she did not know exactly how much 'remained' but believes its about \$50K. She suggested BJWSA might be willing to provide and install storm drain pipe.

Ms. Hill asked the members to determine specifics as to how funding should be allocated if Council approves a budget increase to \$100K. Mr. Semmler suggested generation of a spreadsheet showing projects and associated costs.

Ms. Hill said needed tree removals would occur throughout the park. Ms. Chemsak said she feels site lighting is important. Ms. Hill said this was the #1 priority of the former Southside Park Advisory Commission. She could do a cost estimate for that. There was a discussion of the cost of this.

Ms. Hill asked if the drainage of the multi-use green should be the #1 priority. Mr. Brock said it is for him. There was a discussion of generating revenue from the park. It was agreed that groups are not eager to have events there; they prefer to go to the Town of Port Royal, for example, where they don't have to pay as much for a police presence at their event.

In regards to drainage, Mr. Brock asked about a timeframe and the possibility of receiving soil from the Airport Junction Walmart site. Ms. Hill said she will ask Mr. Taylor for an estimate of cost for piping the ditch; she estimated it might be about \$50K. If Walmart provides soil and Council agrees to increase in SSP budget, it may be possible to develop the central green before the end of the year.

Vice Chairman Waskiewicz asked about the stockpiled soil from the Boundary St. project. Ms. Hill said she would contact David Coleman, project manager to see if soil is available.

Mr. Semmler asked if the projects could be grouped and "phased" for the request: Phase 1 would be infrastructure, Phase 2 could be amenities, etc. PTAC could then ask for an amount of money to do each of the phases as they got to it. Ms. Chemsak said she feels a lot of eyes have been opened about the necessity of infrastructure with the rains that occurred last fall. Ms. Hill cautioned that drainage and infrastructure installation could cost \$250 to \$300K and reminded members that these sort of improvements are not 'seen' by the public.

Reviewing this list is homework for PTAC, Ms. Hill said, and she asked the members to pick one project they think is a top priority – or to pick their top three priorities – and let her know by next week as budget requests are due by weeks end.

2004 ROPER ST. – TREE REMOVAL

Ms. Hill said this property owner "really wants that tree out," but Ms. Hill had told her "No" because of the rarity of the species, the age of the tree, and it is not causing any issues. Ms. Palumbo asked why the owner wants to remove it, and Ms. Hill said the property owner had stated that she feels it doesn't belong there; it was "someone's Christmas tree at one time." Also, she feels the roots are a problem, and they can't grow anything under it because "it's causing too much shade." Ms. Hill said the adjacent magnolia is causing the shade problem. She also had recommended they get a soil sample so they can learn how to amend it; the white pine is not the reason nothing is growing there. The owners did say that they would mitigate, Ms. Hill said.

Vice Chairman Waskiewicz said he had gone by the property, and he didn't see shade as being the issue, but he had told the property owner that he's "not big on trees growing here that don't belong here, either." He knows of two white pines that are doing well; those are on North Street. Vice Chairman Waskiewicz said he's on the fence about this matter. They should be allowed to take it down, he feels, if they're willing to mitigate.

There was a general discussion about the role PTAC has and should have in regard to people taking down trees on their private property. Vice Chairman Waskiewicz said he wouldn't be willing to fight for this tree. **Mr. Brock made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairman Waskiewicz, to allow it to be removed, if the owners mitigate. The motion passed unanimously.**

Ms. Hill presented a list she had made of possible CIP projects at parks other than Southside:

- Paving at the Depot building crossover
- Finishing landscaping at the fire station
- Replacing lights at Knott Park
- Wilson Park (which PTAC had voted to keep) upgrades
- Tree planting program – Ms. Hill said this is at the very top of her list, and she feels they need to get council on board and get Public Works to buy into the maintenance of this.
- Caring for *all* the trees in Waterfront Park – Ms. Hill said 14 trees there will be removed in April.
- Creating a picnic area at the Depot
- Increasing the picnic area at Pigeon Point Park
- Putting in another restroom at Pigeon Point Park
- For Arbor Day, planting live oaks on the Spanish Moss Trail at the entrance to the City of Beaufort
- Cambistat for the trees at the hospital administration building on Ribaut Rd. that belong to the City of Beaufort

There being no further business to come before the committee, Mr. Brock made a motion, seconded by Ms. Palumbo, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:11 PM.