

**TOWN OF MOUNT PLEASANT, SOUTH CAROLINA
RECREATION COMMITTEE
Tuesday, May 1, 2018
(May Committee Meetings)**

**Municipal Complex, Committee Meeting Room, 3rd Floor
100 Ann Edwards Lane, Mount Pleasant, SC 29464**

Minutes

Members Present: Gary Santos, Chair; Tom O'Rourke, G. M. Whitley

Staff Present: Eric DeMoura, Steve Gergick

Mr. Santos called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

1. Approval of Minutes from the April 3, 2018 meeting

Ms. Whitley made a motion to approve the April 3, 2018 minutes. Mr. O'Rourke seconded the motion. All were in favor.

2. Public Comments

Ms. Caroline Bailey, 208 William Street, in the Village, said she was a tennis player and wanted to address the issue of the tennis courts verses the pickleball courts. She said that they use the Royal Street courts a lot and they understand that the courts have been downsized to two courts instead of three courts. She said they had a dress rehearsal as one court has been unplayable for six months and it is increasingly difficult to get a court. She said if they put pickleball courts overlaid on those courts it will be exponentially difficult to get a court. She said with the Whipple facility, she and so many tennis players in Mount Pleasant use it and love it and are under the impression that there is only one more court that is on the agenda to be built. She said more pickleball courts will overlay the tennis courts. She said as the population of tennis court players grows she wonders that Mount Pleasant may be backing off on their commitment to tennis players.

Mr. Santos said they have more courts coming to Mugsy Kerr. He asked Mr. Gergick if that was correct.

Mr. Gergick answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Santos said they have funding to finish Carolina Park which will allow the children that are playing in the field at the Mugsy Kerr Center to practice out at Carolina Park and then they will be able to expand the courts. He said pickleball players are wanting courts as well. He said unfortunately until they can develop the Rifle Range Road property and some of the other properties, they will have to share. He said there is a rising group of pickleball players with a lot seniors and other gravitating to it. He said it was great for all sports in Mount Pleasant as they are growing and expanding. He said with tennis they are expanding the courts as well. He said they are moving forward.

Ms. Bailey said she did not want to take away from pickleball, but she wants to support the tennis players.

Mr. Santos said they support all recreation in the Town and are growing all aspects of it. He said they do have more tennis courts coming to Mugsy Kerr. He said they are moving forward not backward.

Mr. Charles Claus, 701 Royall Avenue, Mount Pleasant said he was a tennis player and frequents the Royall Avenue Tennis Courts. He said he coaches the MPA Tennis Team and they practice at the Royall Avenue courts. He said he was concerned with the Town's decision to only build two courts as opposed to three. He understood it was a zoning flood ordinance that was getting in the way. He said they have over 350 signatures of avid tennis players and as it is with the three courts it is impossible to get playing time. He said as the last speaker mentioned there had been two courts, given the disrepair of one court and he asked that somehow between this Committee, the remainder of the Council Members, the Board of Zoning Appeals, and the Town Administrator they find a way to get the third court put somewhere in that vicinity. He said whether all three is moved to Edwards Park as the Councilman had suggested or

anything that can be done to get it together. He said there had to be a solution.

Mr. Santos said he thought he had met with Mr. Claus and others at the site when he presented an idea that would make everyone happy in that area. He said it was still on the table and they had not heard anything negative or positive about it. He said it would be an opportunity to put more courts.

Mr. O'Rourke said that the one thing he had heard the same thing from both speakers and he really wanted them to leave knowing that it is not the case. He said and that there was a plan to diminish tennis in the Town and that is definitely not something that they are looking to do. He said Mr. Gergick had helped them with believing if they can take care of funding the Carolina Park fields, which they did, it would open up Whipple to actually expand. He said that was done, funded, and on the way. He said they asked the engineer when he was there last month a simple question. He said they asked if they could put three courts there and he said no. He said he does not know what else they could do. He said he thought unless they are moved, there cannot be more than two in that spot from what the engineers are telling them.

Mr. Claus said the ordinance was the issue. He said he understood the intent of the ordinance, but it did not consider the Town replacing a recreation facility. He said he wondered what happens when the College of Charleston had to replace their tennis courts or the Boys and Girls Club on Whilden or Royall need to replace their basketball courts. He said they are going to run into this issue repeatedly. He said it was not the intent of the ordinance.

Mr. O'Rourke said that the issue he does not want to deal with is the Town violating their own ordinances and then have people come in because they have violated the ordinances and saying the Town does it. He said they have a rule book and have to go by it. He said he wanted everyone to know they are not trying to diminish tennis in the Town of Mount Pleasant.

Mr. Santos said it was difficult to look someone in the face whose house is being flooded constantly because of the situation in the area and tell them that the Town expects everyone else to follow the rules, but the Town is not. He said he thought that was what Mr. O'Rourke was saying. He said as they had spoken there is an idea that has not gone far but everyone is talking about moving the three tennis courts over to Edwards Park and being able to build them there and be able to use the existing area for a dog park or a passive park for people in those area. He said there was a lot of ideas being talked about. He said they could keep the three courts if they did that and have a fenced in area for dogs, so they do not have issues with the police with the dogs off a leash. He said they are looking at many options. He said they appreciate them coming to talk to the Committee and they are moving forward and not going backward.

Ms. Mary Horres, 3224 Pignatelli Crescent, Mount Pleasant said she was there to respond to the issues brought up at the last meeting about the use of tennis courts verses pickleball court. She said she was captain of the senior women's group that plays Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings at the at the Whipple Road facility. She said that not everyone is converted at a certain age to pickleball. She said they had their most experienced player present at the meeting. She said Ms. Ruthie Buck was 90 years old. She said that the complex had 15 courts now and they will soon be adding a sixteenth court. She said this was to support over 1,000 players who pay to play on the courts. She said they need additional courts. She said it was a common occurrence for the seniors group to schedule a doubles match at a neighborhood court because there is not an additional court available to them. She said outdoor tennis is played in the mornings and the evenings as is pickleball.

Mr. Santos asked Mr. Gergick how many courts they were going to add to Mugsy Kerr.

Mr. Gergick said six additional courts after the additional clay court is added.

Ms. Horres said that would be in a few years when the ballfield is gone.

Mr. Santos said it was not in a few years as they have money in the budget to finish Carolina Park and will be able to expand then.

Ms. Horres said outdoor tennis is played Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings and evenings just like pickleball so what they are doing is they are increasing competition for the existing courts that they have so they are not going to be meeting the needs of either tennis or pickleball by having multi use courts. She said in addition to extra courts they need to increase the support from maintenance of the existing courts. She said staff does a great job in trying to maintain the courts, but it was a terrible winter and they have cracks, mold, and increased damage from rain, freezing conditions, high heat, and humidity and these are causing serious safety concerns. She said they are grateful for the facilities they have and the work the Town does.

Mr. Thad Wilson, 734 Pitt Street, Mount Pleasant said he was there as a tennis player, dad, and a concerned citizen. He said as Mr. Claus and others said it was hard to get a court at Royall and they wait in line all the time. He said this ought to be something they can solve. He said it cannot be the intent of the ordinance to avoid repaving of tennis courts. He said his perspective is that he is a public finance consultant that works for a company called Municap. He said they work with cities and counties across the country and a lot in South Carolina to finance and build public improvements and recreation improvements. He said they accomplish that by working hand in hand with all the stakeholders. He said he would request the Committee is to direct staff to meet with citizens who can bring good ideas to the table. He said he understood the engineer say it cannot be done. He said he would like for them to organize an event where Town staff, who care deeply about these things, and concerned citizens, who do have good ideas, whether they be concerned citizens that are engineers, public finance consultants, attorneys or people work in those fields to come together and find a solution. He said he had a couple of ideas and there are a lot of different ways to attack this and possible solutions. He understands the possible solution of switching the courts and believes there are ways to do it on the existing court. He said he would

hope that a number of them with himself included along with some attorneys and engineers can meet with staff. He said the Committee could give them direction to have a meeting that they can work together to brainstorm to come up with some good solutions. He said he did not think that was too much to ask as all they want is participation.

Mr. Santos said he had met with citizens at the courts to talk about it. He said that on the previous day they had consultants that they have hired concerning drainage issues there. He said he talked to the consultants afterwards and, not just the Town's engineers, but they also said you could not put three back on the existing site. He said the Town is looking at options and have been. He said they meet once a month and if he needs to call a special meeting they will. He said it was the first time he had seen him at the meeting, but they have been talking about the issues for a while as it had not just come up. He said they have been at the courts talking to people as well. He said they have been wide open about this.

Mr. Wilson said in his line of work they see it all the time, they have another parcel across the street. He said the parcel is part of a larger park. He said he was not saying to move it but think about it conceptually as one large park. He said it could be combined and there are a lot of different ways around it to get past the unintentional consequence of repaving courts. He said there are other ways they can think about it. He said he does not believe anyone has an absolute but if the Committee could direct staff to hear other people that would be fantastic.

Mr. Santos said he believed they were two separate Tax Map Submap (TMS) numbers, the parcels. He asked if Queen Street was the State's road.

Mr. DeMoura answered affirmative.

Mr. Santos said if it was a State road and not the Town's road, then the Town cannot cut it off and include it with Edwards Park. He said they had researched this, but they are always open to hear more.

Mr. Willie Wilson said they play tennis at the courts and a lot of time they have to wait. He said with just two courts they will have to wait even longer.

Ms. Street Wilson said they play tennis a lot and said that when people are waiting on them to finish they feel rushed and feel they have to leave faster because other people want to play. She said it was important for children not to be on technology and to be outside.

Ms. Pierce Wilson said she agreed with her sister in that when people are waiting it takes away the fun of the game and one feels rushed so you do not get a fair game.

Ms. Laura Johnson, 640 Atlantic Street, Mount Pleasant read a letter by a soccer mom, Ms. Joey Bushey. She said their sons had played soccer together for years. She read "Dear Council Members, I understand there is a vote coming up at the Parks and Recreation Committee on Tuesday, May 1. I wanted to share with you my opposition to renewing the contract with renegotiating its parameters. I have a son in Mount Pleasant Recreation Department (MPRD) Developmental Soccer and have been enrolled for five consecutive years. We are loyal to our Coach Chip Decker who is a coach for MPRD and has been for years; however, we are not able to continue as a team under Coach Decker after this year because of the contract with United Soccer Academy Mount Pleasant (USAMP). We are also limited as to which conferences and tournaments we play in because of this contract. We would like to represent Mount Pleasant Soccer in a fair and competitive fashion. I do not know how Mount Pleasant legally can require kids who want to continue to play soccer and/or play competitive soccer only to do so in a pay for play environment like USAMP. This is about fair access for all to competitive soccer instead of a pay to play set up by USAMP. This is about being able to play in competitive leagues. This is about being able to play soccer for Parks and Recreation at any age. This is about USAMP monopolizing our playing fields for a fee that does not even cover the cost to keep the lights on. Please consider the contract stipulations before agreeing to renew it. Thank you."

Mr. Santos asked Mr. Gergick to address Ms. Johnson for comments about the Town not being able to participate in soccer.

Ms. Gergick said that was correct and the Department has a Developmental Program that she had been involved in that is up to age 14.

He said by the current agreement over 14 years of age would put the Department in a competitive level where it says MPRD will not compete and offer competitive similar programs to USAMP Select and Junior Academy Programs. He said that would put it into that level.

Mr. Santos asked if USAMP provided soccer for younger children that compete with the Department.

Mr. Gergick answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Santos asked why the Department would not do the same.

Mr. Gergick said that the Department was abiding by its side of the agreement.

Ms. Whitley asked if the agreement had expired or will be expiring shortly.

Mr. Gergick answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Santos said they have the opportunity to extend it, but the Committee can also say that the Department wants to do the same if USAMP is going to offer it for younger children the Department wants to offer it for older children.

Mr. Gergick agreed and said they can modify the agreement.

Mr. O'Rourke asked about pay to play fee and asked if there was fee for the Developmental Soccer.

Ms. Johnson said there was minimal Parks and Recreation fee and it is very accessible for many people who cannot afford the club sports and has very good coaches as well.

Mr. Santos said they pride themselves on that.

Ms. Becky Williamson said she was representing tennis. She said they play out of Mount Pleasant Recreation. She said they play on the clay courts of which there are only three clay courts at Mount Pleasant Recreation. She said they had always heard there were supposed to be more clay tennis courts built there. She said they heard they are going to put pickleball courts. She said she was all in favor of pickleball but the courts at Mount

Pleasant Recreation are in awful shape. She said they are not keeping up with it.

Mr. Santos asked which facility she was talking about when she said Mount Pleasant Recreation.

Ms. Williamson said Whipple Road. She said they want to know when the clay courts are going to be built that were supposed to be built three years ago. She said they are always in use unless they are getting watered and wanted to know who was going to fix the cracks on the hard courts and it needs to be updated.

Ms. Santos said they have funding for Carolina Park and they are going to expand that with six more courts. He said it was coming. He said it will be sooner rather than later because they have it in the budget to complete Carolina Park. He said as soon as they get that done they are going to start working on the tennis court. He said they are getting ready to expand them to six more courts.

Ms. Williamson asked if the new courts at Whipple would be clay.

Mr. Santos said he did not know if they were clay or not.

Mr. Gergick said it was not in the plan to have additional clay courts above the fourth one that they have right now. He said the expansion is intended to be hard courts and he said everything can be modified.

Ms. Williamson said they were supposed to be clay. She asked if only one clay court was being built.

Mr. Gergick said at this time one additional clay court would be built.

Ms. Williamson asked when construction would start.

Mr. Gergick said that the contract had been awarded and asked Ms. Shelli Davis if she knew the date.

Ms. Davis said she had not been given a start date yet.

Mr. Santos said they are moving forward.

Ms. Williamson asked if the pickleball courts were going to take over the hard courts.

Mr. Santos said they might be included in the hard courts. He said they are not going to take over the courts but may be included. He said until they start developing some other areas around Town for pickleball he would like to see pickleball have some of their own courts that they can have tournaments on. He said the Town has land, but the key is it is all about money. He said it is about developing the future land but until then they are trying to do they best they can with what they have so that everyone is happy which is difficult, but they are trying.

Mr. Chad Grier, Oceanside Collegiate Academy, 580 Faison Road, Mount Pleasant said they have some concerns about the USAMP contract being extended. He said they had enjoyed a very positive relationship/partnership with the Town. He said they have used fields and their facility and want to expand that. He said they have had some productive conversations along those lines. He said they are afraid that the contract as was described earlier is very restrictive on who can use and have access to the fields. He said from their perspective if it is going to be an exclusive opportunity for both Patriots Point and Carolina Park and their specific interest is Carolina Park, they would like to be able to match or bid on an exclusive contract. He said they feel exclusivity is not the most appropriate thing because it penalizes a lot of groups in the area, certainly them. He asked if they are going to extend it if there is going to be an amendment opportunity to include other people's needs for field space they would like to at least be included for an opportunity to participate in an amendment.

Mr. Mike Tinkey, 208 Venning Street, Mount Pleasant said he wanted to thank Town Council and the Recreation Department for their hard work. He said he understood there was a notice posted and he goes to the courts every day in that area, but he did not see a notice. He said he would recommend that more notice be given because he just found out the previous day. He said they had existing courts there since before 1983. He said he understood there were some permeable issues. He said he thought there should be a way to have a variance put up. He said they have a growing city as everyone knows. He said less courts instead of more does

not work effectively. He said that the parking lot may be a permeable structure for example. He asked if the Historic Commission had any purview over the courts.

Mr. Santos said he was not sure and asked Mr. DeMoura.

Mr. DeMoura answered in the negative.

Mr. Tinkey said it would be a good opportunity for a variance and to look at it very carefully. He said that two courts do not work well in that area and said he was not in favor of taking Ann Edwards Park. He said it was a beautiful park and he liked it was a passive space. He said he had been very involved in tennis all his life and said he knew the Town had experts but said he would be happy to get the United States Tennis Association, US Track and Court Builders Association, as well as a number of qualified people to help look at that to take a second look at how that might be able to be accomplished. He said there may be other ways of handling that deals with the drainage. He asked for them to do whatever they can do to get the word out more. He said they could possibly post a sign and the courts or other places. He said they post signs at people's residences, so this would be a perfect place for Recreation. He said he agreed with the children that were at the meeting and the Village is full of young children more than ever which is fantastic, and they need a place to play.

Mr. Santos said Mr. Tinkey had said 1983 for the courts but he had played on the courts in the late 60's. He said they are trying to keep them. He said they talk about Edwards Park and they are not talking about taking the whole park. He said three courts would only take half and leave more for open space as well. He said it was just an idea and no one was pushing it, they were just putting it out there to be able to use that as active recreation with the courts and have a confined area where people could walk their dogs. He said he sees people running with their dogs off the leash and there is a leash law and hear that the police are getting a little more involved in this, so they are trying to make everyone happy and it is going to be very difficult, but they are at least trying to give everyone something.

Mr. Tinkey said that was a good point, but he said the said the fabric of the community starting with the Pitt Street area is being negatively affected. He said this is another area with three courts, more people walking dogs, and first time he has ever seen leash laws enforced. He said he sees a lot of things eroding the quality of life in the Old Village and thinks they need to be thinking carefully about that. He said there are ways for variances as historic areas have variances and thinks it is one of the things that they can do. He said if they had that many courts in 1960 imagine how many courts they really should have but does not think it should be at Ann Edwards Park.

Ms. Caroline Peltia said she was a resident, taxpayer, and coach of her grandson's soccer team with the Mount Pleasant Recreation Department since he was ten years old. She was echoing what Ms. Johnson had read in the contract with the USAMP. She said he was ten years old when they started with his team and is now 13 years old. She said he was being forced out of the Mount Pleasant Recreation team. She said they want to keep the team together and want to play in a competitive league. She said they are being forced to go over to Cainhoy, a private club, and pay thousands of dollars to them for the same services that we should be getting through the Recreation Department. She said they would like to have good competitive, recreational teams be able to continue and get practice fields in Mount Pleasant on a regular basis, assigned and play competitive soccer. She said the previous weekend two of the recreational soccer teams took gold medals at the State Recreation. She said they are fine soccer teams. She said the weekend they went to a tournament in North Myrtle Beach. She said it was a fabulous recreation facility. She said that they mostly play at Patriots Point which has beautiful fields. She said the ladies restroom was a mess. She said the cleanup is terrible and there is trash and there is never paper in the restroom with smell issues. She said something needs to be done with the drainage and maintenance and keep the kids in soccer and recreational soccer.

Mr. O'Rourke asked Mr. Gergick if it was accurate that two people had said if the Town renews the contract their teams have to go to Cainhoy.

Mr. Gergick said they do not have to go to Cainhoy. He said they can play in recreational level soccer but for the travel level soccer there is nothing else offered through the Recreation Department. He said that was correct on those lines. He said it depends which level of soccer they want to get into. He said there are other options in other private clubs as well.

Mr. Santos asked Mr. Gergick if he had said that could be changed.

Mr. Gergick answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Santos said to Mr. O'Rourke that what they are saying is they are looking at a possibility of them being able to continue on with the Recreation Department if they allow that league, so they are able to stay with the Recreation Department and not have to go.

Mr. O'Rourke said there was a contract now and those teams are playing here. He said he was trying to figure out how a renewal kicks them out where the existing one had them playing here.

Mr. Gergick said the existing one has them playing here up to age 14. He said when they get to the higher level they age out of the Recreation Department's program. He said the Department does not have a higher level in their program beyond age 14.

Mr. Santos said they could establish one is what they are talking about if a deal is worked out.

Mr. O'Rourke said he hoped that the Department did not have to send the children other places.

Mr. Santos said he did not want to send the children out of Town.

Mr. Michael Duggan, 1104 Sea Island Crossing Lane, Mount Pleasant said he was there for the pickleball and tennis discussion. He said he appreciated the Committee hearing them and appreciates their conflict of trying to find a balance. He said he was there to talk about pickleball. He said it is a very fast-growing sport. He said it has been described as the fastest growing sport in America. He said they are not as large as tennis yet, but they may be eventually. He said as they consider their options moving forward he asked that they keep in mind that one can fit four

pickleball courts on one tennis court. He said pickleball is always played as a doubles game, so they can easily fit 16 players on one tennis court playing pickleball. He said it was an efficient use of space. He said when they consider how many pickleball courts or dedicated courts they are going to allow to remember that. He said Mount Pleasant does not have any dedicated pickleball courts at this time. He said he was sure tennis players and pickleball players would appreciate if there were some dedicated pickleball courts because they are fighting for limited space. He said if they could consider dedicated courts that would be good. He said a lot of cities of Mount Pleasant's size and statue around the country already have dedicated pickleball courts. He said the Town is lacking in that way. He said if they do give some pickleball courts now then five years from now they will be in the situation. He said they will be behind as pickleball is going to continue to grow. He said that if they gave four courts this year, in five years they are going to need 20.

Mr. Jonathan Yates said he was not there to talk about pickleball or tennis. He said he was there with his colleague, Mr. Keith Powell, about their towers. He said they wanted to briefly introduce, but it would require many more meetings, the concept of wireless business. He said Mr. Powell develops wireless communication facilities. He said most recently developed one at the Rivertown Country Club. He said Mr. Powell works closely with the City of North Charleston. He said he works with North Charleston to place wireless communication facilities on city property. He said that city properties throughout North Charleston as in Mount Pleasant are well located and there are a lot of areas where the wireless coverage is deficient and needs to be improved. He said they wanted to introduce the thought that they would like to work on with the Town and the possibility of placing a wireless communication facility, almost identical but similar to what is being placed at Rivertown Country Club on the Carolina Park soccer field.

Mr. Santos said they want to make sure it is not going on the soccer field.

Mr. Yates said he should have said near the soccer fields. He shared pictures of the facility at Rivertown. He said Mr. Powell typically requires

a piece of property at 100 feet by 100 feet or 90 feet or 90-foot space. He said they can place it anywhere on there out of the way of the existing fields. He said this type of facility takes Mr. Powell 45-60 days to put in. He said after that the cell carriers come anywhere from four to six times a year to do routine maintenance. He shared a photo of the Rivertown Country Club where they have two parts to a facility, the pole where the antenna's are. He said what Mr. Powell does which is a different concept than anyone else is that he places his equipment in an architecturally designed building at the base, so it does not look out of place on the facility. He said that today was just to introduce and broach this subject with them and see if this was something they could pursue. He said they are the only people coming today to try to give money to the Recreation Committee.

Mr. O'Rourke asked about land leases and if they are based on the appraised value of the land or are they standard no matter where they go.

Mr. Yates said they are somewhat standardized across the country but then it also depends where the real estate is. He said Mr. Powell does everything and puts in the facility and maintains the facility in a straight ground lease.

Mr. O'Rourke asked what the footprint of the building was.

Mr. Keith Powell, 1009 Mathis Ferry Road, Mount Pleasant said the building that they put at Rivertown is roughly 65 feet by 35 feet. He said in that situation it was in flood zone which is why it is raised with stairs. He said it could be lower to the ground and as they get through diligence they would determine that. He said as they get into the design they can determine the boundaries of whether it is 100 feet by 100 feet or 65 feet by 35 feet or whatever the design would dictate. He said they try to look for one quarter of an acre as it handles buffering. He said the architectural design could be shrunk in somewhat based on the design.

Mr. Santos thanked them.

Ms. Brenda Corley, 568 Woodspring Road, Mount Pleasant said she had the pleasure of being Oceanside Collegiate Academy's Principal. She

thanked the Committee for all their work and for everything they did. She said as a school principal she gets the thing about making everyone happy and it does not always work. She wanted to tell them about Oceanside. She said Coach Grier started the subject of the USAMP contract and how that is affecting the community. She said they have 650 families, with 90 percent that are Mount Pleasant residents, so they are a community school. She said they are doing some amazing things. She said they just won a lacrosse state championship. She said they are not members of the high school league. She said they are at large members, so they were not able to compete. She said there are a couple of sports that they can compete in.

Mr. Santos said he did follow their football program.

Ms. Corley said they are starting school with 650 students with 200 students on a wait list. She said they are supporting academics as much as athletics. She said they are doing amazing things in getting the children to the next level. She said they are struggling with field space. She said the children are currently practicing in Awendaw at the See Wee Church and not the best conditions. She said girls' soccer is playing their games at Charleston Southern. She said they are a traveling circus. She wanted them to know they are a community school and they want to work with the Town. She said they have started their phase B. She said they have seven acres behind the school and are very interested in putting five tennis and pickleball courts on the back of the school. She said that the relationship with the Town is good. She said they are not affiliated with the school district, they are a free public charter school and can move at much quicker speed and do things outside of what the district can work on. She said she just wanted to introduce herself and said they will be seeing her a lot more. She said she wanted to put in a word for amending the contract with USAMP.

Mr. Santos thanked Ms. Corley for their partnership with the Town and said he know the Recreation Department utilizes their gym as well.

Ms. Corley said they have 16 awesome rooms, school building and a gym and they want to partnership and offer it to the Town. She said there is definitely a relationship to be built.

Mr. Santos said the Recreation Director had said they have a beautiful gym at the school and they are very appreciative that they are able to share that.

Mr. David Tanesi with Cainhoy Athletic Soccer Club said their headquarters on Turgow Lane which is in Mount Pleasant by Park West. He said they have 1200 members of which 800 are Mount Pleasant residents. He said to clarify a few positions that were stated earlier. He said the club does not cost thousands of dollars. He said 15-20 percent of their membership have full scholarships. He said they are a public nonprofit charity. He said his request on behalf of their membership is just fair access, the same as anyone else. He said the issue of soccer complexities with non-competes and levels of competition is far more of a nuance than complex and it is more around the leagues they play than the age they play at. He said he would recommend a sit down with people that fully understand this including Cainhoy, USAMP, and the Mount Pleasant Recreation Department before making any decisions. He said there is a lot of nuances around ages, where one can play, and what level, and what the fees are not at the club level but at the league level. He said there are aspects to this including competition cost that are not paid to the clubs but typically are paid to the leagues. He said there are variable cost that are the same at every organization including the Mount Pleasant Recreation Department if they play in the same leagues. He said if they play in the same leagues they pay the same entry fees and referee fees. He said his appeal was if they are going to renew or extend or think about a new contract for field space that they consider their 800 plus Mount Pleasant members.

Ms. Stephanie Lemke, 1155 East Park View Place, Mount Pleasant said she wanted to echo what Ms. Johnson said about the Recreation Department. She said had two boys who have played Recreation Soccer and it is not just 14 and above where they are limited. She said her boys cannot play at the

competitive level because of the contract. She said at age 10, 11, and 12 are limited on what leagues they are allowed to enter because of the contract as it is not just 14 and up.

Mr. George Debnan, 226 Bennett Street, Mount Pleasant wanted to thank the Recreation Committee for what they do and thanked Gary Santos for his many years of service and said he was glad to have new members on board and looks forward to a great Mount Pleasant. He said he was there for the children and the tennis courts at Royall and Ferry. He said the drainage looked good to them. He said it drains to the side and to the Ann Edwards side and there is a pumping station to take to the harbor. He said part of it was an issue for the people on Queen if they get flooded. He said it seemed like it was a zoning issue with Ferry being a state road. He said it could be looked at because it has been there forever. He said to make it a gross area for the measurements it almost seems like a good idea. He said he joins with Mr. Tinky and the Historical to look at it along with Mr. Klause and try to do something and save the Town a lot of money.

Ms. Sara Bango, 641 Royall Avenue, Mount Pleasant, said she was a block away from the Royall Avenue courts. She said she wanted to echo what Mr. Debnan and Mr. Thad Wilson have said about the children. She said she there to represent her children who learned how to play on those courts. She said she was a Mount Pleasant Recreation Department tennis player, along with her husband and family. She said she was glad to hear there was a conversation happening about this because her children walk, or ride bikes and the courts are full. She said there are three courts now. She said they do drive to Whipple Road, but it takes away from the quality of life for the children who are trying to be in the neighborhood. She said a number of times she drives back and forth during the day and they are full. She said she is glad there is a conversation to find a solution, so they do not go from three to two. She said if they can come up with a plan or variance to keep the Old Village way of life and have that ability for the children to be able to play tennis there. She thanked the Committee for trying to find a solution for them.

Ms. Beth Shackel-Scott said she was representing Oceanside Collegiate Academy. She thanked the Town for working with them this year. She said it had been an uphill battle in year two with no fields or field space for their student athletes to play on. She respectfully asked that before extending contract and echoing the sentiments as many individuals present, that they extend the conversation to find out what everyone's needs are. She said they consider themselves to be a neighborhood school in every true sense of the word. She said that extending the contract not only hurts their students and families but many of the students and families in the Town of Mount Pleasant. She said over 90 percent of their student population are members of the Town of Mount Pleasant. She said that as they expand she expects that to increase a little bit. She thanked the Committee for their time and asked if they are going to extend it to give them all a chance, so they can help their own interest and the Town as a whole and all of the youth.

Ms. Becky Montgomery, 2632 Ringsted Lane, Mount Pleasant said she plays out of Mount Pleasant Recreation and said she is not against pickleball. She said that once the court was taken away for tennis then you lose it for tennis. She said she plays at Wild Dunes and the Tennis Center. She said they have one hard court and they turned it into pickleball. She said there is a lot of noise with pickleball, so a lot of the members do not want to have a tennis court near that pickleball court. She said Seabrook built pickleball courts and spent \$100,000 with lights. She said she did not know how much it is being used now. She said there was a huge tennis conference at Wild Dunes and there are even more types of activities called pop tennis that is coming back. She said it is where one uses a different paddle and quick start type tennis ball. She said it is on regular tennis courts. She said it was great to have all this but thinks pickleball needs their own courts not to take tennis courts away.

Ms. Meghan Alexander, 47 Frogmore Road, Mount Pleasant thanked the Committee for all that they did. She said her son played recreation soccer for five years. She said he has learned so much about leadership and being part of a team and said it was everything they want for their community.

She said she wanted to echo the concern about the contract and that they look in to it. She said her son will not be able to continue to pay the Recreation Department next year and he is upset about it. She said she was there on his behalf.

Mr. Bobby Carrier, 605 Ventura Place, Snee Farm, thanked the Committee. He said he was very familiar with recreation as his father was the Recreation Director of Hickory, North Carolina for 28 years. He said he also serves on the Board of Zoning Appeals (BOZA) Board. He said he was a transportser as he plays tennis and pickleball. He said when Mayor Haynie was running for Mayor they had a conversation where Mayor Haynie asked if pickleball was so popular why the clubs were not getting involved such as Live to Play (LTP) or I'on. He said the answer comes down to money. He said pickleball is a low-cost entry sport. He said a paddle is between \$40-\$75, wear tennis shoes, gym clothes, and a pack of balls is \$11, and they last forever. He said most people have their own nets. He said that is why clubs have not jumped into that sport. He said there are lessons involved so it does not generate much revenue except for memberships.

Ms. Ann Cortes, 2975 Pignatelli Crescent, Mount Pleasant said she was a tennis player who plays out of Mount Pleasant Recreation Department. She said the previous weekend she went to a pickleball tournament at the Park West facility and asked why there is not a discussion of that. She said it is a perfect with a level playing field and it is inside and they do not have to worry about rain. She asked why the discussion is not taking over indoor facilities and not the tennis courts.

Mr. Santos said there is a lot of discussion and they do a lot of that. He said they are building a new gym on the Town Hall property that will be lined out for pickleball. He said one of the problems is that they are already lined for basketball and then they have the youth basketball program that is lined out as well along with volleyball. He said with three sports represented lining a fourth with different colors gets confusing.

Ms. Cortes said there is a great new baseball off Highway 41 and they have a huge indoor facility.

Mr. Santos said it was Berkeley County's and not the Town's. He said he wished it was the Town's. He said the Town is not able to use it now but does not mean they could not work something out in the near future. He would like to as it is a very nice facility. He said they are booking up fast and having tournaments. He said there are sometimes that are available during the week. He said they would like to be involved but will have to work it out with them.

Mr. Santos said they have learned a lot. He would like to have an opportunity to talk more with staff about some of the things that were brought up before he makes a decision on anything. He said he would like for them to look at what is being proposed and possibly bring everyone together and be able to talk and work it out and then come back and readdress it soon. He said he would call a Special Recreation Committee Meeting later in the week if they have to, so it could go to Council on Tuesday.

Mr. O'Rourke said every meeting that they have and he has not been on Council long groups line up and they say we need pickleball courts and they say why it is so great. He said that people say they need soccer fields and why it is so great, and they need fields at the school. He said people say then need tennis courts as tennis courts are going away. He said he would rather make them all mad for a year to figure out how they are going to address all of the needs in the community. He asked if they were going to say build an extra this or that. He said one can build 30 pickleball courts and they will full. He said if one built 30 soccer fields they will be full. He said he does not what their plan was. He said they hear noise and address that noise.

Mr. Santos said to have all the players, like the soccer teams, come and see if they can work this out. He said they did it before with track. He said they were able to work it out because they all talked to each other and they worked it out.

Mr. O'Rourke said it is about fields.

Mr. Santos said they should bring them all together and see if they can come up with some solutions. He said he would like to bring one person from each group together. He said they may be able to work it out and everyone is happy although they may not all get what they want but may be able to survive for the next year on that. He said he would call another meeting this week and announce what the decision was and still get it on the agenda for Council. He said he had heard some ideas and if they talk a decision could be made.

Mr. DeMoura said they were happy to participate.

Ms. Whitley asked what date a decision must be made on the contract extension request.

Mr. DeMoura said it expires July 31.

Ms. Whitley said they have a little bit of time. She asked the reason there was exclusivity and non-compete with USAMP and how long had that been going on.

Mr. Gergick said contract started in 2011. He said USAMP, formerly known as South Carolina United Mount Pleasant (SCUMP), prior to this arrangement, was part of the Recreation Department. He said that when they separated to begin their own private organization a contract was set up to make sure they were successful. He said it was set up to enable them and make sure they had the fields that they needed to continue as they had been previously. He said it was for Recreation not be supporting other soccer groups to compete against them on the playing fields in the locations that they played traditionally.

Ms. Whitley asked if they were providing a service that was not provided by the Town.

Mr. Gergick said they were providing travel soccer.

Ms. Whitley asked if it was for ages 14 and up.

Mr. Gergick said he believed they started around the ages of 6 or 7 where a lot of their players begin but go up to age 18.

Ms. Whitley asked if they are in the process of building their own fields.

Mr. Gergick said that was his understanding. He said they have some property that they have purchased towards Awendaw. He said they are in the process of building four fields in that location.

Ms. Whitley asked what was the stage of completion for the fields.

Mr. Gergick said he could not speak on that. He said he knew they purchased the property and they have had it zoned.

Mr. Matt Job, USAMP, 222 West Coleman Boulevard. He said they are scheduled to break ground sometime in June. He said there is a member of the board of Directors has taken the lead on all of the prequalification's and getting approvals but was not able to attend. He said they have secured financing and lease holding. He said they anticipate that they would be prepared a year from now. He said everything is a go and moving forward. He said it was certainly a help to partner with the Town to help with the field situation.

Mr. O'Rourke said USAMP said they have their fields and will be ready in a year. He said someone said earlier 800 Mount Pleasant children playing in the Daniel Island Club. He said he did not know how many were playing in the Cainhoy Club. He said to get ready for next year as it will not be Mr. Job but someone else putting them in the exact same position.

Ms. Whitley asked if Mount Pleasant offered travel league to the Mount Pleasant Recreation Department soccer players.

Mr. Gergick answered in the affirmative but only in the developmental program up to age 14.

Ms. Whitley asked if the Town wants to offer for age 14 and up soccer at the competitive travel league. She asked if they have the bandwidth to add that. She said it sounds like there are a lot of questions with the fees as some of the fees are related to the league level. She said it would not necessarily be as cost effective or as inexpensive to play for the Town if they still have to pay the fees for tournaments and league related things and it would still be expensive.

Mr. Gergick said it would cost more than normal recreational soccer because there would be additional leagues and fees. He said if it was the will of Council to offer travel soccer through the Recreation Department above and beyond the developmental program they could certainly do that. He said they would not be able to offer it in the fall. He said they would hire coaches and establish a program to be able to offer that. He said they would have additional field space requirements that they have not had under the current agreement because they have been used by USAMP.

Ms. Whitley asked if staff had a recommendation as to what to do with this contract extension or was staff leaving it up to the will of Council.

Mr. DeMoura said they need policy direction and that is the area of Council. He said they can build whatever they like. He said they have not entered this field before, but they can, and are willing to do it. He said the Town is not built structurally to satisfy all the recreation needs in Town. He said they are about to complete a lengthy budget process. He said that have tens of millions of dollars allocated towards major infrastructure projects, roads, storm water and that is where a lot of the money goes. He said they do the best they can with the money they have in Recreation. He said they can enter these areas and provide something. He said they have a large subsidy. He said that Recreation Department does not fund itself as it survives based on taxation. He said it will be cheaper ultimately. He said as the Administrator he was not sure where it stops after that. He said to Mr. O'Rourke's point if they enter into competitive travel with soccer for older ages, he wondered what was next. He asked if they could reach financially what is next and the he said the answer was no without funding sources.

Mr. Gergick said to Councilman O'Rourke's point from planning what they do from present forward. He said it would not necessarily only be soccer. He said it would not make sense for them to enter into a program where they offer travel soccer without offering the same thing in baseball, lacrosse, and other sports as well. He said it needs to be considered in a larger picture.

Mr. O'Rourke said he agreed with that.

Ms. Whitley said that was one separate issue. She said she thought the other issue, with her new on Council just starting in November, is it is odd to her that the Town is essentially subsidizing a private organization, USAMP, and providing them with not the actual rental rates that they typically charge for the fields. She said that was her understanding and asked if that was correct that they receive sort of a sweetheart deal that does not even cover the cost of maintenance on the fields and literally just keeping the lights on is what they pay.

Mr. Santos said that was a previous administration that did that. He said they had all inherited this. He said staff does as Mr. DeMoura said they serve on behalf of Council. He said Council made that decision some years ago. He said it was made and they are dealing with what was given. He said he did not believe anyone on the current Council was on when that administration made the deal. He said it is what it is, and they really cannot go back because that was done in 2011.

Ms. Whitley said they have an opportunity to move forward and provide equal access to a broad variety of organizations that support the children of Mount Pleasant. She said for her personally that is the direction that she would like to see this contract go in. She said that is to provide opportunity to Oceanside and Cainhoy. She said she did not personally think the Town of Mount Pleasant should try to get into the business of providing travel league at the higher age levels but offering a more competitive environment to the professional clubs that do provide this service. She said she thought they were opening a big can of worms if they try to do this for every single sport that is out there. She said she did not know that the Recreation Department has the budget or the bandwidth to do it in a way that would be good for the children of Mount Pleasant.

Mr. Santos said they use to do it when Hungryneck merged with the Town. He said they did provide the best of the best travel teams and then split off so they have done it before. He said that is why he wanted to try to get the players together, maybe even tomorrow, and see if they can work it out among themselves and if they can great and if they cannot then the

Town makes decision. He wants to give them an opportunity. He said everyone heard Mr. Job wants to work with the Town and Oceanside wants to. He said they have to give the 24-hour Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) notice. He said it would give opportunities to work it out between themselves. He said he believed they could do and was confident as they did it with the track program.

Mr. O'Rourke asked if a motion was needed.

Mr. Santos said he thought they needed a motion.

Mr. O'Rourke said he thought Oceanside was different as they are bringing something to the table as opposed to the other soccer group. He said he thought it was a soccer issue, so he was fine with what Mr. Santos wants to do but does not know if they need to be in the room. He said he thought they need to be working with them as they are bringing something. He said one thing that had not been brought up is that most of the practices can be done during the day, in the morning.

Mr. Santos said he would like for them to at least have voice.

Mr. O'Rourke said they will have a voice.

Mr. Job said they are unique in that where they are today as they were born out of the Recreation Department. He said they were transitioned to this current state. He said then there was a directive that they wanted them to be independent which was in the last six months to a year, message from Council. He said they went out and secured funding, signed leases, and made financial obligations to provide a structure for themselves and the community. He said they will help lacrosse and Cainhoy if they have this facility. He said they are transitioning from here to there, but they have to be able to get there. He said the issue is the construction phase and structurally how they are designed. He said they are still connected with the Town and want to always be connected as a partner. He said that ultimately right now and the reason this is a critical extension because they need to be able to finish the complex. He said they are about to start and they will finish, and they will have the complex and

will continue to work with the Town in every way that they can but they have to get there.

Mr. Santos asked the Committee if they could meet the next day. He then asked Oceanside, the others, and staff if they could meet.

Mr. DeMoura answered in the affirmative. He said it would be after 9:38 a.m. for the 24-hour FOIA notice.

Mr. Santos said 10:30 a.m.

An attendee in audience said they were realizing that the Recreation families do not have a representative.

Mr. Santos said the Committee and staff were the representatives.

Mr. O'Rourke said they can be assured that the Recreation Department programs that have been playing will be represented at any meeting.

An attendee said for clarification they were not asking for travelling teams.

Mr. O'Rourke said they knew that and that Mr. Gergick knew what he was doing.

Mr. Santos said he personally would like to see the Department have it because he likes to be able to serve every aspect of the athlete from the child who is out there because the parents want them to be out there and he is drawing in the sand to the best of the best. He said when citizens are paying tax dollars they have children in that whole level he believes they should offer recreation for all the levels, but he said that was something they could work on at another time.

Mr. O'Rourke asked if this would be a public meeting.

Mr. DeMoura answered in the affirmative.

Mr. O'Rourke said he did not know if there was enough time to have the meeting at 10 a.m. with public notice.

Mr. Santos said 10:30 a.m. and they did have time.

Mr. DeMoura said they will post the notice right away.

Mr. Santos asked that there be an Executive Session item in case they need to go into one to get advice from the attorneys.

Mr. O'Rourke made a motion to call a Special Recreation Committee Meeting for the next day at 10:30 a.m. and offered for USAMP, Oceanside, the Town, and Cainhoy to attend. Mr. Santos seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Mr. DeMoura said once the soccer issue is resolved, in his tenure, the elected body has had different feelings about the extent and reach of public recreation in Mount Pleasant and those conversations can be taken up again as to what the long-term direction of public recreation is going to be in Mount Pleasant.

Mr. Santos said Mr. O'Rourke has already said and leading that charge.

Ms. Whitley said, if she recalled correctly, at one of their earlier meetings they did task the Recreation Department with putting together a long-term needs assessment.

Mr. O'Rourke said that was just him suggesting it, but they did not agree to do that.

Ms. Whitley said they should do a long-term needs assessment exploring the land that the Town owns, the land that the Town could potentially own, and the population growth of Mount Pleasant and the trends in Recreation. She said also Mr. Gergick's wish list.

Mr. O'Rourke said it was not just Mr. Gergick's wish list but the 85,000 people who live in the Town in the Town wish list.

Ms. Whitley said she thought they had done this, so she made a motion to task staff with putting together a long-term needs assessment for the Recreation Department so that they can come to full Council with a potential long-term plan and start to consider funding sources for that plan.

Mr. DeMoura said he applauds the request, but they cannot design until a policy decision. He said that once that was determined then they can show

them what the needs will be to reach that end. He said that they should hold on the assessment until there is additional direction.

Ms. Whitley asked if that meant broader Council.

Mr. O'Rourke said that they need to listen to Mr. Gergick and his staff as they know what they are doing. He said they should help develop the scope of what this is and once it is, it is not the Committee telling them what to do. He said it is everyone together with the Town figuring out what they want. He said he agrees with that in they have to develop a scope. He said he thought the Recreation Department has a lot of say in that and they can work on that.

Ms. Whitley withdrew her motion.

Ms. Whitley asked Mr. DeMoura if he wanted policy direction from the greater Council and if it needed to go on the Town agenda for the full Council to discuss.

Mr. Santos said they start at the Committee level.

Ms. Whitley said she thought the Committee was on board in doing something like this or do they need more than the Committee.

Mr. DeMoura said ideally, he would want the Committee to undertake determining what the level of service for public recreation is going to be in Mount Pleasant in seven, ten, or twenty years. He said from that it becomes clearer on how to populate that in terms of a needs assessment. He said the assessment will state what will be needed to reach that goal, including the funding. He said it seems to make sense as the initial step and then Council has to weigh in and agree.

Mr. Santos said they could bring it to Council. He said the Committee would bring it to Council for their recommendation. He said it would probably have to go to Finance as well.

3. Consideration of contract extension request from United Soccer Academy Mount Pleasant

4. Program/projects update

Mr. Gergick said they had a Parks and Recreation Development (PAR) Grant for \$16,000 for an \$18,000 project to put in Bleacher Shade Structures as they had done at Duffy. He said it covers the dugouts and bleachers.

Mr. Gergick said the Blessing of the Fleet was held and he was proud of everything at the event.

Ms. Gergick recognized Ms. Tina Carter. She recently performed the Heimlich on a small child choking at Ye Old Fashioned restaurant. He said she represented the Town well by saving the child's life.

5. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Bedenbaugh, 5/1/18