

**TOWN OF MOUNT PLEASANT, SOUTH CAROLINA
RECREATION COMMITTEE
Monday, October 1, 2018
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 9:01 a.m.

1. Approval of Minutes from the September 4, 2018 meeting

*Mr. O'Rourke made a motion to approve the September 4, 2018 minutes.
Ms. Whitley seconded the motion. All were in favor.*

2. Public Comments

Mr. Al Bradshaw-Whittemore, USA Pickleball Ambassador for Mount Pleasant, of 577 Antebellum Lane, Mount Pleasant was recognized. He said that Mr. Mike Michener, the lowcountry's District Ambassador for pickleball, had resigned from his position. Mr. Bradshaw-Whittemore said at present he was the only official pickleball representative for Mount Pleasant. He said that if anyone else represents themselves as such they have no authority. He said that the Miriam Brown Community Center court is quickly deteriorating. He said there are long cracks all over it which causes unusual ball bounces. He said that in the last week it had started blistering and popping open. He said that needs some attention. He said that they appreciate that court as there are four pickleball courts there. He said they had a Pickleball Power Hour at the Senior Center last Friday that was very successful with 21 people participating which was a lot when there is only one indoor court. He said that everyone had a good time with fun, games, and food. He said that winner with the most points got a free 30-minute massage from a local person. He said that area schools are now introducing pickleball into their physical education programs. He said that Moultrie Middle School is now into their third year of pickleball. He said

he would be going there to help demo pickleball. He said they had eight courts on one basketball court. He said also that pickleball was also played at Ashley Hall in Charleston, with pickleball played by grades seven thru twelve. He said that after the first of the year Whiteside's Elementary School is going to have him there to introduce pickleball to them. He said that indoor courts at the Recreation Department are working out very well and they appreciate that. He said they now have four days a week that they can play indoors and understands that will continue into the cold months too.

Mr. Santos said that he needs to come the Recreation Committee Meeting next month because they are going to have people there talking about bringing a large tennis facility here and they are going to include pickleball courts as well.

Mr. Bradshaw-Whittemore asked if that would be Mr. Derrick Williams.

Mr. Santos answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Bradshaw-Whittemore said he had spoken to Mr. Williams and they had some conversation about what is needed.

3. Presentation of Special Olympics fundraiser

Ms. Debbie Antonelli thanked the Recreation Committee for allowing her to speak and thanked Mr. Gergick and the Recreation Department for giving her a chance. She said they had have lived in Mount Pleasant for 19 years and 15 of those years she had been a volunteer in the Recreation Department several different ways. She said she always coached in the summer and coached her boys through Recreation basketball. She said she had conducted numerous camps and clinics and was in the middle of one called the Mount Pleasant Basketball Academy which she hosted for the past 13 years. She said for four nights she brings children in to Park West with 100 boys and girls teaching them the fundamentals of basketball. She said she had introduced a new camp called the Girls Only Sports Camp. She said they have pickleball in their camp and play 20 different sports. She said that the first year that she conducted the camp was three summers ago. She said she was not sure if it would be a success,

but it was not just introducing new sports to young girls, it is teaching them about self-confidence and empowerment. She said that everyone knows from research the positives when girls participate in sports. She said she had three boys. She said her oldest just graduated from South Carolina. Ms. Antonelli said that her middle son is a sophomore in the Clemson Life Program (Learning Is For Everyone) and has an intellectual disability called Down Syndrome. She said he had been a big part of participating in every recreational therapeutic program that has been held. She said she wanted to take a moment to recognize Ms. Shelli Davis who is an employee of Mr. Gergick at the Recreation Department and does an outstanding job with the families in the community for children with special needs and with Special Olympics. She said that her youngest son was 16 years old and all of her children played everything from soccer, flag football, and others. She said that with the girls camp she had 30 participants the first year and made \$3,000 on that camp after her expenses and she gave all of that back to the Recreation Department for girls in this community. She said that last year she had 100 girls in the camp and she expects to keep doing that camp. She said she had been told it might be the second largest camp that they have in Mount Pleasant. She said they should all be very proud of what they are doing for girls in this community because everyone is involved in it. She said she works for Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN) and Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). She said she covers basketball, and this will be her thirtieth year on the air. She said she had been doing it for a long time and with a lot of travel during the winter. She said she works for CBS on the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Men's Tournament as well as ESPN in college basketball on the men's and women's side. Ms. Antonelli said that for many years she had been trying to figure out something that she could do that was individual and unique to help Special Olympics in this area. She had discussed with Mr. Gergick's staff about a five on five or a three on three but all of that required a lot of work and many more people than herself and she thought this was something that she could control. She said that the basis of it was a free throwing shooting marathon hopefully in the Town Hall Gym. She said she would start at noon on May 18 and

finish at noon on May 19. She said she was going to make 100 free throws every hour and was going to ask for pledges. She said she was going to stay in the gym for 24 hours. She said this was her plan and her pledge. She said she was going to make 100 free throws every hour and said it would not take her that long and she is going to stay in the gym the whole time. She shared on the presentation information about Special Olympics in this area. She said that her son, Frankie, does play on a Recreation team and not on the Special Olympic Team because he is capable of playing on that team as he is that good of an athlete. She said that the Mount Pleasant Recreation Department had been an incredible partner for a very long time with Special Olympics. She said the first time she met Mr. O'Rourke was at the introductory Buddy Walk that has been hosted in this community and has been a very successful event for a of reasons. She said not only was it a fund raiser but created awareness for people with intellectual disability. She said she was leaving this open ended because she was not sure what the rules were about what she will and will not be able to do. She said her plan was to incorporate all the partners into this event. She said because she has been an invested member of this community and she is a basketball person and not just a parent that coaches' basketball. She said it was her profession, it was her career, and it is her passion. She said she was going to stay in the gym for 24 hours and they are welcome to come in and shoot with her. She is going to figure out how that plan might work. She said she was going to make it a community activity and would almost fall short of calling it a basketball festival. She said that they do not have that in the community right now and she said she can see every person that has some sort of play in the game would be interested in being a supporter of this. She said she had bounced it around to a lot of different people and feels like it will be a fun event for this community. She shared a pledge card and said that would be how people would be able to contribute. She said if one gave a penny they would be giving \$24 to Special Olympics, a nickel would be \$120, and a dime would be \$240. She said she locked herself into a minimum and that is probably what she is going to be able to do is 2,400 free throws. She said that way people could know what they would be pledging when

they decide to support. She said she was going to take the pledge card with her everywhere she goes. She said she will be traveling the college basketball landscape. She said she was on five none profit boards, but Special Olympics is not one of them. She said she feels there are a lot of people that she can ask to get involved because they have asked her to get involved. She said she thought this was something that everyone could be proud and said she was going to need their support and help to be able for this to happen. She said she was not worried about anything but the 16, 18, and 20 hours when she is in the gym. She said a lot of people are going to question how she was going to do it. She said it was ridiculous and so outrageous sounding and she knows that no one has done it here and does not know if anyone has done it. She said she thought teams had done it. She said she felt that this was a way to invest back into the community. She said that she knows with the resources of the Recreation Department and the wonderful people in the community that support Special Olympics, coming off the large bocce tournament which is in April, they thought that May would be a good time and from a marketing standpoint it gave her the whole college basketball season to lay this out. She said that she cannot guarantee that her employer ESPN would get behind this, but she had a feeling that once it gets some synergy going she could see that it will. She said that she plans each hour to have some live social media presence. She said she thought all the people in this community from media to some corporations will get behind this and want to get involved. She said that was what her plan was, and she said she was training but also with muscle memory and the ability to self-correct it will not take her that long. She said that she owns her own dish that is a rebounding machine. She said it has gigantic nets on it and when one shoots the ball it shoots the ball back out to the shooter and is very much like a baseball or tennis machine that throws the ball back. She said if she had to be in the gym by herself she does have someone that can help her rebound and it would be the dish. She said she was very excited about making this presentation and thanked them for giving her time.

Mr. Santos said he met Ms. Antonelli years ago when his daughter and some of her sixth-grade team took her clinic. He said they got invited to a

seventh and eighth grade championship. He said that after coming from the clinic they went all the way to the semifinals and took the winning shot that bounced off the rim. He said if it would have won in they would have been in the finals against the eighth-grade team and that was a sixth-grade team. He said that clearly the clinic helps girls tremendously. He said that they love it and it was fantastic. He said if Ms. Antonelli had been there last month she would have seen that the Committee had Ms. Davis come and tell everyone about her program. He said it was such a great program and they went to Denver and that was where he first got to see them working with the children and they do a fantastic job.

Mr. O'Rourke said thanks to Ms. Antonelli for living here. He said she would be this person no matter where she lived, and they benefit from that. He said that the camp for the girls was the best thing ever and all the things that she said that young women need, and it was important to have that and, in this world, make everything the same. He said he loved the fact that it would be a festival and said she would never be in the gym by herself.

Ms. Antonelli thanked him and said she did not know about two, three, or four o'clock in the morning. She said she was counting on her personal friends to be in there with her at that time.

Mr. O'Rourke said this could be larger than they think. He said it was also because of the cause as the cause was so important. He said he was excited about doing anything that he could to help and wanted to say thanks for everything that she had done.

Ms. Whitley said she thought what Ms. Antonelli was doing was wonderful and wished her the best of luck with it.

Ms. Antonelli thanked Ms. Whitley.

Mr. Santos said for her to let them know what they could do as she can tell the Committee is all for it and he was sure the rest of Council was as well. He said whatever they need to do she can come through Mr. Gergick or feel free to call one of them if she wants but certainly they were all for it.

Ms. Antonelli thanked Mr. Santos and thanked them for their time.

4. Carolina Park Phase III cost analysis

Mr. Lee Gastley, Seamon Whiteside, 1881 Capri Isle, Charleston County, said that a couple of months ago they were there doing a comparison between a turf field and a synthetic field to see what the differences were from a cost perspective. He said that at that time they were asked to go further in depth and analyze where a synthetic field might go at the Carolina Park Sports Complex. He said there is a new phase that is being considered right now. He shared with the Committee the Master Plan for the Sports Complex. He showed where half of the parking lot, one baseball, two softball fields, additional parking, another field, a dog park, and two pieces of property that would remain passive and there would be a trail system on it. He said they came up with three options. He said the Baseline Option was what he had just shared which is Phase III as is currently proposed in the Master Plan. He said that the next option was to replace the existing turf field with a synthetic field. He said that the second option is where the baseball field is was to put a synthetic rectangular field in the outfield of that baseball field. He said that particular field because of the composition and the size of the baseball field would only be a 50 yard by 100-yard field as opposed to a 65 yard by 120 yards. He said that the last option that they investigated was making the rectangular field synthetic from the beginning.

Mr. O'Rourke asked Mr. Gergick if other sports were played on the field besides soccer.

Mr. Gergick said that currently the only sport they play was soccer, but it could be used for other rectangular sports if they wanted.

Mr. Gastley said that in the Committee's packet he had a very detailed Opinion of Cost and a Summary. He said that with the Summary there are a lot of numbers. He said the best thing would be to talk about the overall numbers and if there any specific questions they had to ask him. He said that the Baseline Concept was the original Phase III concept with an early estimate for total construction cost was a \$7.1 million project to execute that. He said that if they were to replace the existing field one and make that a synthetic field then the cost goes up to just a little over \$8.1 million.

He said if they were to do the synthetic baseball option and the entire baseball field needs to be a synthetic surface would be \$8.168 million. He said it was a little more than the synthetic soccer field one replacement but was very close.

Mr. Santos asked Mr. Gastley if that was the field that he said could not handle soccer.

Mr. Gastley said the synthetic baseball could not handle a full match because it was 100 yards and one could play on it, but 100 yards is not long enough for full size fields. He said it would be better for micro soccer, small size soccer, or a practice field.

Mr. Santos said it would not be any use to Oceanside.

Mr. DeMoura concurred.

Mr. Santos said they would not be able to play on it.

Mr. Gastley said that the last option was the synthetic soccer field five which is part of Phase III and that is a \$7.7 million option. He said that all the synthetic options are more than Baseline with the least expensive as building the one remaining soccer field that is in the Master Plan as a synthetic soccer field.

Mr. Santos asked if the figures Mr. Gastley provided just had the cost and does not have maintenance. He said he thought the last time they reported approximately \$16,000 but he thought that once they reviewed the numbers they found out it was approximately \$29,000 savings for maintenance on the fields. He asked if he had calculated that into this or was build cost.

Mr. Gastley said that this was strictly hard construction cost for the complex.

Mr. O'Rourke asked Mr. DeMoura what the budget was for Phase III.

Mr. DeMoura said it was \$3.5 million.

Mr. Gastley said that site is low. He said that the existing fields are built up so in order to build out the rest of the complex there is a substantial

amount of fill material that is going to have to be brought in to the site in order to elevate enough to drain and match it up with the existing. He said the amount of offsite borrow that is going to be required for the parking and fields was \$1.4 million of the budget. He said in another situation they may would have some of that but this site they would be spending a substantial portion of the budget for that imported fill.

Mr. O'Rourke said he asked Mr. DeMoura what the budget was, and he said \$3.5 million. He said synthetic turf, weeds, or whatever they want said they are not doing it for \$3.5 million so he said they had a problem.

Mr. Santos asked Mr. DeMoura what his thoughts were.

Mr. DeMoura said that if constructing a turf field was their desire that was fine.

Mr. O'Rourke said if it was not turf.

Mr. DeMoura asked if he was saying without.

Mr. O'Rourke said if it was grass or dirt, \$3.5 million was not going to get them hardly anything.

Mr. DeMoura said that was correct. He said that \$3.5 million was money they were going to have in the bank at the close of year. He said they have the \$7 million plus in the out years for this project. He said it was not in the bank and would not be for a while. He said that was dependent on money coming in as expected. He said they could not take on a \$7 million project right now anyway because they do not have the money in the bank. He said that by the end of the year they will have \$3.5 million. He said there are two options available and one would be without the turf field and they work with their designer to see what they can fund in this portion of Phase III. He said the second option would be work the designer and possibly Oceanside as to what the Town can fund and phase in the phase and phase in Phase III to include a turf field.

Mr. Santos said he was remiss in that he should have introduced Oceanside's principal.

Ms. Brenda Corley said she was the principal at Oceanside Collegiate Academy and said they are a public charter high school in Mount Pleasant with 650 children. She said they are full and in a lottery system and the lottery was November fifth. She said they are doing amazing things for a lot less here in the lowcountry.

Mr. DeMoura said that when he mentioned phasing in Phase III, the numbers provided by Mr. Gastley when one looks at preconstruction, earthwork, general sitework, and some other things, this would all be less by phasing it in. He said this was pre-construction, earthwork, and sitework for the entire amount of property. He said if they are looking at turf fields, parking, and any additional fields they could get in, it would be on a smaller site and the earthwork and sitework would be less.

Mr. Santos asked Mr. DeMoura if they could task him to look at this and see how they can make it work within the budget with a turf field.

Mr. DeMoura answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Santos said if they could phase that in.

Mr. O'Rourke said to Mr. DeMoura that not at present but later they meet with Ms. Marcy Cotov and look at all options, bonding, or anything that would make the money go further.

Mr. DeMoura concurred.

Ms. Whitley said that this was a large additional expense and she understood that the turf field would be able to be used year-round. She asked if the current fields were down 60-70 days a year.

Mr. Gergick said they are used throughout the year; however, they do not schedule sports on them continuously, but they have camps that can use them. He said this was because of the wear and tear on them and to give them a chance to recover during the summer time.

Ms. Whitley asked if they were all taken down during the summer time so there was period of time during the year where all the fields or soccer fields were down.

Mr. Gergick said that all the fields are taken down during the winter time to reduce play and also during the summer as well. He said they do use them for summer camps and some programs but do not schedule sports or rent out to clubs that want to use them.

Ms. Whitley asked if the added value of a turf field be that the Recreation Department would be able to use that field during those down times and would it be it they could rent it out to other outside organizations or would it be both.

Mr. Gergick said the primary advantage would be enabling the Department to rent them out to other organizations. He said they would be able to use them for the program. He said they have the space and the ability to use the fields for the programs right now. He said it would make a difference in the future when they could reduce the amount of rentals to other organizations that utilize a large number of the fields. He said they may be able to rotate the fields a little more and still be able to use them during the summer without as much of a need to have the recovery.

Ms. Whitley said that the distinction between option two and option four was than option two is a replacement of an existing soccer field with a turf field and option four was building an entirely new field. She said she would like to put out there that she would prefer option four. She asked why they would take down an existing field.

Mr. Santos said they had talked about the baseball field and that is gone too so it was no use hamstringing themselves by building a field that is not going to be able to be used by the high schools or bringing in soccer matches. He said they certainly want to be able to handle anybody that wants to come out there and play. He said that was why he thought if Mr. DeMoura could look at the funding and see if there was a way to be able to do that within the existing budget and thought that would be the most appropriate thing.

Mr. DeMoura said if they wanted staff would plan to come back next month with what this might look like within budget and to communicate as well with the friends at Oceanside to discuss opportunities.

Mr. Santos concurred.

Mr. O'Rourke said that was a great plan.

Ms. Whitley said what she would like to see in that if possible is what would be done with the \$3.5 million without the turf and then what can be done with the turf field in there. She said in order to have that extra \$700,000-\$800,000 for the turf field necessarily something else in this next phase or this \$3.5 million going to have to be taken out of the project for now. She said what she does not want to do is hamstringing the development where they are only going to get one field when they could get two or three. She said that is something they are going to have to balance and say they would rather have one artificial field than three regular turf fields. She said she thought that was something they need to look at.

Mr. Santos said that turf field will be able to handle multiple sports, soccer, football, lacrosse, and rugby if they wanted to. He said it could be used for a lot of different sports which he thought was great and they need to be able to do that. He said Mr. DeMoura knew what they were asking and thanked him.

5. Program/projects update

Mr. Gergick said youth sports was going strong and they are increasing across the board. He said adult soccer participation numbers were up and adult softball was down a little. He said tennis memberships were down from last year, the swim lessons are booming, and the Senior Center was increasing as well. He said they had the Farmers Market going on throughout the month. He said that the Culture, Arts & Pride (CAP) Commission is finalizing preparation for the installation of sculptures with one installed at the Mount Pleasant Library and one at the R. L. Jones Center. He said they had installed 14 poems for It's Raining Art! at Towne Center. He said that was the art that comes out when it rains and shows up on the sidewalks. He said CAP was accepting submissions for the six new Traffic Box installations at the October meeting. He said that the traffic boxes had been very popular. He said they had put out submissions for the Town Hall Art to be placed in Town Hall and will be selecting art at

the November meeting. He said they had one of the largest Sock Hops in September. He thanked Ms. Allison Lane for promoting it through our marketing area. He said they were excited to do them next year in the new Town Hall Gym. Mr. Gergick said in a few weeks they will have the Children's Day Festival on October 21 at Park West which a huge event. He said they have the traditional Halloween in the Old Village. He said that two years ago they duplicated this out at Park West and it turned out very well. He said the Police Department comes and does trunk or treating and they all dress up.

Mr. O'Rourke asked Mr. Gergick if there were any groups or people that are requesting fields that they cannot accommodate. He said he spoke to someone that plays a Sunday afternoon soccer pick up and they had been kicked off every field in the region. He thought of having them pay one fee and get a card and play on Sundays from 9-11 a.m. He said he did not know if there was room for that.

Mr. Gergick said they accommodate a lot of groups to be able to use fields. He said there are times especially during the season when the Department is monopolizing the fields. He said that more fields were good, and they use them. He said that being able to have access to five additional fields soon would be fantastic for the program to be able expand the sports. He said for the Department to expand the sports they have to run them much later than they would like to as they have to stack games after each other. He said being able to have additional fields certainly would allow them to have time space. He said the Department would use them up themselves on the early part but that would open up evening spaces. He said that would be a perfect time for adult groups.

Mr. Santos said they also have the lacrosse group that wants to come in the evenings and rent fields.

Mr. O'Rourke asked if it was adults or youth.

Mr. Santos said it was adults. He thought they were going to be teaching youth and giving back to the community by holding clinics. He said that the gentleman that came before them at a previous meeting was a

professional. He said he was getting a lot of requests for use of the fields and that is why he thought the turf would be the best because it would be less wear and tear.

Mr. O'Rourke said that his motives were selfish because he was the Finance Chair as well and said he knows that next year, the year after, or in five years, they have to find revenue sources. He said he felt that adults with good fields and good organization of which the Department has both, will pay anything. He said he was trying to think about opportunities for them to help on the finance side with an enterprise based adult sports model.

Mr. Gergick said the fields are fantastic and are the envy of so many communities around here and they are sought after.

Mr. O'Rourke said the Department knows what it is doing, and it was a great program. He said he thought people pay anything to be able to have that quality.

Mr. Santos said impact fees are high and with budgets they are going to start to see it bottom out here and it would be nice if the Recreation Department could generate revenue for themselves. He said that once they get Rifle Range Road completed they could bring tournaments in and Recreation might be able to help other areas of Town as well if they are making that kind of revenue that other places are making. He said it was good and self-sustaining for Recreation but also help other areas of Town. He thought it was something they need to look at because a lot of places are going to that and they are very successful.

6. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Bedenbaugh, 10/1/18