

Richland County Recreation Commission
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
July 18, 2016
6:00PM

Commissioners in Attendance:

J. Marie Green, Chair
Barbara Mickens, Vice Chair
Weston A. Furgess, Jr., Secretary
George Martin
Thomas Clark

RCRC Staff in Attendance:

Tara Dickerson
David Stringer
Robert Hickman
Bryan Crider
Kasey Wilson
Marta Cleary
Tiyana Henley
Erica Smalls
Demetria Goodwin
Jeffrey Brown
Cornelia Watts

1. Call to Order:

Chair Green called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and welcomed any special guest.

2. Adoption of Agenda: (Action)

Motion to adopt the agenda made by Commissioner Furgess, second by Commissioner Mickens. Motion approved unanimously by all members present: Green, Furgess, Mickens, Clark and Martin.

3. Approval of Minutes: (Action)

Motion to approve the minutes from the June 20, 2016 Regular Board Meeting made by Commissioner Mickens, second by Commissioner Furgess. Minutes approved unanimously by all members present; Green, Furgess, Mickens, Clark, and Martin.

4. Public Input:

Mr. Willie Washington, Athletic Director Benedict College, stated that the Richland County Recreation Commission is certified, the facilities are outstanding and Mr. James Brown has worked his way up after 31 years and is one of the best recreators in the business no matter what the situation might be and how you look at it. Mr. Washington added that James Brown has worked for this county, grew up here and he's doing an excellent job.

Mr. Sherman Goodwin, New Castle/Trenholm Acres Community, stated that he appeared before the Commission in April requesting the correction of the spelling of New Castle and that the Board indicated that they would get back with him. Mr. Goodwin added that in his conversation with Mr. Brown he suggested that the community raise the \$6,000 to \$7,000 to have it corrected and Mr. Goodwin advised that it should come from the Commission and Mr. Brown hung up on him. Mr. Goodwin then stated that he called him back and Mr. Brown stated that he would absolutely not correct the situation. Mr. Goodwin stated that it might seem like a small item but it represents our community. NewCastle is one word and it was founded in 1964, our articles of incorporation and every other official document shows it as one word and he is asking the Commission to make the correction.

Chair Green asked Mr. Bryan Crider, Division Head Property Management, to address the request.

Mr. Crider stated that at the April 18th board meeting he was asked to go back and review documentation and everything that he found starting in 2006/2008 forward shows New Castle was given as two words; the brick sign turning into community, all prototypes were presented as two words, and the sign presented in front of the building while it was being constructed was two words. Mr. Crider stated that all of the documentation throughout from 2006-2008 when the bond started shows two words.

Mr. Goodwin stated that he wanted to go back to 1964 and presented an official document showing NewCastle as one word. He added that the sign entering from Warner Drive NewCastle is one word and the first street named NewCastle Drive is one word. Mr. Goodwin stated that he is asking the County to do their due diligence and check the official records to see that NewCastle is one word. Mr. Goodwin added that he does not think that the neighborhood should have to come up with the money to correct the Recreation Commission's mistake. Mr. Goodwin asked if someone will get back with him and Chair Green stated that they would.

Mr. Joseph Ray, Line Dance Group, stated that his main reason for being here was to “toot the horn” for the administrators at Richland County Recreation and to also bring up an issue with the line dance group of about 55 retirees who participate here twice a week. Mr. Ray stated that they have a signature event each month called First Friday where they invite individuals to come out and join in the line dance activities; this is a signature event and last year we had a problem where we were bumped by the New Castle group’s Christmas party. Mr. Ray reported that the First Friday event has been going on for over 10 years and they bring in an excess of over 200 to 300 participants to join in the activities. Mr. Ray stated that he does it for the fitness aspect and it has been a wonderful event for him and they are making a plea to the Commission to honor their request that they have the first Friday as a standing date for the First Friday event.

Chair Green stated that management staff will get back with him on this matter. Chair Green explained that the Board of Commissioners does not get involved with the Agency’s day to day operations.

Mr. Ray stated that he still wanted to bring it to the Board’s attention that the quality of services provided here are wonderful and that they religiously show up every Tuesday and Thursday and always pull in 200 to 300 people every month. Mr. Ray added that Mr. James Brown always works with the group very diligently, but we somehow got bumped.

Ms. Barbara Roach, Line Dance Group, stated that the issue is not just that they have the first Fridays, but in December the New Castle Group is trying to bump them out of the first Friday. Ms. Roach explained that calendar documentation shows that the Line Dance Group is on the calendar and it doesn’t seem fair that they have to give it up for another activity that could possibly be scheduled for another date.

Chair Green stated that it seems there is some controversy between the two groups in scheduling an event for a specific date and management staff will look into it closely and work with you to resolve the issue.

Ms. Roach reiterated that this is a scheduled activity that is trying to be bumped and Chair Green stated that she understood.

Ms. Doris Trapp, Line Dance Group, stated that other members of the group have already addressed the problem that they are having but she would also like to state that Mr. Brown has done a wonderful job with them and they have no problems with staff or him; normally he handles any problems that we have and we greatly appreciate them.

Senator Joel Lourie, stated that first of all he would like to thank the Board for their service and that this is not an easy position that you serve in and he doesn’t think that it is going to get any

easier. Senator Lourie continued by expressing his thanks to Chair Green for responding quickly to the letter that he sent last week. Senator Lourie explained that he wanted to be very clear that the members of the delegation do not want their relationship with the Board in any way to be contentious. Senator Lourie stated that this is not about him or any member of the delegation, it is not about any of the Commissioners and it is not about Mr. Brown, it is about the people of Richland County, the park system in which he grew up playing baseball at Trenholm and basketball at Forest Lake; we have a wonderful park system.

Senator Lourie stated that to say that he is concerned would be an understatement; we have to work together with you the Commission and the way the Commission is structured is no fault of your own, you're a Special Purpose District and he thinks if there is any fault it is on the delegation for not bringing you in on a regular basis to engage you in dialogue about what is happening here at the Recreation Commission. Senator Lourie stated that the delegation make appointments and that is pretty much it. He announced that for the next six months of his service he intends to be a little more engaged with the Commission and he hopes that they can work together to right the ship and he does believe that the ship needs righting, adding that he is not here to throw stones, he's about solutions having spent 18 years standing up for employees in state government, fighting for people that sometimes have no voice and working on issues to make South Carolina better.

Senator Lourie reiterated that he does not want the relationship to be viewed as contentious because that is not who he is, he is here to work with the Commission to make things better and there is a lot of work to do and at the end of the day it is about the people of Richland County who expect their park system to be run efficiently and honorably and it is about the hard working employees of this agency and he does not ever want an employee of any Agency to walk into what they feel like is a culture of intimidation and sadly he has gotten many emails and most of them are not anonymous and that concerns him.

Senator Lourie stated that there are a lot more things that he would like to be doing in his last six months of service than to be here before this Commission but he feels an obligation to the people of Richland County and he knows the Commission does too or they would not be serving. Senator Lourie ended expressing that he looks forward to working with the Commission and that he may have some follow up questions that he will direct to the Chair as he continues to sort through this with some of his colleagues and he looks forward to working together on behalf of the people of Richland County.

Ms. Gloria J. Brown, representing as a senior participant, stated that in America we are the one group of people that don't reverence our seniors and she wants the Commission to know that in this center and all the centers we are revered and we feel like somebody.

Ms. Brown stated that there are all kind of nice programs; she has learned to make baskets, crochet, quilt and dance. Ms. Brown stated that when she participated in Zumba class at the AAC in the 8:00am class that Mr. James Brown would meet us and come in for a few minutes. Ms. Brown stated that there are a lot of things going on in these centers but there are a lot of good things going on in these centers and she asked if any of them have visited the centers and actually participated. Ms. Brown stated that they really need to come and participate and see what is really going on and then they could see, because she is proud to be a part of Richland County. Ms. Brown added that she has lived in the Northeast area since 1974 and she likes where she lives; she encourages everybody to come and a lot of people come to this center and other centers because of the atmosphere for the seniors and she asked the Board to consider this.

Representative Beth Bernstein, stated that she serves in the state of South Carolina representatives and represents House District 78 and she too shares what Senator Lourie said because we want to make sure that we have a good working relationship with the Commission.

Representative Bernstein stated that she is not retiring and intends to be here for her next term and hopefully see what the future holds, but she grew up in this town and the Park system is very important to her. Representative Bernstein shared that she likes to hear comments that were just made, how people enjoy coming here, and we just want to make sure that the people of Richland County have the facilities that they are entitled to and also want to make sure that the employees and other people are treated the way we would want to be treated; so we just want an open dialogue.

Representative Bernstein stated that she thought it would be prudent to come to a meeting since she has not been to one. She is in her second term, so it is nice being able to meet some of you and see you for the first time. She would like to be able to have this open dialogue for communication because she thinks a lot of it is when you don't have that open line of communication is when we have some concerns.

Representative Bernstein stated that constituents have been calling with concerns and that is what her job is; to represent the constituents in House District 78 and the larger community and that is what is troubling for her. Representative Bernstein concluded stating that she wanted to come and see in person and make these statements on behalf of her constituents make sure that those in charge are doing what we would expect of good service.

Chair Green thanked everyone who came in support of the Recreation Commission and expressed appreciation for all the comments.

5. Presentation:

Mr. Randy Huth along with Mr. David Wiesendanger, architects from the Boudreaux Group, thanked the Commission for the opportunity to work with them over the past years. Mr. Wiesendanger stated that every year the American Institute of Architects recognizes outstanding projects. This year the Boudreaux Group submitted the Gadsden Community Center for an award and it won a Design Merit Award. The judges were complimentary on the use of materials, natural light and unique form of the building, especially considering the type project and being good stewards of the resources that we were given. Mr. Wiesendanger presented the Gadsden Community Center Award to proudly display in the building, as they have it displayed in their office.

Chair Green thanked the Boudreaux Group on behalf of the Board of Commissioners and assured that the award would be proudly displayed at the Gadsden Community Center.

Chair Green offered any visitors the opportunity to exit at this time.

6. Financial Report: (Information)

Kasey Wilson, Financial Operations, reviewed financial reports included in the Board's packet.

7. Bond Construction Updates: (Information)

Bryan Crider presented Bond Updates included in the Board's packet.

8. Executive Director Report: (Information)

Ms. Tara Dickerson, Chief of Staff, reported Agency Updates as outlined on the handout.

Ms. Dickerson presented two requests for Waiver of Facility Fees from the South Carolina Department of Social Services and the Antioch AME Zion Church outlined in the Board's handout.

Motion to approve requests for Waiver of Facility Fees for the two events at Eastover Park on July 30, 2016 and September 16, 2016 made by Commissioner Furgess, second by Commissioner Clark. Motion approved unanimously by all members present; Green, Mickens, Furgess, Clark and Martin.

Commissioner Clark referenced a matter from last meeting, questioning the status of employment for James Brown, Jr.

Ms. Dickerson stated that she would discuss the matter in Executive Session, personnel matters cannot be discussed in open session.

Ms. Dickerson stated that there are two items for Executive Session; one contractual and one personnel.

9. Other Business

No other Business

Motion to go into Executive Session for a contractual and personnel matter made by Commissioner Furgess, second by Commissioner Mickens. Motion approved unanimously by all members present; Green, Mickens, Furgess, Clark and Martin.

10. Executive Session

Commissioner Furgess stated that no actions were taken in Executive Session.

Motion to come out of Executive Session made by Commissioner Furgess, second by Commissioner Clark. Motion approved unanimously by all members present; Green, Mickens, Furgess, Clark, and Martin.

Motion to approve Staff's recommendation to continue to use the accounting firm of Burkett, Burkett and Burkett for auditing purposes for the fiscal year 2015-2016 made by Commissioner Furgess, second by Commissioner Clark. Motion approved unanimously by all members present; Green, Furgess, Clark, Mickens and Martin.

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Furgess, second by Commissioner Clark. Motion approved unanimously by all members present; Green, Furgess, Clark, Mickens and Martin.

11. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 7:18p.m.


J. Marie Green, Chair

Minutes approved on this 19th day of September 2016.