

A meeting of the Park and Tree Advisory Committee was held on **January 25, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.** in City Hall, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Barb Farris, committee members Gordon Fritz, Blake Austin, and Chuck Rushing, and Brian Franklin, city staff. Amanda Flake was absent.

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d) as amended, all local media were duly notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting.

Chairman Farris called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

### **MINUTES**

**Mr. Rushing made a motion, second by Mr. Fritz, to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2017 PTAC meeting. The motion to approve the minutes as submitted passed unanimously.**

### **LITTLE FREE LIBRARY LOCATIONS**

Chairman Farris said the person who built the Little Free Library at Pigeon Point Park has said the materials of additional ones would be about \$75 each, and she would like there to be 2 more. She said she would look into getting materials donated. Mr. Austin said some of those materials are available at Southern Palmetto.

Chairman Farris said the area near the police buildings was one location that had been discussed for a Little Free Library, as well as the trailhead for the Spanish Moss Trail at Hermitage Road. Mr. Austin said people have created a Little Free Library in the Depot building and are sticking books in the crevices. Chairman Farris asked if that could be promoted, and Mr. Franklin said he would talk to **Dean Moss** about it.

Chairman Farris said she would pursue getting two Little Free Libraries more built.

### **NEW FENCE IN PIGEON POINT PARK**

Mr. Franklin said the fence by the boat landing at Pigeon Point Park was rope and had been vandalized multiple times, so a new wooden fence was put up at that location. He asked for feedback from the committee about it; it could be a possible "fence standard" for the city, he said.

### **SOUTHSIDE PARK TRAIL UPDATE**

Mr. Franklin said the construction of the Southside Park trail has been put out to bid, and 3 quotes were received and are under review. They expect to award the construction contract February 14.

Chairman Farris asked Mr. Franklin to review his thoughts on the trail. Mr. Franklin said the construction documents have grown a little bit in scope; the trail will be in the DOT right-of-way, so the 15' connector points, they decided, need to be concrete, which

changed the design a little. They were copying the Spanish Moss Trail's connector points, he said, which is an added detail. One attachment point on Southside Boulevard was moved further toward the main drive, Mr. Franklin said.

Originally, the Public Works buildings were to be removed, and the trail was to go around the back of the dog park, but because the buildings aren't being removed, "trail has been added" as a Plan B.

Mr. Franklin described the materials of the trail, which will be 1.2 – 1.5 miles in length and has a pedestrian bridge. It connects by the dog park and goes through the woods to the tennis courts, he said. A small section of trail is proposed on the county property by the tennis courts.

?

### **SOUTHSIDE PARK MOU UPDATE**

Mr. Franklin said Holy Trinity School is exploring options for sports fields, since its current campus doesn't have land for them, and school representatives came to the city to discuss creating some soccer fields in the green at Southside Park. The school drafted a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the city, and various city staff and the mayor are reviewing it. It would go to neighborhood associations for discussion and input before going to city council for a vote, he said.

Chairman Farior said there had been concerns expressed about parking. Mr. Franklin said **Lamar Taylor** had discussed expanding the parking area for the dog park by 15 to 20 spaces, and Mr. Franklin did a sketch for him and tried to get it to relate to the trail there, too. He said there might be another parking spot there, in which people can park during events.

Chairman Farior asked if Mr. Franklin has a problem with this use since Southside Park is meant to be a passive park. Mr. Franklin said he hasn't read the covenants yet, so he doesn't know how sports fields fit in with the covenants in terms of use. He personally feels that if the citizens and this board were for it, soccer fields would take public open space and allow it to be used "without being fully structured." He said Holy Trinity is looking at putting in 2 soccer fields.

People will be in favor of the idea and against it, Mr. Franklin said, so it's important "to go through the process." From a planning standpoint, he feels it's a good idea, in that a neighborhood school could develop its current location, stay in the neighborhood, and have sports activities off-site. The school would incur the majority of the costs, he said, but city residents could use the fields as well.

Mr. Fritz said he assumes that when Bridges Prep leased space at Southside Park for a fundraiser, the city had leased it to them, which would have generated revenue for the city. He asked if there would also be revenue generated if the soccer fields are built. Mr. Franklin said, if Bridges wanted to lease the green at the park for an activity, "they

probably still could.”

One potential conflict the city might see is when the school would need to use the fields and when the public could use them, Mr. Franklin said. Southside Park is a potential location for the annual Food Truck Festival, for example; the festival might be able to still use the park if the fields were there, he said.

The city wouldn't be incurring any additional maintenance costs than it already has, Mr. Franklin said, nor would it have to do any work to create the fields.

Mr. Fritz asked if soccer fields would interfere with the tree farm at Southside Park, and Mr. Franklin said no. Soccer practice would also not affect the dog park or the trail, he said.

Mr. Austin asked about parking. Mr. Franklin said they are looking at making the two-way road one-way and putting parallel parking on it. Mr. Austin said he had looked at it the area, and he feels they would have a problem getting 2 fields in there, as well as parking. Mr. Franklin said the field area is not where parking would be.

There was a general discussion of dogs using the area outside of the dog park fences.

Mr. Fritz asked if there is a feel for how the surrounding neighborhood feels about the use of the space for sports fields. Mr. Franklin said **Barb Chemsak** had said she is concerned about the covenants, and another woman he spoke with wants the park to remain passive.

Mr. Franklin said there has been talk in the past about putting a pond in Southside Park to help with drainage issues in the neighborhood, and there would need to be discussion of how the soccer fields would be arranged around a pond. Holy Trinity had approached the city about 3 phases, he said: The soccer fields are Phase 1, followed by two other phases the school might want to do if those fields work out. Mr. Rushing asked what those phases might be. Mr. Franklin said a baseball field was mentioned, and then possibly adding a tennis court to the county's courts. Lighting is part of the discussion, he said.

Chairman Farris asked if Holy Trinity would have its soccer games there or just use the fields for practice. Mr. Franklin said they would probably use them for games, too.

There was a discussion about BJWSA putting in a force main, which it is doing currently, and that should be finished before the trail construction starts.

Mr. Franklin said the city once owned several ball fields, but it turned them over to the county. He said he has been approached by parents about the sports activities that are in Bluffton and Hilton Head but not here; these parents aren't impressed with Beaufort

County PALS (Parks and Leisure Services) or with the sports fields in Beaufort. Mr. Franklin said his impression is that the city doesn't want to be in the business of running those fields it gave to the county.

Mr. Fritz said he likes the pond idea that Mr. Franklin had mentioned. Mr. Rushing asked about the pond, which would be in the low-lying area of the park, not in the green. Mr. Franklin said there are many master plans around for Southside Park, and many of those include a water feature. Mr. Fritz said it could be a meandering lagoon, and it wouldn't necessarily conflict with sports fields.

Mr. Austin said he doesn't see the fields causing that much change to the park, unless Holy Trinity puts in stands, lighting, etc., which would be a big change. Mr. Rushing said if he lived close to Southside Park, he wouldn't have a problem with the little change to its use for practice fields, but if they were used as game-day fields, the lights, crowds, and noise would be a big change.

#### **BOUNDARY STREET PLANTING UPDATE**

The cathedral live oaks are being ordered for Boundary Street, Mr. Franklin said. All the trees in the original design are being planted; the caliper size is going down to 2.5-caliper inches. The holes will be dug in a couple of weeks, he said, and there is no expectation of hitting concrete. Soil tests will be in next week from the landscaper, Mr. Franklin said, with whom communication has been very good. All parties are shooting for the end of the Boundary Street project to be in March.

Mr. Rushing asked where the oaks would go; Mr. Franklin said 24 would go in the median.

Mr. Fritz discussed live oak saplings that were planted about 15 years ago on an acre on Highway 21; the owner planted the trees with the intention of selling them. Mr. Fritz suggested the city could look into getting these trees, though they are not cathedral live oaks. Mr. Franklin said, depending on the caliper inches of the tree, it would take at least 8 years for it to acclimate. Mr. Fritz said these are "not monster trees," and he had discussed them with the owner a few years ago.

Mr. Fritz said he's really concerned about the median at the new Walmart, where a tall grass was planted that could create a driving visibility hazard. Chairman Farris said some of the plants there were removed for the sake of visibility.

Mr. Franklin said the plantings in that median went in per the drawings, but then people complained to the DOT about nearly getting T-boned because of visibility problems, so the DOT made the decision to remove some – and then all – of the plants. Now Mr. Franklin is in the process of redesigning that median, he said, adding that this "learning experience has also been applied to Boundary Street."

Mr. Franklin said the Walmart medians would never have live oaks in them because of the speed of traffic. When the speed limit is 45 MPH or up, nothing can go in the median that is larger than 4-caliper inches.

Mr. Fritz said he's also concerned about the traffic circle on Sams Point Road. Mr. Franklin said that's a county road. Mr. Fritz said the Sea Island Coalition is looking at going to the county about improving the plantings there.

**WILSON PARK SIGNAGE UPDATE** 

Mr. Franklin said he has spoken about this with Mr. Taylor, who has told him to get pictures to him and to get it on the Public Works agenda to get the sign built and installed. Mr. Franklin wants to get this addressed this year.

There was a general discussion of the city's parks and open spaces.

**There being no further business to come before the committee, Mr. Rushing made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fritz, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.**