

**BLUFFTON TOWN COUNCIL
QUARTERLY CIP WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

**ELECTRONIC MEETING
January 19, 2021**

Mayor Sulka called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M. Council members present were Mayor Pro Tempore Fred Hamilton, Bridgette Frazier, and Dan Wood. Councilman Larry Toomer was not present. Town Manager Marc Orlando, Deputy Town Manager Scott Marshall, Director of Engineering Bryan McIlwee, and Town Clerk Kimberly Chapman, and Town Attorney Terry Finger were also present.

Public Comments – There were none.

Workshop Items:

Oyster Factory Park Master Plan Update

McIlwee stated that at the July 21, 2020 CIP Quarterly Workshop, staff presented an update to the 2015 Master Plan for Town Council to review.

Staff believes that the proposed updates are consistent with the terms of the Conservation Easement and has submitted plans to the Open Land Trust for review and approval.

Updated features are generally the same as the 2015 Master Plan with more detail provided including:

- Cookout Area Improvement
- Parking Improvements
- Playground Improvements
- Pathway Improvements
- Treehouse and Other Improvements
- Bulkhead, Boardwalk and Crabbing Dock

Council feedback from the July 21, 2020 Workshop was as follows:

- Relocate playground and tree house from behind the pavilion
- Update and increase power service at the cookout area
- Consult with Beaufort County and Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program to verify that proposed updates are consistent with existing agreements
- Upgrade ground surface and drainage inside cookout area (crushed oyster shell, plantation mix, coral stone, etc.)
- Provide convenient access points for loading and unloading to the event area but restrict vehicular traffic through the park space.
- Proposed northern parking lot to accommodate passenger vehicles rather than more boat trailer parking.

McIlwee stated that staff has suggested the following for discussion:

- Passive recreation located to western side of the park.
- Treehouse relocated to specimen tree near stage.
- Food truck and service delivery area defined with bollards to restrict access into event area.

- Incorporated Bottle Cap Mural into Master Plan.
- Proposed durable and pervious surface throughout the event area.
- Power service updates to be incorporated into FY22 improvements.
- Provided loading zone off Wharf Street to allow for pull in and delivery offloads.

Next steps are as follows:

- FY 2021 – Design of the next phase of Development as directed by Town Council.
- FY 2022 – Construction of selected improvements and design of remaining phases of development.
- FY 2023 and beyond – Phased construction of the remaining Master Plan Improvements.

Sulka stated that she loves the passive swings versus the past idea of a playground, not to take up too much of the area to the east of the park towards the Garvin/Garvey House, as it used for weddings, and she suggested that oyster shell not be installed in high traffic areas where people are walking and running to avoid injury.

In regard to the proposed three-point turn for food trucks, Frazier stated that there should be consideration given designating a specific area for the trucks to park so that easy entry and exit will be allowed. McIlwee stated that staff will investigate alternate accommodations for the food trucks regarding maneuvering in the small space to provide ease.

Bottle Cap Art Project Update

McIlwee stated that Palmetto Ocean Conservancy approached Town Staff to discuss the installation of a bottle cap mural on Town owned property. The proposed project proposes to recycle plastic bottle caps into community art to promote conservation awareness around the health of our waterways.

The Palmetto Ocean Conservancy has commissioned Amos Hummell to design eight 4' wide x 8' tall panels depicting ocean wildlife scenes. Panels can be configured into an octagon or linear configuration, single or double sided.

Previous mural locations considered and discusses included Buckwalter Place, Oyster Factory Park, 184 Bluffton Road and Oscar Frazier Park. The initial preferred location was next to Buckwalter Park playground, but it was determined that there was not enough space remaining after the playground was constructed to accommodate the mural.

Oyster Factory Park is now being considered due to available space as well as its proximity to the May River.

Frazier stated that she likes the proposed location near the existing restrooms due to it being an open space. After some conversation regarding the location near the crosswalk and its close proximity to the road and concerns with oncoming traffic, all Council was in consensus that the location near the existing restrooms was the most desirable.

May River Watershed Action Plan Update

Kim Jones gave the following overview in regard to the development and background of the May River Watershed Action Plan:

- 2007: SCDHEC reported increasing fecal coliform levels in the May River headwaters
- 2009: SCDHEC shellfish harvesting classification change

- DRAFT 2018: May River on the SCDHEC State 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies with >1,000 sites in SC; 1,250 Total Impairments in SC; 116 Bacteria Impairments for Shellfish Waters in SC
- May River Watershed Action Plan
 - Goal to restore & protect shellfish harvesting throughout the May River
 - Developed from Dec 2010 – Nov 2011 with public/stakeholder input; Adopted by Town Council in November 2011
- Coordinated proactive approach:
 - Strategies include Policies, Programs, Projects & Partnerships with WAPAC guidance
 - Provide measurable goals
 - Dynamic & adaptable document
- Restoration & Prevention Measures:
 - Engineering-based solutions
 - Planning-based solutions

Jones stated the following policies, programs and projects:

Policies:

- Unified Development Ordinance – Stormwater Water Quality Volume Control requirement (2011)
- Transfer of Development Rights of 1,300 residential units (equivalent of 146 acres impervious surface) out of the May River headwaters (2012)
- Sewer Connection Ordinance (2015; amended 2018)
- Sewer Connection & Extension Policy (2017)
- Stormwater Utility (SWU) Fee Rate Model Update (2019), Revised SWU Fee and implemented new Stormwater Plan Review and Inspection Fees (2020), and \$5.25 million GO Bond (2020)

Programs:

- Neighborhood Assistance Program – Septic Maintenance Assistance Program (2009)
- Microbial Source Tracking added to Water Quality Sampling Programs (2017) to identify sources and develop appropriate management strategies
- Neighborhood Assistance Program – Septic to Sewer Conversion Program (2018)
- Capital Improvement Program projects incorporate water quality treatment, eg. Dr. Mellichamp Drive Streetscape; Oyster Factory, Wright Family, Martin Family Parks; May River Road Streetscape

Projects:

- Sanitary Sewer Extension both within and beyond May River Watershed
 - Completed – Buck Island/Simmons Road Phases 1 – 4; Toy Fields; Jason/Able Streets; Poseys Court
 - Current – Buck Island/Simmons Road Phase 5; Historic District Phases 1 & 2

- EPA Clean Water Act Section 319 grant projects as awarded by SC DHEC
 - Phase 1, 2009 – \$483,500 New Riverside Pond to reduce fecal bacteria concentrations; septic system maintenance assistance throughout the watershed; rain barrels and rain gardens
 - Phase 2, 2011 – \$290,000 Pine Ridge Stormwater Reuse for Irrigation Pond Retrofit to reduce stormwater volume
 - Phase 3, 2016 – \$231,350 Town Hall Campus Retrofit to reduce impervious surface
 - Phase 4, 2019 – \$365,558.36 Sewer lateral line connection construction in support of Poseys Court and Historic District Phases 1 & 2
 - Phase 5, 2020 – \$179,700 Bridge Street Streetscape Retrofit to provide stormwater runoff treatment
 - May River Watershed Action Plan intended to be a “living document” revised as needed based upon an adaptive management framework
 - 10 years since original Action Plan was developed and implemented.

Key Components of the Action Plan Assessment & Update accomplished by:

1. Assessment of current conditions – “Historical Analysis of Water Quality, Climate Change Endpoints, and Monitoring of Natural Resources in the May River” (Montie et al. 2019)
2. State of Knowledge for Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) – Southern Lowcountry Post Construction Stormwater Ordinance and Design Manual (2020)
3. Water Quality Model – Develop XPSWMM Water Quality Model for 2002 Baseline Conditions and 2018 Current Conditions for the Headwaters sub-basins (1. Rose Dhu, 2. Stoney Creek, 3. Duck Pond, and 4. Palmetto Bluff), and evaluate potential impact of current Action Plan proposed BMPs and suggest up to 11 alternatives, as needed

Jones discussed the strategic plan fiscal years 2019-2020 May River Watershed Action Plan Update and stated that the project team of McCormick Taylor, Moffatt and Nichol, and Noble Lab, LLC completed:

1. Water Quality Modeling Report summarizing the data, processes, and assumptions the Project Team utilized to construct the XPSWMM water quality model, and a summary of the results; and
2. Provided recommendations on policies, programs, projects and potential strategic partnerships intended to restore and protect shellfish harvesting throughout the length of the May River as the May River Watershed Action Plan Update.

Water Quality Model – Develop XPSWMM Water Quality Models (2002 & 2018 conditions) and evaluate 2011 Action Plan’s proposed BMPs and suggest up to eleven (11) alternatives as needed.

Key Findings included:

1. Need to integrate tidal creek research (Holland et al. 2004; Sanger et al. 2008; Sanger and Blair et al. 2015; Sanger and Tweel et al. 2015; Montie et al. 2019) findings with current State of Knowledge of fecal coliform fate and transport with stormwater BMP efficacy.
2. In the Headwaters, ponds have increased from 22 in 2002 to 262 in 2018.

3. Headwaters impervious surface increase from 2002 to 2018 in Table 1.

Table 1: Change in Impervious Area in May River Headwaters

Subwatershed	Total Area (Acres)	2002 Impervious*		2018 Impervious*	
		Acres	%	Acres	%
Duck Pond	683.10	18.90	2.77%	18.90	2.77%
Palmetto Bluff	1,925.53	117.24	6.09%	186.24	9.67%
Rose Dhu Creek	4,168.06	342.00	8.21%	822.60	19.74%
Stoney Creek	5,480.16	229.79	4.19%	848.71	15.49%
TOTAL	12,256.85	707.93	5.78%	1,876.44	15.31%

*calculated from Town of Bluffton GIS files and referencing historic aerial imagery

Action Plan Update Recommendations:

1. Policies to protect and improve water quality in the May River watershed include:
 - a. Adopt proposed regional Southern Lowcountry Post Construction Stormwater Ordinance and Design Manual.
 - b. Eliminate clear cutting approach within developed areas.
 - c. Increase buffer areas and requirements.
 - d. Increase conservation and open space requirements and require recorded conservation easements.
 - e. Reduce planned density/re-zone.
 - f. Increase tree protection/conservation areas and requirements.
 - g. Offer incentives to renegotiate existing land development agreements to reduce density and meet current environmental objectives.
 - h. Develop strategies to effectively execute public/private partnerships.
2. Programs to continue and new program recommendations:
 - a. Continue to support the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program in the Town and County as they work to achieve the six (6) Minimum Control Measures.
 - b. Continue Neighborhood Assistance Program
 - Septic Assistance
 - Septic to Sewer Conversion
 - c. Establish an Impervious Area Restoration/Retrofit Program in areas where development pre-dated stormwater management requirements or failed to meet on-site retention of the 95th percentile storm. The purpose of this Program is to target large impervious areas to be retrofitted to meet 95th percentile storm retention of impervious surfaces with infiltration/filtration BMP to the maximum extent possible.
 - d. Modify Water Quality Monitoring Program to include:

- Developing in-house microbial source tracking
 - Recommendations for future bacteria monitoring locations
 - Recommendations for future water flow monitoring locations
4. **Partnerships** – Continue to seek and establish key partnerships to protect and improve water quality especially with Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority, Beaufort County, Beaufort County School District, and public-private partnerships for retrofit projects.
5. **Projects** – In contrast to 2011 Action Plan, ponds and ditches are not recommended as new projects as they do not promote infiltration
- a. Four (4) septic to sewer conversion projects (Stoney Creek, Gascoigne, Pritchardville, and Cahill) from the May River Watershed Sewer Master Plan
 - b. Eleven (11) Impervious Area Restoration/Stormwater Retrofit Program, prioritized via an evaluation matrix
 - c. Additional future projects include:
 - Impervious Surface Rehabilitation/Retrofit
 - On-site Volume Reduction
 - Modifications to Make Ponds Bacteria Neutral (Pond Retrofit)
 - Proprietary Products to Eliminate Bacteria
 - Nature-Based Solutions

Jones stated that the next steps will be to bring a Resolution to adopt the Action Plan at the February 9th Town Council Meeting.

Wright Family Park Rental and Fee Schedule

Mcllwee stated that every year when the budget is adopted, a master fee schedule adopted as well. The current master fee schedule does not include rental fees for the newly completed Wright Family Park.

The following chart was displayed for reference:

Oyster Factory Park	Basis	Fee
Reservation of Park East of Wharf Street		
Rental Fee	Per Day	\$300.00
Less than Full Day (6 hr Reservation: 1 hr Setup, 4 hr Event, 1 hr Cleanup)	4-Hour Block	\$150.00
Rental Fee – Non-Profit	Per Day	\$150.00
Less than Full Day (6 hr Reservation: 1 hr Setup, 4 hr Event, 1 hr Cleanup)	4-Hour Block	\$75.00
Security Deposit	Per Rental	\$100.00
Reservation of Park West of Wharf Street		\$100.00
Rental Fee	Per Day	
Less than Full Day (6 hr Reservation: 1 hr Setup, 4 hr Event, 1 hr Cleanup)	4-Hour Block	\$50.00
Rental Fee – Non-Profit	Per Day	\$50.00
Less than Full Day (6 hr Reservation: 1 hour Setup, 4 hr Event, 1 hr Cleanup)	4-Hour Block	\$25.00
Security Deposit	Per Rental	\$100.00
Martin Family Park and Public Park @ Buckwalter Place Commerce Park	Basis	Fee
4 Hour Access (6 hr Reservation; 1 hr Setup, 4 hr Event, 1 hr Cleanup)	Per Event	\$100.00
All Day Access	Per Day	\$150.00
Security Deposit	Per Event	\$150.00

McIlwee stated the below as a fee recommendation:

Wright Family Park	Basis	Fee
4 Hour Access (6 hr Reservation; 1 hr Setup, 4 hr Event, 1 hr Cleanup)	Per Event	\$100.00
All Day Access	Per Day	\$150.00
Security Deposit	Per Event	\$150.00
Additional Notes:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town Manager or designee may waive any or all fees if it is deemed in the best interests of the Town. • All fees will be collected at the Customer Service Center at Town Hall. • Security Deposit may be refunded provided the park, facilities, and equipment are clean and returned to the condition that existed prior to the rental. • A full refund of the Rental Fee and Security Deposit will be granted with cancellation notice at least 48-hours prior to the scheduled rental start or if an event is rained out and the part not utilized. 		

Frazier asked if the fee schedule is set, if it can be amended once access to the Squire Pope Cottage is allowed.

Wood asked the rest of Council if the Town should rent the park out. Hamilton stated that he has reservations about renting the park out, due to lack of parking and how close the park is to churches in the area.

Sulka asked what interest the Town has received thus far. McIlwee stated that the Town has had requests for weddings (even though alcohol is not allowed). Sulka stated that she is in agreement with Hamilton with the lack of parking for large events. Wood concurred as well, and said he was somewhat opposed to renting the park. Frazier stated that she agreed in regard for the parking concerns, but that she felt that citizens would really want to have events at the park. She asked that a survey be conducted for input from stakeholders to see what the park's purpose is for the community.

Orlando stated that past conversations were that wedding ceremonies could take place at the park, but the receptions would need to take place elsewhere.

Sulka asked that staff inquire what the waterfront park in Beaufort did for special events such as Symphony Under the Stars, etc. Marshall stated that the park is rented in sections and that it rents for \$200 - \$2200 for one section to the entire park, in four-hour blocks.

McIlwee stated that he can have staff track the number of requests the Town is receiving and what type of events are being requested.

Hamilton and Wood stated that they would like staff to speak to the church and to residents on parking and traffic concerns.

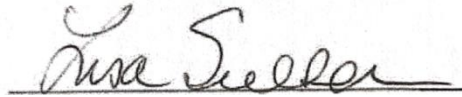
Frazier stated that the Town needs to be considerate of the church, but also residents that want to use the park as well.

Sulka asked that everyone put on their creative hats and rethink the rental of the park and what events will be permitted. Sulka stated that the proposed fees seem a bit too low.

Marshall stated that there is plenty of time to solicit feedback from residents before the first reading of the budget.

Sulka acknowledged that this meeting is outgoing Town Manager Marc Orlando's last Council meeting. Orlando stated that he is proud of the entire Town of Bluffton team and Council's high attention to details. He thanked Mayor and Council on behalf of staff for their leadership.

Wood made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:32 p.m.



Lisa Sulka, Mayor



Kimberly Chapman, Town Clerk