



**Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina  
Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, September 4, 2025**

**A. Call to Order & Freedom of Information Act Requirements:**

The Recreation Committee of Council met at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 4, 2025, at Town Hall, all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied. Present were Council Committee members Ned Higgins (Chair), Jody Latham, and Justin Novak. Staff members present were Jason Blanton, Charles Drayton, Rebecca Fanning, Town Administrator Joe Henderson, Amanda Hawver, Pam Otto, and Max Wurthmann. There were seven (7) members of the public and no (0) members of the media present.

Chair Ned Higgins called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., and stated the press and public were duly notified pursuant to State Law.

**B. New Business (Discussion and Action Items)**

1. Update on Stith Park drainage and golf cart parking:
  - Thomas & Hutton will oversee engineering, bids, and construction
  - Awaiting the first step – engineering

Rick Karkowski from Thomas and Hutton presented a preliminary design for Stith Park, which includes plans for drainage and the parking lot. He showed the parking lot design, which will be for both golf-carts and cars. He showed different options for adding an outfall system to offset the new impervious surfaces that would be built. He stated that a bioswale would be the best option for water retention and would also likely be the cheapest. Rebecca Fanning, Director of Resilience and Natural Resource Management, stated staff agrees that the bioswale would be the best option. Mr. Karkowski explained more details about how the bioswale would work, compared to a vault and a retention pond. He also took questions from the Committee. There was discussion about how to divide the parking spaces for golf-cart and vehicular parking (not including the two ADA spaces that are allotted) and the Committee agreed they would like the majority of the spaces to be for golf-carts. Town Administrator Joe Henderson agreed that the bioswale was the best option for water retention, which the Committee also agreed on. Mr. Karkowski mentioned part of the park plan is to clean up and improve the existing swale. He also stated there would not be standing water in the swale.

## Public Comment

- Angie Polk, 1652 Thompson Ave – asked if bioswale would have standing water
- Barbara Spell, 1702 Atlantic Ave – doesn't understand why a bioswale was not already built in the past. She also asked about the possible extension of the parking lot and why the existing ditch has not been cleaned out before. She also doesn't understand why they are asking Thomas & Hutton to make a plan when the Town has only accepted a contract.

Mr. Novak asked Mr. Karkowski to give some clarity on what this presentation is for and how it fits into the overall, larger scale stormwater plan that has been engineered. Mr. Henderson also confirmed other parts of the plan, including the need for new pipes to connect to the existing system. It was also clarified that “accepting” a plan does not necessarily mean all components of it will be implemented but acts more as a guideline with options that will be decided upon after input from Council, staff, and the general public.

- Susan Middaugh, 2420 Raven Dr – asked if there was an estimated timeline for the drainage project. She also explained the difference between accepting and adopting a plan.

Mr. Karkowski stated they do not want to close the entire park so they will be working in phases. He also gave an estimated timeline of four-to-six-month permit period and the same for the following construction. Mr. Henderson stated they are hoping to begin construction in the summer of 2026.

- Chauncey Clarke, 2119 Pettigrew St – is concerned about erosion on the mound and asked that is addressed. He also asked about the catch basins along the mound and what the construction access will look like.

**Motion was made by Mr. Novak, seconded by Ms. Latham to request Thomas & Hutton to prepare final proposed engineering drawings for the stormwater portion and golf-cart portion of the plan that was presented today that incorporates a bioswale, a parking area that includes pervious gravel and golf-cart parking where not required by the ADA, and examines the options for incorporating of drainage of stormwater off the mound, into the stormwater system, passed unanimously.**

## 2. Stith Park's "Tot Lot" equipment replacement bids

Mr. Henderson presented the current state of the Tot Lot, stating some of the equipment was over 20 years old and needs to be repaired or replaced. He presented the three bids from contractors recommended by surrounding municipalities that the Town has received. The estimated costs from each proposal were \$152,000, \$53,000, and \$100,000, respectively. The Committee discussed the three proposals, as well as the costs associated.

### Public Comment

- Barbara Spell, 1702 Atlantic Ave – does not understand why the latches have not already been replaced or why the Committee is interested in moveable equipment.

It was stated the latches do currently work, but are not self-latching, as proposed. An explanation on self-latch gates was provided. Having moveable equipment has a variety of uses, including the ability to rearrange the layout of the pieces in the existing location.

**Motion was made by Justin Novak, seconded by Jody Latham, to recommend to Town Council consideration of presentation by vendor two regarding potential options for equipment for presentation, passed unanimously.**

## C. Old Business (Staff update available)

1. SC250 Palmetto Log Fort
2. Update on Pocket Parks

Ms. Fanning discussed the potential of pocket parks on public land and various stub-outs on the Island, an idea that was mentioned in the last Comprehensive Plan a few times. She also stated the Plan has mentions of protecting these areas, the desire to transform Town-owned properties into public-protected open space, and to identify areas for expanding recreational opportunities. She then presented a possible location of a pocket park, at the end of Middle Street, at the intersection with Conquest Avenue. The site has been used as a construction lay-down area in most recent years but had historically been a wooded area with a marsh view. Staff's suggestion for the park is to add some golf-cart parking, a bike rack, some bollards to prevent vehicular traffic, and two benches for the public to enjoy the waterfront view. She stated there is money available for two benches from the PARD (Parks and Recreation Department) funding opportunity.

Mr. Novak gave a more detailed description of stub-outs and how they relate to the DOT (Department of Transportation) right-of-way, which they do not maintain. Distinguishing between the two property pieces is another reason for establishing these pocket parks, as well as beautification and utilizing them for public enjoyment. Mr. Henderson stated now that funding

has been secured, they hope to present a more formal plan and get input from residents in the area.

**Public Comment:**

- Allie Bernie, 852 Middle Street – praised the recent improvements at the Cove Inlet park. She also mentioned there has been more traffic in her area as a result and encouraged the Town to consider traffic and safety issues before inviting the public to quieter areas of the Island.
- Chauncey Clark, 2119 Pettigrew Street – feels the focus should be more on residents and not on tourists. He feels there should be limits on the hours and for police to make sure the areas stay safe.

Mr. Henderson stated we are able to email property owners so they are aware of the discussions. He also said this park would be very different from the Cove Inlet project, as that was more of a major restoration. Ms. Fanning gave more background on the need for the restoration done at Cove Inlet, stating the bridge there, which was where the Pitt Street bridge connected to the Island, was for trolley travel. She also stated they are working on improving the plant growth on the EnviroLok wall and that the first round of planting was not as successful as they had hoped due to an unusually dry season. The Town is in touch with a contractor as well as other vendors to help improve the vegetation.

Regarding the proposed park in discussion, there would be much less landscaping needed as there are no pressing structural issues. It would also not require much maintenance other than what is already routine and maybe replacing the bollards periodically. Mr. Henderson stated in addition to the police, the Code Enforcement officer also helps patrol these public spaces, as well as Town maintenance and admin staff.

- Krista Heilig, 840 Middle Street -would like to be involved during the process and agrees with Ms. Bernie's comments.
- Angie Polk, 1652 Thompson Avenue – finds it jarring to invite people to watch the sunrise next to people's homes.

Chair Higgins stated he would like a more detailed proposal from staff as well as input from Public Safety and nearby residents/property owners for the next time this is discussed.

**3. Pickle Ball Courts maintenance update**

**D. Pending Items (Discussion / Action not required)**

**E. Public Comment**

## **F. Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Mr. Novak, seconded by Chair Higgins, to adjourn at 10:55 a.m., passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,



Bridget Welch