



Town of Hilton Head Island TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP Thursday, November 9, 2023 -1:00 PM Minutes

Call to Order

Mayor Perry called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Adoption of the Agenda

Ames moved to approve. Stanford seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

Workshop Discussion

Shawn Colin kicked off the workshop by introducing the team that is now working on both projects. Mr. Brian Witmer of Witmer Jones Keefer, Jasmine White of Sark Formation and Mr. Kevin Smith of Thomas & Hutton. He also introduced staff that were involved, which includes Bryan McIlwee, Director of Public Projects and Facilities, Erik Ladd, Project Manager, and Ben Brown, Senior Advisor to the Town Manager. He reviewed the work process which included a project kickoff, community engagement, comprehensive review and history and culture.

Patterson Park Master Plan

Colin conducted a detailed presentation regarding the proposed park. He provided a project background which consists of the following:

- 3.65-Acre Town-owned Parcel located at 23 Marshland Road in the Marshland Historic Neighborhood
- Acquired by the Town from the Patterson Family in early 2000's
- Project was included in the 2020 Parks & Recreation Master Plan
- Project includes the planning, design, and construction of a community park
- Funding Sources: ATAX Beach Fee, Hospitality Tax, TIF Revenue, and a
- Community Development Block Grant
- Total FY24 Budget: \$2.2M

Beginning in August 2023, Jasmine White, an Island-based designer, conducted a series of interviews with key Native Islander community members, including Dr. Louise Cohen and Thomas Barnwell, Jr. In her work she was able to uncover more cultural and historical aspects of the Patterson Family and property, which generated unique design ideas that could be integrated into the park and ultimately refined the proposed Conceptual Master Plan. White explained the effort included the addition of

the following key components:

- General history of the land and family
- Creation of a “Dominant Theme” for the park related to farming
- Identification of specific play features
- “Peace and Participate” features such as the pavilion, lawn, and observation platform

It was explained that beyond the Town Council Workshop to review the Conceptual Master Plan, the next steps include:

- Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC) Review – Nov 2023
- Refinements to plans - Based on Community, Parks and Recreation Commission and Town Council feedback
- Town Council Approval – Target is by end of CY 2023
- Begin Final Design – CY 2024

Following the detailed presentation and review of the Master Plan, Council members made comments, asked questions and had discussion regarding: the creativity within the plan; the need for the community to embrace the history of the property; acknowledgment of the research put into the project; inquiry into the economic aspects of the project as compared to past projects; how the project meets the eight goals noted in *Our Plan*; and acknowledgment of the community input effort.

Mayor Perry asked for public comment.

Tai Scott addressed Council regarding stating his appreciation for the project and stated he looks forward to the finished product which includes connectivity for Island Square and the work that will be done regarding drainage issues in the area.

Frank Babel addressed Council regarding the process and stated he felt the item should have gone to the Parks and Recreation Commission for input and decision-making regarding the park.

Following public comment Council members made comments, asked questions and had discussion regarding: acknowledgment that the first elected Ward 1 Council Member was a direct descendant of the Patterson family and further research will unfold many historical notations regarding the property; confirmation that Community Block Grant Funding contributes to the cost of the park; the goal and effect that will happen in the surrounding community with such a project completed; inquiry into event management for the park; inquiry as to the location of the oyster area and concern for safety for nearby residents; the need to be sensitive regarding parking and the need for consistency within the area; concern for the resiliency of the site and the need to consider the use of fill for the property; confirmation of the location of the Patterson General Store; confirmation cameras will be on site for safety issues; inquiry into the actual projected cost for the project and discussion regarding supplementing the

original amount budgeted; the need for self-programming and historical markers with information and QR code access; suggestions that the Outside Foundation and Heritage Library be involved in the programming; confirmation the project fills the need for residential and community parks; confirmation this plan was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission before coming to this Workshop and will return to the Commission after the plan has been refined and before Council reviews for final approval; and confirmation that by the time this park is completed it will be a four-year project and hopefully from lessons learned future projects will not take as long.

Taylor Park Master Plan

Shawn Colin conducted a detailed presentation regarding the proposed park. He explained The Taylor Family Tract was donated to the Town by the Taylor Family in 1991, with the intention of it being developed into a future neighborhood park. The property zoning is restricted to Parks and Recreation Space.

In July 2023, Town Staff and the consultant team prepared a preliminary project scope for the planning and design of the Taylor Family Park, which will be located on the 4.9-acre undeveloped parcel within the Historic Squire Pope Neighborhood. The property contains approximately one acre of wetland area, and the upland portion of the park will serve as a passive-use space with amenities for immediate neighborhood residents such as the Historic Squire Pope community as well as others along Wild Horse Road, Gumtree Road, and Squire Pope Road. In addition, the park will provide a unique destination location for visitors. The presence of several large live oaks, young maritime woodland vegetation and a freshwater wetland on the site provides an opportunity for integration of nature and design.

Community engagement to solicit input and feedback to identify key stakeholders and further refine the scope of work also began in July 2023. This provided the project team with initial ideas to develop a preliminary concept plan for the space. During this phase of work, the team also sought additional consultation from Jasmine White, an Island-based designer.

The project team presented a Preliminary Master Plan to the community in October 2023 showcasing a small neighborhood park with amenities including bike and pedestrian traffic, passive recreational uses, vehicular parking, activity zones for adults and children, and sheltered space. The Master Plan for Taylor Family Park includes the following components:

- Safe pedestrian connectivity with a crosswalk to the existing pathway network
- Vehicular access that accommodates park users and emergency vehicles
- Internal pathways with lighting and interpretation
- Passive open lawn space
- Interactive playground with STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math) features
- Adult activity zone with outdoor fitness stations

- Covered pavilion with restrooms, tables, grills, and seating areas
- Integration of existing natural features such as specimen trees and wetland areas
- General history of the land and family
- Creation of a “Dominant Theme” for the park
- Identification of specific play features such as STEM
- “Peace and Participate” features such as History Path, Cultural Garden, and inclusion of a 55” Pecan tree that served as a meeting place for Gullah Elders throughout the last century
- Integration of new pecan tree plantings within the proposed landscape

Jasmine White conducted a series of interviews with key Native Islander community members to include Dr. Louise Cohen and Mr. Thomas Barnwell, Jr. In her work she was able to learn more about the Taylor Family and discovered an even deeper historical connection with the McKnight Family, who owned the property for a long period of time between post-Civil War and the 1950’s. This effort helped generate unique ideas that will be integrated into various design components for the park.

Beyond the Town Council Workshop to review the Conceptual Master Plan, the next steps include:

- Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC) Review – Nov 2023
- Refinements to plans - Based on Community, PRC and Town Council feedback,
- Town Council Approval – Target is by end of CY 2023, and
- Begin Final Design – CY 2024

Mayor Perry asked for public comment:

Wynn Davis addressed Council regarding the concept, noting it’s been 40 years, and she is glad to see it finally included in the budget and stated the concept is appreciated. She suggested the park be named after the McKnight family while paying homage to the Taylor family donation of the property.

Kim Davis addressed Council stating her concern regarding traffic in the area of the proposed park.

Louise Miller Cohen addressed Council regarding the importance of correct spelling of names for historical documentation. She expressed her appreciation to the Town for the efforts being made to document and protect history.

Thomas Barnwell, Jr. addressed Council expressing his appreciation to the team of Town staff for their efforts and Jasmine White for her intensive research.

Charlie Quigg addressed Council regarding the existing plaque on the property and the need for consideration to keep it.

Following the detailed presentation and review of the Master Plan, Council members made comments, asked questions and had discussion regarding: the need for unique programs to learn the history of the area; confirmation that the park is not being extended to Gumtree Road, but there would be a pathway from the park to the existing pathway on Gumtree Road; the convenience of the location from the Gullah Museum, Boys and Girls Club and First Tee; suggestion of adding additional pecan trees to the area; affirmation that additional smaller pavilions on the site would be a plus when the large pavilion is being utilized; the value of having a community park in the specific area; the need to listen to the community regarding the park; acknowledgment that celebrating the culture of the area; the need for gathering places at both parks; the need to utilize the park for family reunions; concern over engraving on the tables as it would encourage others to engrave comments; inquiry and confirmation as to the need for security on site; the need to confirm spellings of names; the need to consider safety for pedestrians and children; acknowledgment of the stories of the communities being told through the park; inquiry as to whether the sound of water can be an addition to the park; inquiry as to how to address the wetlands; a notation there is not a Gullah representative on the Parks and Recreation Commission; the need to involve the community early and often when planning this type of project; and a suggestion for speed limit controls on Wildhorse Road.

Colin expressed appreciation to all who contributed to the plan and stated the concept will be refined based on the input received through this workshop, will go to the Parks and Recreation Commission in November for review and then on to Town Council for approval of the final Master Plan in order to move on to implementation.

Appearance by Citizens

No requests.

Adjournment

The workshop was adjourned at 3:11 p.m.
December 5, 2023

Approved:



Alan R. Perry, Mayor

Kimberly Gammon, Town Clerk

The recording of this Meeting can be found on the Town's website at www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov