



Municipal Park Foundation Board Special Called Meeting

Tuesday, January 21, 2026

6:00 PM

Minutes - Draft

1. Call to Order, Roll Call

Awendaw Park Board Present: Chair Blythe, Coan, Colson, Daniels, Frazier, Pepper-Alston

Not Present: Ott

Staff Present: Town Administrator - Watkins

Ms. Watkins noted that Ms. Sandra Freeman formally resigned from the board, there are now seven total Park Board members (2 vacancies).

2. Prayer - the meeting opened with the Lord's Prayer, led by Chair Blythe.

3. Civility Pledge and Pledge of Allegiance, led by Mr. Pepper-Alston.

4. Old Business Items

A. Update on New Signs for the Municipal Park

- Chair Blythe presented a packet containing three vendor quotes for entrance gate signs.
- The quote from Vivid Designs was prepared for an 18" x 24" sign; board requested a revised quote for a 3' x 5' sign for improved visibility.
- Other sign vendors included Sign Design and Nelson Sign Company.
- Nelson Sign Company was noted as including posts/poles in their pricing and offering a graffiti-resistant coating.
- Next Steps:
 - Obtain a revised quote from Vivid Designs for a 3' x 5' sign.
 - Board review of new quote

B. Update from the Town Administrator on Park Benches

- Ms. Watkins reported that she is still working on obtaining quotes and expects to update the board at the February meeting.

C. Update on Camera Installation at the Municipal Park

- Ms. Watkins noted that cellular cameras are now installed and operational at Gates 1, 2, 3, & 4 (rear entrance to park).
- The cameras are battery powered with solar recharge and are motion activated/following. They are currently producing good image quality.
- Ms. Watkins will provide access to the cameras through the park board email account so Board members have camera access.
- Mr. Pepper-Alston is gathering additional quotes for signs alerting visitors that they are on camera.

D. Update on the Approved Entrance Project

- Chair Blythe reported that site work/grading is scheduled to begin on February 2nd.
- The plan includes grading, adding rock, and preparing the parking lot.
- Fencing installation was anticipated to follow later that week and is pending coordination.

5. New Business Items

A. Consideration of the Proposed Special Events Guidelines for the Municipal Park

- Mr. Pepper-Alston presented a draft framework for establishing a process and application for special events and park rentals. He discussed examples from other local municipalities and Charleston County resources.
- Board discussion followed and highlighted the following:
 - Board members favored creating an application packet using elements from the referenced examples (including a flowchart).
 - Ms. Watkins confirmed that once the Board consolidates a draft, it will be forwarded to the Town Attorney for legal review.
 - Discussion included rental fee considerations and the potential for varying fees based on event type.
 - A reference example was discussed: another municipality charging \$200 with exceptions for nonprofit/civic organizations.
 - Board discussed historical event fees and donations associated with a recurring cycling event.
- Action Items:
 - Board members will review the provided packets and identify 2–3 key elements from each to incorporate.
 - Draft to be refined for discussion at the February meeting, then sent to legal counsel.
 - Ms. Watkins will confirm the historical donation amount for the recurring bike event.
 - Ms. Watkins to attempt to coordinate with Greenbelt representatives for guidance.

B. Consideration of the Number of Board Members to Recommend to Town Council

- Discussion occurred regarding recommending the number of Board members to Town Council. Several viewpoints were expressed, which included:
 - Maintaining seven members given current Board size and functionality.
 - Concern about maintaining sufficient membership for consistent quorum and continued operations when vacancies occur.
 - Discussion included the possibility of language recommending “seven or less” or establishing a minimum number; the Town Administrator noted other town boards are structured at five members.
- Motion: Chair Blythe moved to recommend to Town Council that the number of Municipal Park Board members be seven or less, pending legal review. Mr. Colson seconded the motion, all voted in favor, motion carried.

6. Discussion Items

A. Budget Update

- Mr. Colson presented preliminary budget observations and a proposed approach for upcoming budget planning, noting:
 - Prior year revenues and expenses, including festival-related outcomes.
 - Discussion referenced approximately \$60,000 previously allocated for park improvements and that a portion may remain unspent (estimated \$35,000), with a recommendation to consider rolling funds forward.
 - Park maintenance was discussed as being budgeted at \$40,000 with prior year spend estimated at roughly \$18,000 (exact figures to be verified).
- Discussion included:
 - Aligning the budget with realistic revenue expectations (given prior festival performance).
 - Considering a “disaster recovery” or “rainy day” line-item reserve.
 - Ordinance reference to four annual events for fundraising.
 - Upcoming Council budget retreat in February (date TBD).
- Budget Next Steps:
 - Mr. Colson will email the draft budget document to the Board via the park board email for informational review.
 - Ms. Watkins will notify the Board of the Town Council budget retreat date.
 - Board members were asked to submit feedback and proposed amendments (maintenance schedules, reserve fund, event assumptions, etc.) for later discussion.

B. Municipal Park Master Plan

- The Board discussed master plan concepts and priorities. Discussion included:
 - Recognition that some concepts may be limited by Greenbelt restrictions.
 - Consensus that restrooms and trails are top priorities for initial park usability.

- Discussion explored near-term restroom options such as portable toilets (rental/maintenance considerations discussed), including the possibility of adding a handicap-accessible unit and determining service frequency based on usage.
- Trail ideas included potentially adding exercise stations along trails and exploring sponsorship opportunities.
- Master Plan Next Steps:
 - Board members will continue reviewing master plan materials and revisit during the February meeting.
 - Town Administrator to research any applicable permitting/regulatory concerns (e.g., flood zone, siting, maintenance obligations) and report back.

7. Public Comments

- None

8. Board Member Comments

- Mr. Coan commented on his frustration with limited feedback during prior joint discussion with the Town Council; noting that council seemed to want the Park Board to bring forward recommendations for approval, instead of providing direction and strategic guidance.
- Chair Blythe read an email from Councilwoman Helms that highlighted that the entrance project is the first major park improvement and will be used to develop best practices for Park Board and Town Council interactions going forward. She also encouraged the Park Board to develop a strategic master plan linked to priorities.

9. Adjournment

Mr. Pepper-Alston moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Colson seconded, all voted in favor, motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:47 PM.

Date: Jan 21, 2026

Prepared By:

Christopher R. Ott.

Municipal Park Board Secretary

Note: These meeting minutes are not verbatim. To watch the full meeting video, please visit the town's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/TownOfAwendaw