

**The official minutes of the University of South Carolina Board of Trustees are maintained by the Secretary of the Board. Certified copies of minutes may be requested by contacting the Board of Trustees' Office at trustees@sc.edu. Electronic or other copies of original minutes are not official Board of Trustees' documents.**

University of South Carolina  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Buildings and Grounds Committee – Called Meeting

September 27, 2019

The Buildings and Grounds Committee of the University of South Carolina Board of Trustees convened in a called meeting at 10 a.m. on Friday, September 27, 2019, by telephone conference hosted from Room 206-B of the Osborne Administration Building.

Chairman William C. Hubbard attended in person. Members participating by telephone were: Mr. C. Dan Adams; Mr. J. Egerton Burroughs; Mr. Toney J. Lister; Mr. Miles Loadholt; Mr. Eugene P. Warr Jr.; Mr. Thad H. Westbrook; Mr. John C. von Lehe Jr., Board Chairman; and Mr. Hubert F. Mobley, Board Vice Chairman. Ms. Leah B. Moody was absent.

Other Trustees participating by telephone were: Mr. A. C. “Bubba” Fennell; Dr. C. Edward Floyd; Ms. Rose Buyck Newton; Dr. C. Dorn Smith III; and Mr. Charles H. Williams.

Also attending the meeting in person were Columbia Faculty Senate Chairman Mark Cooper; Columbia Student Government President Luke Rankin; President of USC’s College Panhellenic Association (CPA) Christen Piccioni; and President of USC’s Interfraternity Council (IFC) Zach Goldberg.

Others attending the meeting in person were: President Robert L. Caslen Jr.; Secretary J. Cantey Heath Jr.; General Counsel Walter “Terry” H. Parham; Interim Provost and School of Music Dean Tayloe Harding; Chief Operating Officer Edward L. Walton; Vice President for Student Affairs Dennis A. Pruitt; Associate Vice President for Student Life Anna Edwards; Director of Facilities Planning and Programming and University Architect Derek S. Gruner; Interim Chief Communications Officer Jeff Stensland; Chief Audit Executive Pam Doran; Executive Director of Military Programs and Strategies, Palmetto College, James Smith; and Board staff member Terri Saxon.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Hubbard called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and invited those at the table to introduce themselves. Secretary Heath called the roll to confirm those participating by telephone and that a quorum was present to conduct business. Mr. Stensland introduced Lucas Daprile with *The State* newspaper in Columbia; Mike Fitts with *The Post & Courier* newspaper in Charleston; Sarah Pritchard and

Summer Huechtker with *Carolina News*; Joseph Leonard, Vanessa Purpura and Megan Crum with *The Daily Gamecock*; and Emily Wakeman with WIS-TV.

Chairman Hubbard said the agenda had been posted, the press notified as required by the Freedom of Information Act, and the agenda had been circulated to committee.

## II. Greek Village Parking

Chairman Hubbard called on Mr. Walton, who said the meeting was called to provide clarity to the Greek Village Parking discussion at the committee's September 13, 2019 meeting. Mr. Walton called on Mr. Gruner for details.

Mr. Gruner reiterated some of the West Campus Parking Development information presented when the Buildings and Grounds Committee approved establishing Phase I design with a budget of \$50,000 funded with the Greek Parking Student Fee at its September 13 meeting. He sought more cost effective and convenient strategies to serve the need of Greek Village (GV) students at mealtimes in that the cost of surface parking to both build and maintain is a fraction compared to the parking garage originally envisioned. The cost of the 1,400-car garage would require borrowing approximately \$30 million. The debt service, supported by the Greek Parking Fee, would last for the next 20-30 years, plus the cost of maintenance.

Mr. Gruner said the proposed action would repurpose a 2.4 acre site on Devine Street between Gadsden Street and the railroad. Approximately 300 cars are anticipated on this site including parking under the Blossom Street Bridge. Two academic facilities, one for the School of Visual Arts and Design and the other for the Theatre Department, must be relocated from the future parking site to space that will be renovated to receive them which will be appropriately funded by the parking project. Incidentally, Theatre recently renovated their location at Devine Street spending nearly \$250,000 to do so.

He said one of the images shown at the September committee meeting noted "An ongoing parking master plan seeks to reallocate 500 spaces in the existing AD3 commuter lot for use by Greek Students." Planning for parking is dynamic at this time due to the evolving demands of Campus Village and parking for Campus Village and Greeks are interrelated since there is only so much available land to allocate for parking. At the time of the September 13 committee meeting, Mr. Gruner said he was not prepared to define a timetable for the reallocation of the commuter lot AD3. Knowing the only available land to create replacement commuter parking for lot AD3 was the recreation field between Gadsden Street and the

railroad, the timing of the new parking that would enable AD3 to be assigned to Greek use was tied to when the field could be repurposed.

Mr. Gruner noted the Buildings and Grounds Committee's September 13, 2019, Phase I approval, was the first of five steps of needed regulatory approval to authorize the University to study options, refine design, create estimates of the cost, and confirm schedules.

Mr. Gruner said questions that must be resolved in Phase I included: exploration of sub-surface conditions, in which he expects to encounter old building foundations that can destabilize the ground beneath development and thus may require removal; a plan that respects railroad setbacks to more firmly determine the precise number of spaces on the site; storm drainage requirements and strategies; zoning design requirements; and an understanding from DOT regarding the Blossom Street bridge replacement and parking below.

A subsequent Phase II approval cycle tentatively scheduled for April to August of 2020, will allow USC to complete the design and subsequently construct the parking. It is anticipated that it will be early 2022 before the 300 spaces are ready for use.

Mr. Gruner said previous planning intended to maintain the recreation field on Gadsden Street until new fields could be constructed on land near the Congaree River off National Guard Road, in late 2021 at the earliest. In the last two weeks, Student Life administration and Facilities Planning made the difficult decision to repurpose the field a year or two earlier, to develop parking for the fall of 2020, to enable 500 spaces to be used by Greek students. This new commuter parking on the recreation field will be described as interim and would have a graveled surface suitable for future improvements subject to other parking planning in the area. He said he spoke with the City of Columbia zoning administrator to determine that gravel parking lots are allowable in the city ordinance (17-343) and are permitted as a "request for alternative surface parking" with the Board of Zoning Appeals. He said the City has permitted gravel lots as temporary situations for two-three years.

Mr. Gruner concluded that to achieve what he described, which would enable 500 spaces in the AD3 lot to be reallocated for Greek use by fall semester in 2020, approval was needed to gravel the Gadsden Street recreation field lot as a first stage of work, with funding from the Greek Parking Fee.

Mr. Rankin thanked Chairman Hubbard for calling the meeting. He introduced Ms. Piccioni and Mr. Goldberg, who also thanked Mr. Hubbard. Ms. Piccioni said as President of the CPA, she oversees 13 Greek chapters, representing 4,000 members of the GV. She thanked the Trustees for their quick response

to a letter, written in collaboration with the 20 presidents of GV organizations, to address growing concerns and uncertainty surrounding parking accommodations and GV improvements. As President of the IFC, Mr. Goldberg said he oversees 20 chapters, including seven GV houses, and 2,500 members.

Mr. Goldberg discussed three main presentation goals: to explain the current situation regarding parking and other issues in the GV related to parking and transportation; to clarify student desires for future parking accommodations to meet the needs of students in GV chapters, especially during mealtime; and to express student desires to maintain communication regarding future plans for GV, which includes a high level of transparency and consistent input from students and student leaders.

Ms. Piccioni said in addition to her chapter's mandatory meal plan fees, she pays \$360 in Greek dues and \$375 in future GV parking fees per semester. Greek students who do not reside in a GV house are not authorized to park in the GV, even though they must go there two to three times a day for meals, Monday – Friday, causing students to park illegally and be ticketed. She said the University shuttle system is unreliable and inconsistent in providing transportation to the GV, in that only one bus is dedicated to the route and the commute time from campus to the GV averages 26 minutes. To assess the GV students' desire, Ms. Piccioni said a survey was conducted in which they were asked to choose between construction of a parking garage with continuation of the parking fee or the creation and reallocation of parking lots to give GV students 700-800 spaces and a removal of the \$375 per semester GV parking fee. She reported 1,220 responses were received, with 78.7% in favor of the removal of the \$375 fee and a much smaller lot maintenance fee if deemed necessary. Ms. Piccioni asked the Trustees to continue to seek out student input, especially from the leaders of the IFC and CPA, as well as chapter presidents, about how the lot will be regulated in terms of parking passes, costs, parking times, and other utilization questions.

Mr. Goldberg said he believed a higher level of transparency and communication from the Board to the students regarding current and future plans would help reduce confusion and increase understanding for all members of Greek organizations. He noted converting the Gadsden Street recreation field to a gravel parking lot would increase usage of the Strom Thurmond Wellness Center (STWC) fields. Therefore, he supported installment of synthetic turf at the STWC fields to increase usage for intramural sports and other activities. Dr. Pruitt noted the installation of synthetic turf on the STWC fields would provide 24/7 access.

Chairman Hubbard thanked the students for their leadership and asked Mr. Gruner to discuss the timeline for creating recreation fields on the property behind Gamecock Park. Mr. Gruner said the plan is to bring the recreation fields on line by late 2021 or early 2022; however, it includes multiple approvals.

Mr. von Lehe said he appreciated the student's letter and felt everyone was on the same page.

Chairman Hubbard summarized the discussion. He said four out of five GV students agreed with dropping the Greek Parking Student Fee beginning in the Spring 2020 semester and installing a gravel surface lot to provide 400-500 parking spaces. Mr. Gruner clarified that following approvals, the new request would provide 500 parking spaces beginning Fall 2020, with an additional 300 in Spring 2022, making a total of 800 new GV parking spaces.

Mr. Gruner said with Facilities scheduled to move out of its building in December 2019, staff parking around the building would become available for students. Also, the Greek Parking Student Fees collected thus far would fund the proposed gravel lot. He said Chairman Hubbard and Secretary Heath agreed to call a Building and Grounds Committee meeting on October 11 for new action to allocate funds for the interim graveling of the Gadsden Street recreation field for commuters by fall 2020. Once approved, the project would begin in April 2020, with completion scheduled for the start of the Fall 2020 semester.

Chairman Hubbard asked Mr. Gruner for an update on the Department of Transportation (DOT) Blossom Street Project. He responded that DOT's plan is to replace the bridge determined to be nearing the end of its service life, in 2023-2024; including exploration of pedestrian accommodations across the bridge. He said he is still studying expanding student parking under the current bridge and influencing the development of the new bridge to provide parking under the bridge.

Mr. Goldberg asked if 800 spaces was the maximum number of new GV parking spaces that could come on line and Mr. Gruner yes. He noted the 800, would be in addition to the 612 spaces in the GV.

Ms. Piccioni said improvements to the University's shuttle system would help relieve some parking issues. Mr. Walton responded to Chairman Hubbard's questions about the University's shuttle system. He said University employees Jack Claypoole, Derrick Huggins and Ester Legette were currently reviewing the shuttle system and should have ready this Fall, improvement recommendations to provide rapid, reliable transportation. Mr. Walton also noted that a parking decal fee for the new spaces would be determined.

Ms. Newton said she appreciated staff's leadership to address the concerns and thanked the students for their leadership.

President Caslen thanked the students for their leadership and professional presentation. His take-away, he said, was the importance of transparency and communication to manage expectations.

Chairman Hubbard noted there was no longer a need for the Executive Session listed on the agenda.

III. Adjournment

Chairman Hubbard declared the called meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Cantey Heath, Jr.  
Secretary