

Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission celebrates opening of newly renovated Seven Oaks Park baseball complex

April 4, 2014 By Tom Lanahan

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Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission members throw out the first pitch Thursday after the ceremony. (photo by Tom Lanahan)

The Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission celebrated a special day Thursday evening when they held their grand opening of the newly renovated Seven Oaks Park Baseball Complex.

The park, which opened in 1971, has been a staple in the Irmo community for years according to commission Executive Director Elizabeth Taylor. She said one of the reasons the park underwent renovations was to make it more user-friendly.

“Our approach was to create a ball complex within a park,” she said. “Originally, the park was created around a ball complex, so I hope you can tell with the trees, the shade structures and the way we have put this back into the park, hooking it back into our trail system, that it’s going to serve more purposes than just playing baseball.”

The renovation project was part of a larger \$18 million project in the Irmo area. The main area of the park consists of four fields surrounding the newly built concession stand and sitting area for spectators. The concession stand building and field renovations cost just more than \$6 million.



Before the renovations, Taylor said the park was not in a state in which the recreation commission could hold many tournaments during the season. The park now can accommodate any type of baseball game, she said.

“The whole idea of the renovations at Seven Oaks Park is to create a community center and park that will serve the community for the next 20 years,” she said. “We’ll probably have more tournament play than we have had in the past, so we did build these fields to accommodate

Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission Executive Director Elizabeth Taylor said the renovations to the park will have a big economic impact on the community. (photo by Tom Lanahan)

that as well as our recreational leagues.”

Taylor said she was asked by the commission in 2008 to start reaching out to the community and asking residents what they thought their

needs would be over the next 10 years. The commission then used surveys and focus groups to find out what issues were important to the community.



The new concession stand and bathroom area is the centerpiece of the baseball field renovations. (photo by Tom Lanahan)

Taylor attributes the successful completion of the project to residents in the Irmo community.

“The commission never touched it until the community got through with it,” she said. “I think that’s why, when we asked these elected officials for support, we had no opposition. None.”

Taylor said she thinks parks have a very strong economic impact on communities and that the renovation of the park will revitalize some of the older communities in the Irmo area.

“The Seven Oaks and St. Andrews area should see a real economic impact by the revitalization and expansion of the park facilities and the tournaments that will be brought here,” she said.

Some areas within the park still need construction, according to Taylor. But once the park is complete, she said plans to build a gymnasium are in the immediate future.

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