

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

4:00 p.m., Monday, March 5, 2018

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was called to order at 4:00 p.m., Monday, March 5, 2018 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bell and Ward, Chair Smith, Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham, Captain Usry, Assistant Administrator Fragoso and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Chair Smith called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 5, 2018; Councilmember Ward seconded.

In an earlier communication, Clerk Copeland informed Committee members that the minutes presented at the February Council meeting had a significant typographical error in a motion; on page 6 of 9, the Saturday construction hours in the final motion stated 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. when the motion was 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. per the audio recording of the meeting. After discussing the matter with the City Attorney, the minutes presented for approval at this meeting have been corrected.

Amendment: Councilmember Bell moved to approve the minutes as corrected; Councilmember Ward seconded and the amendment PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

VOTE: The amended motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments

- A. Request to hold SEALkids Swim event on Saturday, August 11th or September 8th as a City-sponsored event – Troy Pusateri
- B. Request for City-sponsored event status for South Carolina Aquarium's 3rd Annual Turtle Trek 5k Sunset Beach Run and Kids' Fun Run on Saturday, September 29th at 5:30 p.m.– Stephanie Gabosch

Administrator Tucker stated that the SEALkids Swim and the Turtle Trek have been held on the island in the past and were low impact events for the City; she opined that the Committee would recommend approval to City Council as City-sponsored events in 2018. In addition, she suggested that the City could add them to the list of approved annual, City-sponsored events so that the representatives would not have to come before the Committee each year for approval. They would be required to communicate with the Public Safety agencies of the City as to the when, where, and how and provide the certificate of insurance.

Mr. Pusateri representing SEALkids thanked the Committee for their consideration and reported that last year's event had raised seventy thousand dollars (\$70,000) that helped some twenty (20) kids; it drew approximately sixty (60) swimmers and three hundred fifty (350) people to the auction in the evening. He was present to confirm a date for 2018 and to ask for approval to hold the event at the Isle of Palms annually. He said that, when he plans the event, he chooses the Saturday closest to September 11th, and, for 2018, that date is September 8th.

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to recommend to City Council the approval the SEALkids Swim event as an annual City-sponsored event to be held on the Saturday nearest September 11th each year and to recommend the approval of the Aquarium Turtle Trek Sunset Run and Walk as an annual City-sponsored event to be held in 2018 on Saturday, September 29th; Councilmember Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Rusty Streetman, 4004 Palm, stated that his home was between two (2) construction sites and his issue was that delivery trucks were parking in the street. The driveways at the construction sites were filled with the workers' vehicles, but ample right-of-way existed between 39th and 40th Avenues. As shown in photos he brought to the meeting, which are attached to the historical record of the meeting, these instances create a substantial public safety issue. He added that when he was at home, he personally asked that the vehicles be moved, and he has made quite a few calls to the Police Department who have responded quickly and have been very helpful. He reported that, on a particularly bad day, the Animal Control Officer stopped by and pulled into Mr. Streetman's driveway; he needed Mr. Streetman's assistance to get back onto Palm Boulevard. Mr. Streetman was asking for more enforcement.

Administrator Tucker stated that ten (10) tickets have been written by the Police Department at these two (2) locations.

Elizabeth Campsen, 32 Intracoastal Court, commented on the possible changes to the Managed Beach Parking Plan and voiced hope that some tweaks could be made before this tourist season. Having researched the Beach Management Plan, she stated that the City currently has sixteen hundred (1,600) public parking spaces, including the municipal lots, with five hundred (500) between 21st and 57th Avenues on Palm Boulevard. The number does not include the vehicles that park two (2) deep on the ocean-side of Palm. One (1) change she would like to see was limiting parking on Palm Boulevard to one (1) side or parallel parking on both sides. She recalled a plan offered by Stantec that included a median on Palm Boulevard paid for with tourism funds. She reported that she has already called the Police Department about boat trailers parked on the bike path on Waterway Boulevard, and she suggested limiting the trailers to the areas on 41st Avenue where there are no homes.

Lavonne Settimo, 25 – 24th Avenue, brought to the Committee's attention the poor condition of many of the beach access paths on the island; she said that many of them required walking through murky water and mud. Secondly, she repeated her husband's request made at the City Council meeting for the City to require that all dogs, resident and non-resident, have an IOP dog license.

Gail Jordan, 3704 Palm Boulevard, stated that she could not entertain guests in the tourist season because the day-trippers take up all of the parking in front of her home; she asked if the City could eliminate parking in front of the residences of full-time residents.

Bob Miller, 3 Fairway Village Lane, stated that he was a member of the IOP Coyote Control Coalition, a group of six (6) individuals who share the common goal of educating and informing citizens and visitors and influencing government bodies to try to reduce the number of coyotes on the island. He offered four (4) recommendations for actions to be taken by the Public Safety Committee and City Council to address the public safety concerns created by the growing coyote population and their aggressiveness, and they are as follows:

- The implementation of simple signage stating what one should and should not do around coyotes;

- The placement of flyers in each renters' welcome package from the rental agencies;
- The adoption of an island-wide coyote management plan; and
- The island-wide implementation of actions.

Sally Wiseman, 35 Fairway Dunes Lane, told the Committee that she never left home without her whistle to scare off the coyotes; as his introduction, Mr. Miller stated that she has spent a lot of time researching coyotes and how other areas have dealt with them. She stated that a City coyote management plan should be consistent with the Mount Pleasant and Sullivan's Island plans. A plan should include a three-fold purpose, a strategic plan and the balance of the plan would be the details behind the strategic plan; a copy of the proposed Coyote Management Plan dated January 23, 2018 was attached to the historical record of the meeting.

Gary Hart from the Banana Cabana expressed concern about parking for him and his employees in the City lots due to the re-opening of The Palms Hotel and the City's agreement with them for parking for their guests in the lots. He stated that, although he has purchased a seasonal parking pass, over the past two (2) seasons, he has had problems finding a vacant spot, and he worries about his employees.

Administrator Tucker commented that guests of the hotel are not guaranteed a parking space.

4. Old Business

Consideration of coyote control, research and public information

Chair Smith asked Animal Control Officer Enourato to give the Committee an update on actions being taken by the City relative to coyotes.

3

Officer Enourato stated that the City has had five (5) soft leg traps deployed at the rear of 2300 Palm Boulevard at the request of the owner for two (2) weeks; the City's contractor Critter Control removed the traps yesterday and was in the process of relocating them. The evidence was that the coyotes were active in that area so that the traps will likely be placed there again after a couple of weeks.

The Administrator reported that the City ordered new beach access signage for the most heavily travelled accesses; once installed, one (1) of the messages will be about wildlife. Since the City cannot install signage on private property, it cannot put any signs on the accesses that belong to the Wild Dunes Community Association.

Councilmember Bell was clear that trapping was not going to solve the City's coyote problem; information he has seen has recommended a multi-pronged approach to control the coyote population.

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to recommend to City Council that (1) the City move from the current monthly fee structure to a "pay per coyote" basis, (2) the City staff provide the Committee a step-by-step plan to implement hunting as a legal and lethal means to immediately reduce the coyote population and (3) review of and recommendation for a comprehensive coyote management plan to be adopted by the City; Chair Smith seconded.

According to Captain Usry, the City must pay a contractor to place the traps and pay an additional fee when a coyote was caught; it also paid a fee if another fur-bearing animal was caught unless

the Animal Control Office was available to release it. The traps were checked every day by either the contractor or the Animal Control Officer.

From DNR, the Chair learned about a different type of trap referred to as a Collarum trap which is canine specific, but is illegal in South Carolina; the person with whom she spoke said that the City would be allowed to use whatever method they wanted.

Councilmember Ward moved to suspend the rules to bring the members of the Coyote Coalition into the discussion; Councilmember Bell seconded.

Councilmember Bell and Chair Smith withdrew the motion and second respectively.

When Mr. Miller, Ms. Wiseman and Ms. Gogol joined the Committee, Councilmember Ward asked Ms. Wiseman if she agreed with Councilmember Bell's multi-pronged approach, and she responded that each coyote management plan she read included multiple means of reducing or controlling coyote populations.

Judy Gogol added that the City needed to feel a sense of urgency to act as quickly as possible; she noted that mating season was over and that the pups would be born in sixty to seventy (60 - 70) days – just as tourists begin to arrive on the island.

Administrator Tucker stated that the USDA-Wildlife Service is the agency that would perform the hunting activities, and they have indicated that they were willing to come to a Council meeting to discuss their work.

When the Committee discussed the pros and cons of a coyote management plan, Councilmember Bell stated that the plan would be a framework, not a prescriptive; Ms. Wiseman noted that Mount Pleasant has not had to tweak their plan in fifteen (15) years.

The Administrator was reminded that a coyote management plan was drafted, but it was not adopted by City Council.

Councilmember Ward recalled that the draft never got out of committee for Council to consider.

Councilmember Bell made his motion for the second time.

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to recommend to City Council that (1) the City move from the current monthly fee structure to a “pay per coyote” basis, (2) the City staff provide the Committee a step-by-step plan to implement hunting as a legal and lethal means to immediately reduce the coyote population and (3) review of and recommendation for a comprehensive coyote management plan to be adopted by the City; Chair Smith seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Smith wanted the City to step up its public messaging campaign, emphasizing what residents and visitors can do to discourage coyotes from interacting with pets and humans via updates to the City's coyote page on the website and, possibly, a mailer.

Councilmember Bell remarked that the short-term rental companies would likely have a very different view of a messaging campaign; as dependent as the City is on tourist dollars, he cautioned that it cannot afford to scare tourists away.

Ms. Wiseman suggested changing the word “co-exist” to “coyote smart.”

Chair Smith repeated her desire for the City to partner with Sullivan’s Island and Dewees to hire a researcher to get a count of the coyotes on the islands.

5. New Business

MOTION: Chair Smith moved to re-order the Agenda to address Item C as the next item of business; Councilmember Bell seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Discussion on obstructions on Palm Boulevard sidewalks

Administrator Tucker stated that she has learned that SCDOT is responsible for the overhang on Palm Boulevard, but not for the removal of the obstructions on the sidewalk; they are also responsible for replacing dangerous things, like cracked pieces, etc. of the sidewalks. Overgrowth and encroachment from the sides fall to the property owner, the property management company, or the City, as a last resort. She reported that she and Assistant Fragoso walked the sidewalk from 21st to 41st Avenue with a representative from SCDOT and divided up the problems that were under their purview from those falling to the City.

A. Renewed consideration of Managed Beach Parking Plan to include safety, traffic flow and impact on beach access

Chair Smith referred to an email that contained an outline for the Committee that listed primary and supporting goals as well as the focus for this meeting as follows:

- A. Primary Goals
 - 1. Improve safety of seasonal parking and traffic while providing proper public access to the beach;
 - 2. Protect residential parking area restrictions already in place.
- B. Supporting Goals
 - 1. Promote efficient traffic flow and parking that steers beachgoers toward the City’s Front Beach lots and/or the IOP County Park;
 - 2. Explore options for adding paid beach parking beyond the Front Beach in 2019;
 - 3. Develop long-range solutions to meet demands of accelerating visitor growth.
- C. March focus
 - 1. Initial overview of potential changes and challenges
 - 2. Develop ideas for short-term solutions for beach parking along Palm Boulevard east of 20th Avenue
 - 3. Discuss alterations to traffic flow for improved ingress and egress

Approaching the parking problem from the standpoint of what can be done this season that would impact public safety and could be implemented, the following motion was made:

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to recommend to City Council to implement the Managed Beach Parking Plan year-round, to prohibit boat trailer parking on Waterway Boulevard by residents and non-residents and to implement parallel parking on both sides of Palm Boulevard from 21st to 41st Avenues; Councilmember Ward seconded.

Councilmember Bell stated that parallel parking on Palm would significantly reduce the number of cars, but still meet the requirements of the Beach Management Plan for public beach access.

Chair Smith offered an alternative to parallel parking on both sides of the street and to have parallel parking only on the ocean-side of Palm Boulevard thereby eliminating the need for drivers to turn around or loop through the neighborhoods to park in the opposite direction. She also proposed making the non-ocean side of Palm residential parking only.

Captain Usry commented that any change to parking would require an engineering design, DOT approval, ordinance changes and appropriate signage.

Amendment: Chair Smith amended the motion to add consideration of residential parking only on the non-ocean side of Palm Boulevard from 21st to 41st Avenue; Councilmember Bell seconded.

Captain Usry stated that presently the only area of parallel parking on Palm Boulevard was on 21st Avenue closest to Beachside, and, from 21st to 41st Avenue, the parking is four (4) feet from the pavement. Making both sides parallel parking would make parking on Palm Boulevard safer and would allow for a reduction in the number of spaces; the negative issue with parallel parking on Palm would see beachgoers turning around or going into the neighborhoods to park in the non-ocean side.

6

Chief Graham agreed that parallel parking would be preferable, but getting parked was the problem.

VOTE on the Amendment: The amendment Failed on a vote of 1 to 2 with Councilmembers Bell and Ward casting dissenting votes.

Administrator Tucker opined that the Committee would get pushback from residents on extending the parking plan to year-round because residents want to entertain family and friends without getting passes for their guests.

VOTE on the Original Motion: The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Without funding, the Administrator noted that she could not act on getting the services of a transportation engineer since it was not included in the FY18 budget; she also asked whether the Committee wanted to go through the competitive bidding process or to approach Stantec for its services.

Councilmember Ward asked that the Administrator and the Treasurer look at the budget and to locate possible funding sources on which the Ways and Means Committee could vote.

Chair Smith recalled comments made at the City Council meeting about the need for pedestrian lines-of-sight at some beach accesses between 41st and 57th Avenues, and she was reminded

that the rights-of-way on Palm in that part of the island were not wide enough to support parking four (4) feet from the pavement.

MOTION: Chair Smith moved to include a study of the need for sufficient pedestrian lines of sight at the beach accesses between 41st and 57th Avenues in the scope of work for the traffic engineer; Councilmember Ward seconded.

Councilmember Bell advocated for a comprehensive plan for parking inclusive of all of the things that need to be done for the FY20 budget cycle; at the present time, he supported making those changes that can have an immediate impact on parking safety.

The Administrator noted that the City did not know whether SCDOT would grant line-of-sight for beach accesses or if they have standards for pedestrian line-of-sight or, if the standard exists, what the footage would be on either side of the path. In the area of 55th to 57th Avenue, another issue was whether the space required for line-of-sight would reduce the available parking so that it would no longer meet the requirement for full and complete access to the beach.

Councilmembers Bell and Ward expressed opposition to this additional work because it would add to the amount of time the traffic engineer would need to complete the work and add to the unbudgeted expense.

Chair Smith and Councilmember Ward withdrew the motion and second respectively.

B. Discussion of improvements to crosswalk at 20th and Palm Boulevard

Residents have voiced concerns about this crosswalk because it is difficult to cross safely since most drivers do not stop; one (1) suggestion was to have a blinking sign that would be activated by the pedestrian(s).

7

Captain Usry stated that this crosswalk belonged to SCDOT; therefore, any change to it would be their decision.

If the City chose to make it a stamped crosswalk to draw more attention to it, it could likely get an encroachment permit, and the City could put money into the FY19 budget to do it. The cost for stamping across four (4) lanes of traffic would be approximately ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

The Chair asked that staff reach out to SCDOT to learn what the City's options would be to improve the crosswalk at 20th Avenue and Palm Boulevard.

D. Consideration of approval of Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Agreement between the IOP Police Department and the Town of Mount Pleasant Police Department

Mutual Aid Agreements are routine between neighboring communities; they must be approved annually by the Public Safety Committee and by City Council.

MOTION: Councilmember Ward moved to approve the Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Agreement between the IOP Police Department and the Town of Mount Pleasant Police Department; Councilmember Bell seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Highlights of Departmental Reports

Fire Department – Chief Graham

In the month of February, personnel responded to forty-three (43) calls, of which twenty-six (26) were EMS calls. Nineteen (19) fire inspections were conducted that located twenty-four (24) violations. Fire Department personnel averaged approximately thirty-nine (39) hours of training on a variety of subjects. A leak has been found in the radiator of the generator; the City is waiting on a quote for the replacement of the radiator if that is possible. In the meantime, inquiries are being made to rent a generator; if the rental is necessary, the City must provide a plug for it from the building that will cost approximately ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). On two (2) occasions during the month, fire crews conducted station tours and talked about fire prevention with eighty-six (86) kindergartners and twelve (12) teachers from Jennie Moore Elementary School in Mount Pleasant.

Police Department – Captain Usry

The Police Department hosted a “Coffee with a Cop” event at Café Paname with twelve (12) residents in attendance; the Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Dispatch Center Public Education team was also present and provided information on “text 9-1-1” and “smart 9-1-1.” In February, Communication Specialists responded to three thousand nine hundred eighty-eight (3,988) calls, and, of that number, three thousand five hundred fifty-nine (3,559) were for the IOP Police Department. Officers made three hundred sixty (360) traffic stops and wrote tickets for seventy-seven (77) of them. Seven (7) coyote sightings were reported in the month. Of the twenty-eight unkempt lots carried over from 2017, five (5) remain unresolved, and, of the sixty-three (63) encroachments in the right-of-way carried over, eight (8) were unresolved and would likely be receiving citations for not complying.

8

Councilmember Bell commented that the number of traffic stops continued to increase month over month while the percentage of those stops that receive tickets was consistently around twenty percent (20%). He opined that creating a lot of data that does not produce a behavioral change was a waste of time, and he did not want to see anyone wasting his time producing reports that do not get used for anything. He indicated that the reports do tell the reader if the Department enforces consistently across the island, things that could be done differently, etc. He expressed the opinion that, when an officer sees an infraction, parking or otherwise, he/she should stop and handle it, but the perception now is that parking infractions are not handled by the regular patrol officer because it is a BSO duty. He thought that officers should be advised to act and not to drive by. He also told Captain Usry that he thought the Department could submit its data to Council electronically rather than in a written report.

Captain Usry stated that every traffic stop gets a written citation, either a state citation with a fine attached or a warning; no verbal warnings are issued. Officers are encouraged to write a citation when the speed is ten (10) miles over the posted speed limit and to take into consideration other factors, such as time of day, weather conditions, and the fact the IOP is a residential community. The Captain noted that staffing for a shift are one (1) sergeant and two (2) officers who are dealing with the mischief that occurs on the island in the course of twelve (12) hours, as well as speeding drivers. She also explained that the officers have access to any warnings and/or tickets the driver may have gotten in the City in the past, as well as the driver’s driving record maintained by the State via their in-car computers.

Administrator Tucker remarked that the Police and Fire Departmental reports were the product of requests for information from past Councilmembers and reporting requirements; if components of the reports have information the Committee was not interested in seeing, it would not be included.

Responding to Councilmember Bell, Captain Usry said that the report takes approximately sixteen (16) hours to compile, and some of the data must be manually gathered.

Councilmember Bell commented that the Committee could get “more productive analysis of data with less work if done correctly.”

As a final comment, Administrator Tucker stated that patrol officers do write parking tickets.

7. Miscellaneous Business

Workplace Safety Resolution

MOTION: Chair Smith moved to recommend to City Council the adoption of the Workplace Safety Resolution; Councilmember Bell seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Next Meeting Date: 5:00 p.m., Monday, April 9, 2018 in the Conference Room

8. Executive Session – not needed

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Chair Smith moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:07 p.m.; Councilmember Bell seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk