

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

5:00 p.m., Monday, November 5, 2018

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:00 p.m., Monday, November 5, 2018 in the City Hall Conferenced Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bell and Ward, Chair Smith, Interim City Administrator Fragoso, Interim Police Chief Usry, Fire Chief Graham and 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 October 1, 2018 as submitted; Councilmember Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments – None

MOTION: Chair Smith moved to re-order the Agenda to move New Business Item A to be the first item of business; Councilmember Bell seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. New Business

A. Discussion of proposed cancer benefit bike ride "LOWVELO" on November 2, 2019 to support MUSC's Hollings Cancer Center

Dr. Gustavo Leone, Director of the Hollings Cancer Center and Dean of Oncology, introduced his entourage as Janet Bolin, Executive Director of this fund raising event, Chris Aronhalt and Jeff Corvett with Medalistsports who will manage the operations surrounding the event.

Dr. Leone was very enthusiastic about this fund-raising event that will encompass an entire weekend with rides of twenty-five (25), fifty (50) and one hundred (100) miles; this ride will be one (1) of seventy (70) across the nation that are designated by the National Cancer Institute. The Hollings Cancer Center is ranked number twenty-four (24) in the nation for its cancer clinical care. He informed the Committee about the work done at the Hollings Cancer Center, and their goal of establishing additional research centers throughout the state.

Chris Aronhalt stated that their role was to ensure the safety of the riders in the event; they want to limit the impact to the local communities as much as possible. He noted that it would be "a rules of the road" ride; they will not be asking to close any roads on the island. Riders will be asked to stay in bike lanes or on the shoulder of the roads. He has not finalized the route because they continued to finalize participation from the local municipalities they would ride through; they wanted the ride to showcase Charleston and the coastal area. Maps have two (2) different scenarios based on where the start-line is located. They expect one hundred or two hundred (100 – 200) riders for the one hundred (100) mile distance, and their travel over the Isle of Palms will likely take one to two (1 – 2) hours.

Councilmember Ward noted that the City gets so many requests from well-deserving non-profits and it cannot grant every one; therefore, he was interested in hearing what the Chiefs had to say about this event. Chief Graham voiced no concerns, and Interim Chief Usry stated that it would depend on the start and how many riders would be here; her only point of concern was the light at the foot of the Connector.

MOTION: Councilmember Ward moved for the City's Chief of Police and Interim Police Chief to meet with the ride organizers to work out logistics and to make a recommendation to the Committee; Chair Smith seconded.

4. Old Business

A. Discussion of parking and traffic issues

- **Review of Stantec work product and impact of recent changes to parking**

MOTION: Chair Smith moved to suspend the rules to invite Stewart and Rick Day of Stantec to join the members for discussion; Councilmember Bell seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Interim Administrator Fragoso introduced Rick Day and Stuart Day from Stantec and noted that Rick has worked with the City as the City's traffic engineer consultant since the inception of the needed for a managed beach parking plan and that Stuart had come on-board with the changes to the plan in January 2018. The most recent contract with Stantec was to update the sign plan based on the recent changes and to look at the impact of the changes to the number of parking spaces on Palm Boulevard between 21st and 40th Avenues by going to parallel parking and prohibiting double parking.

Stuart Day explained that they laid out all of the possible parking spaces in that stretch of Palm Boulevard taking note of driveways, trees, fire hydrants, etc. and counted four hundred thirty (430) perpendicular spaces.

Chair Smith noted that this number is far greater than the number required by the Comprehensive Beach Plan; they then looked at the area with parallel parking in mind and counted three hundred fifty-six (356) spaces. This is a reduction of seventy-four (74) spaces.

Stuart Day explained that the DHEC OCRM Public Beach Access Facility Classifications are determined by the amenities available at the beach access point. In that table, the lowest level of beach coverage is the public beach access point which is defined as one-eighth (1/8) of a mile on either side of the beach access; this classification calls for a trash receptacle, an improved surface access, signage and on-street parking for six (6) vehicles. A local public access covers a quarter (1/4) mile of the beach on either side of the beach access point; its requirements are the same as the previous classification but with on-street parking for ten (10) vehicles within five hundred feet (500 ft.) of the beach access. The bulk of that parking in this category is on Palm Boulevard. The next is a regional public access park which includes showers, lifeguards, concessions, handicap access and parking for up to one hundred fifty (150) vehicles which are found at Front Beach with the municipal parking lots and in the County Park. The graphic shows how the parking accommodates the beach coverage. Mr. Day noted that the Comprehensive Beach Maintenance Plan does not include the public parking area at Breach Inlet that provides approximately ten (10) parking spaces which would cover the quarter (1/4) mile at that end of the island. Since that parking area was not in the Comprehensive Beach Plan, it was not shown in the graphic. The graph provided shows the public access parking needed to meet the State's full

and complete beach access definition versus the parking currently provided, and it demonstrates how much more parking is being provided against what is required.

The Interim Administrator stated that Council's intent was not to reduce the amount of parking but to control traffic and to insure public safety; she thought that a public safety argument could be made to reduce the amount of parking availability and still meet the requirements of the Beach Management Act – the question is how best to accomplish that.

Councilmember Bell, speaking as one (1) voice of Council, stated that the island was overcrowded in season and has issues to address, and, therefore, he did not agree with the statement that Council would not want to reduce some of the parking. He noted that “heavily, heavily congested” areas carry the majority of the burden for the island, in his opinion, the area between 21st and 40th was “out of control.” He was an advocate for reducing the parking on the island, but he opined that should be a full Council discussion. He did not think a reduction to the minimum required by the Beach Management Act, but he stated that the island “has a day-tripping problem and that ensuing public safety issues.” He was surprised that the change to parallel parking only produced a twenty percent (20%) reduction; he had anticipated a reduction of thirty to forty percent (30% – 40%). He added that the reduction of seventy-four (74) spaces did not take into consideration that people parallel park two and three (2 – 3) deep on the ocean side of Palm where space allows.

Chair Smith stated that the information provided by Stantec was valuable, and it clearly showed that the City was providing considerably more parking than it was required to provide; the information showed that the City could eliminate one hundred (100) spaces and still provide more than double the amount of required parking. She opined that the Committee would have to go through the 2019 beach season to learn the real impact of parallel parking on both sides of Palm Boulevard between 21st and 40th Avenues.

Councilmember Bell stated that the numbers provided by Stantec provide Council with a baseline, and, with the coming new year, he thought the City needed to define its goal(s) relative to parking. He inquired about the number of parking spaces in the County Park, because with those spaces included, the number between 10th and 21st are skewed, and the spaces in the small lot at Breach Inlet need to be added in.

Between 21st and 40th Avenues, Councilmember Bell identified two (2) issues, safety and density, that when addressed will not produce the same answers. In the area of safety, he would turn to the two (2) Chiefs to make recommendations or to identify the problem areas. Parallel parking will generate its own set of problems, for example more people making u-turns on Palm Boulevard, drawing people into the neighborhoods as they try to turn around, etc. One (1) discussion the Committee could look at both to reduce parking and maintain the regulatory requirements would be to limit parking on Palm to one (1) side of the street in areas with the densest parking.

Interim Administrator Fragoso informed the Committee that she has requested a meeting with the SCDOT District Manager, along with Chief Graham and Interim Chief Usry, to discuss with the SCDOT team several alternatives for parking to get a feeling for SCDOT's response to them.

The Interim Administrator noted that Stantec has completed its work under its existing contract, and, if the Committee wants them do additional work and if money is available in the budget, a change order could be made to this contract.

B. Update on coyote activities

To correct the record, the Interim Administrator reported on the wrong amount of money that had been spent year-to-date relative to coyotes, the correct amount is eleven hundred eighty-nine dollars (\$1,189) and not thirteen thousand dollars (\$13,000) as reported during the previous Committee meeting.

Interim Chief Usry reported that, in October, six (6) soft-leg traps and one (1) Collarum trap were set in the marsh area along the sixth fairway on the Harbor Course, and they ensnared five (5) raccoons. In the period that the City has been trapping the coyotes, they have trapped five (5) and three (3) were killed by automobiles. In addition, field cameras have been deployed near the 8th tee box on the Harbor Course based on sightings in that area, and additional cameras have been deployed at the rear of 5845 Back Bay Drive and at the end of Dune Ridge Lane. She remarked that the mating season for the coyotes was beginning and suggested that members of the Committee look at betteriop.com where they have been tracking data, some of which the Interim Chief had not seen before. In a conversation with the Coyote Coalition, the Interim Chief stated that the two (2) groups will be sharing data in the future and the Police Department will be using their map for hotspots of coyote activity.

Interim Chief Usry stated that she had talked with the trapper who had trapped for Mount Pleasant and reportedly been so successful. She learned that he is much more expensive and was not as successful as she had been led to believe. He stated that he would be very limited on the island since he would not be allowed to set traps for the City on private property, and the City has a limited amount of property under its control.

Responding to Councilmember Bell, the Interim Chief reported that Wild Dunes is no longer trapping but they are allowing the City to set some traps there.

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Councilmember Bell reported on discussions he has had with Dave Kynoski of the Wild Dunes Community Association (WDCA) that he has never broached the subject of hunting to the WDCA board who would make such a decision. The Councilmember repeated his belief about coyotes on the island that “the City would never trap its way out of the coyote problem,” and he still supported the idea of a well-managed and well-controlled coyote hunt on the island.

Given the correction to the amount of funds spent year-to-date on coyote trapping, the Chair suggested that funding existed for a coyote study to get an idea of the number of coyotes on the island. She again recalled that, in budget planning, spending approximately three thousand dollars (\$3,000) for a coyote study was discussed.

Councilmember Bell opined that the City could get such a study done free of charge by one (1) of the local colleges, and he asked why the City would want to do a study and what was the City going to do with the information gathered. Until the City has a plan to use the data, he would not support a coyote study as an unwarranted spending of taxpayer funds.

Councilmember Ward stated that every line in the budget has a description of the use(s) of the funds, and, if a coyote study was not detailed in the budget, funds were not allocated for it.

Interim Administrator Fragoso noted that the quotes she received from Dr. Kilgo earlier in the year were estimates only.

MOTION: Chair Smith moved to spend up to \$5,000 to fund a coyote study to get a count of the number of coyotes on the island; Councilmember Bell seconded.

Chair Smith asked the Interim Administrator to contact the biology departments at the local colleges to find out if they were interested in doing a coyote study on the Isle of Palms without being paid to do so.

VOTE: The motion PASSED on a vote of 2 to 1 with Councilmember Ward casting the dissenting vote.

C. Update on IOP public transit initiative

Interim Administrator Fragoso reported that the Council of Governments (COG) continues analyzing the responses to the stakeholder survey that was distributed at the September meeting and put on the website for those invited who were unable to attend. To-date the COG has received seventeen (17) responses to the surveys which have been interpreted as ongoing interest in the possibilities for their employees; the COG is confident that they can have a pilot program running for the 2019 beach season. The biggest obstacle to-date has been finding a location in Mount Pleasant for a park-n-ride program; she plans to speak with her counterpart in Mount Pleasant to ask him to join the discussions between the COG and IOP in hope of identifying a location.

Councilmember Ward reported that, when the CARTA board met last week, the subject of a park-n-ride was not discussed.

D. Discussion of expenses related to the use of the metal detector, police officer attendance at Ways and Means Committee and City Council meetings

Although this topic was overlooked for discussion at the October meeting, the direction from City Council had been to delve into the expenses associated with paying a trained attendant to wand people as they enter and paying an off-duty police officer at his/her overtime rate to be present at the meetings. The firm paying the attendant would be paid four hundred dollars (\$400) for a minimum of four (4) hours, and, according to the Interim Chief's calculations, the expense to the Police Department would be approximately three thousand ninety-five dollars (\$3,095) annually in overtime that could be absorbed in the FY19 budget.

Having been the member of Council who initiated this discourse, Councilmember Bell stated that "an armed officer is great after the first shot is fired;" he added that the only way to stop that first shot from being fired was preventing them from getting into the facility. He expressed pride in his fellow Councilmembers for going through the Police Department's "Active Shooter" training and noted that more incidents have occurred since this discussion began. He also stated that he looked forward to a discussion by the full Council led by Interim Chief Usry.

The Interim Chief expressed that she was glad to see Council move in this direction; she did not want something to happen and look back saying that Council had talked about providing protection for themselves and the public but took no action. She told the Committee that officers were seeing more and more guns on the island as well as vehicles stolen with guns in them.

The Interim Administrator commented that state law prohibits firearms in public buildings, and it has several requirements the City must meet related to proper signage. She stated that the

recommendation from staff was to proceed with the use of the metal detector with an attendant and the presence of an armed police officer at all Ways and Means and City Council meetings.

Based on earlier comments from the Interim Chief, Councilmember Ward said that he would like to see her sit at the back of Council Chambers for these meetings.

The Interim Chief remarked that, with an armed officer in attendance, she would be comfortable sitting anywhere on the room.

MOTION: Councilmember Ward moved to approve using the metal detector with a trained attendant and having an armed police officer at future Ways and Means and City Council meetings; Councilmember Bell seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. New Business

A. This item was addressed earlier in the meeting.

B. Consideration of an update to the Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement

According to the Interim Administrator, the City has been a signatory to the Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement for several years, and what was before the Committee was an update to that document. The change requires each participant to notify its insurance carrier of the agreement and for the insurance provider to approve the City's participation in it. In addition, the insurance provider shall provide a letter to the insured stating that it authorizes the participant to provide and receive assistance under the terms of the Mutual Aid Agreement and indicate that no lapse in insurance coverage shall occur for employees, vehicles or liability.

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Chief Graham informed the Committee that the agreement originated in 2000 and that the City became a signatory early-on; apparently this change occurred in 2017, but it appears that an email might have been over-looked at that time. The Mutual Aid Agreement applies primarily to fire assistance, and it allows the City to provide or receive assistance from all local governments in the state; currently the City has individual Mutual Aid Agreements with Sullivan's Island and Charleston County, which is a countywide agreement. The City has received the required letter from its insurance provider.

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to recommend to City Council the approval of the updated Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement; Chair Smith seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Update on Waterway multi-use path improvement project

Interim Administrator Fragoso reminded the Committee that the FY19 budget has set aside twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) in Municipal Accommodations Taxes for design and engineering of improvements to the Waterway Boulevard multi-use path between 21st and 41st Avenues. She reported that she invited the engineer who oversaw the County's 28th Avenue sidewalk project to join her for a look at the multi-use path and to advise if Charleston County's engineering department would be able to do that work for the City. She also opined that Charleston County might do the work at a lower cost to the City than a private firm. The engineer stated that Charleston County might be able to do the work, and she would meet with the lead engineer about it and get back to the Interim Administrator.

On the possibility that Charleston County could not do the work, she has begun to work on an RFP for the design and engineering for the project.

Interim Administrator Fragoso stated that, with plans in-hand, the improvements to the multi-use path on Waterway might sway the TST or CTC Committees to provide grant funds to cover the construction cost to accomplish the improvements.

Councilmember Bell asked if the City could use additional MUNI ATAX funds for the construction of the enhancements if the project did not receive funds from the County, he was told that it would be an acceptable use.

6. Departmental Reports

The reports were not complete at the time of the meeting, but they will be posted to the website when they are.

7. Miscellaneous Business

Next Meeting Date. Although the Committee did not set a date for a January 2019 meeting, it did agree to continue meeting on the first Monday of the month and to meet at 10:00 a.m.

8. Executive Session – not necessary

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:52 p.m.; Councilmember Bell seconded, and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk