

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
5:00 p.m., Monday, October 1, 2018
Conference Room
1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina

AGENDA

1. **Call to order** and acknowledgement that the press and public had been duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.
2. **Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes**
Regular Meeting of September 5, 2018
3. **Citizens' Comments**
Request for City-sponsored event status for filming a portion of a National Geographic documentary dedicated to the 3 Civil War ship wrecks, including the Hunley, on Saturday, October 13th for a maximum of 2 hours
4. **Old Business**
 - A. Discussion of parking and traffic issues
 - Paid parking beyond Front Beach
 - Review of Stantec work product and impact of recent changes to parking
 - B. Update on funding for coyote count
 - C. Update on allowing golf carts on the beach for handicap persons
 - D. Consideration of changes to the dog ordinances
 - E. Update on IOP public transit initiative in partnership with the Council of Governments (COG)
5. **New Business**
Review of Hurricane Florence response
6. **Highlights of Departmental Reports**
Fire Department
Police Department
7. **Miscellaneous Business**

Next Meeting Date: 5:00 p.m., Monday, November 5, 2018 in the Conference Room
8. **Executive Session – if needed**
Upon returning to open session, Council may take action on matters discussed in Executive Session
9. **Adjournment**

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

10:00 a.m., Wednesday, September 5, 2018

Council Chambers

1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was called to order at 20:00 a.m., Wednesday, September 5, 2018 in Council Chambers, 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, Attorney Copeland 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. She also introduced Jim Mercer of the Mercer Group, the search firm hired by the City to assist with hiring the City Administrator, the Chief of Police and the Assistant Public Works Director.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting as submitted; Councilmember Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments

Judy Gogol, 8 Summer Dunes Lane, stated that she was a member of the Coyote Coalition; she told the Committee that the coyote pups were coming out of the dens and the number of resident sightings has increased. With a camera on her house directed to the beach, she had three (3) sightings between August 16th and August 23rd; the sightings were at night, but one (1) showed the coyote chasing two (2) deer. She thought that everyone had seen the photo of the group of coyotes on the beach at 8:00 a.m.; they appear to have no fear of people. She was interested in knowing when the City would begin trapping again. Questions from the coalition were:

- What are the City's trapping plans, how many traps will be set and when will trapping begin?
- Will the remote trapping sights have cameras to monitor the coyote activity because the law states that the traps must be checked daily? Is this a consideration in hiring trappers?

Ms. Gogol stated that the residents have a feeling of urgency in addressing this problem and are concerned about how the number of coyotes has multiplied over the winter. In conclusion, she thanked the City for adopting and implementing the Coyote Management Plan.

Bob Miller, 3 Fairway Village Lane, noted that he has addressed the Committee in the past; he stated that the coyotes are back and so was the Coalition. He commented that they are seeing on the internet more and more instances of people throwing out food waste that is attracting coyotes; the culprits are construction sites, restaurants, picnics, etc. He added that he did not know the answer to that problem. Mr. Miller asked what the City knew about the coyote situation in Wild Dunes; he opined that the methods of addressing the coyote problem should be island-wide through coordination between Wild Dunes and the City. He also noted that residents who call the Police Department to report coyote sightings are getting mixed messages; some who answer the phone seem to be sympathetic and concerned, while others are relatively dismissive.

Jim Raih, 3904 Cameron Boulevard, commented on the first item under New Business of allowing golf carts on the beach. Being married to a woman who is challenged mobility-wise, he expressed the opinion that anything the City could do to make the beach more accessible to the handicapped would be much appreciated.

4. Old Business

A. Discussion of plan to address parking and traffic at October meeting

The Chair recalled that she had distributed a sheet at the August meeting of topics she thought worthy of more in-depth discussion, but she acknowledged that all of the issues could not be discussed and resolved in one (1) meeting. Since the Committee had decided to incorporate this discussion into a regular meeting, she questioned how much time could be devoted to this discussion.

Councilmember Bell stated that he was not opposed to a two (2) hour meeting with a concise agenda and repeated his statement from an earlier meeting that the City needed a balance parking plan. "If the City is prepared administratively to educate those that have not paid a lot of attention to the prior Stantec plans, has an understanding of what current ordinances cover and the City's position on areas previously excluded from public parking, he thought it could be a productive meeting."

Councilmember Ward voiced agreement with Councilmember Bell and stated that he liked having things concise and moving in a set direction; he wanted to set a goal for the meeting so that time is not spent on things that have already been discussed in the years the City has employed Stantec as a consultant on parking on the island.

Chair Smith reminded the Committee that, in the current contract with Stantec, they had been asked to provide some updated information relative to the impact of the changes to the parking plan made early in the year. She continued that she thought that paid parking and its implications should be a priority in the discussions.

Councilmember Bell stated that he thought the dated signs for the Parking Management Plan needed to be removed immediately; the ordinance approving the enforcement of the plan year-round was approved months ago, so the law is in effect. He asked that this subject be included on the October agenda.

B. Discussion of Coyote Management Plan

- **Obtaining coyote count estimate**

Interim Police Chief Usry reported that the traps recently have been replaced on the golf course near the 3200 block of Waterway Boulevard; the Department received a report that a dog had become trapped in one (1) of them and that a young boy had been caught up in one (1) of the traps, but they have not been able to verify the information to determine if they are accurate reports. These traps have been pulled to ensure safety of the public; she noted that the traps were set way off the path and into the marshy area, so the dog and young boy had to go out to run into them. The Interim Chief indicated that she was in talks with another trapper to add to the current trapper to see if the City could increase its capture rate. Since the last meeting, another coyote has been hit by a car and this time it was a police vehicle; the vehicle had some minor damage, and the coyote had to be dispatched since it was injured. For the public safety, additional traps have not yet been deployed; she reported that the City works with Wild Dunes to

deploy the traps. The traps are checked a couple of times a day, both by the trapper and the Animal Control Officer; the City also deploys to monitor what is happening at the trap. The report from the Coyote Coalition is that food waste has become a problem, she thought additional public education was necessary, and the PD would coordinate with the rental agencies and the property owners who rent to communicate the problems.

Councilmember Bell commented that he has learned from residents of Intercoastal Court that they were seeing more coyotes; Richard Campsen said that a coyote had been under his dock barking at his dog recently. Mr. Campsen stated that he had spoken with a Mount Pleasant officer who told him that they were having reasonable success with the trappers they are using, and Councilmember Bell has suggested to Interim Administrator Fragoso that the City find out who they are using and to contact them.

The Interim Chief reported speaking with Deputy Chief Gragg recently and has the trapper's name and plans to begin communicating with him. She also reminded the Committee that the City is limited in where it can trap; the City cannot set traps on private property. On the other hand, any property owner is free to apply to DNR for a Deprivation Permit for trapping on their property.

Chair Smith stated that education and information will be the City's best tools for control, and she felt that the public should be advised of the risk so they can be prepared to prevent problems by being aware. The public should be encouraged to be proactive, especially when it comes to food so that they are not inadvertently providing food sources for coyotes.

The Chair also wanted the City to engage a researcher on coyotes to get a rough count of the coyote numbers on the island.

Interim Administrator Fragoso recalled that, when the Committee and City Council discussed hiring a researcher to get a count, staff was not given a clear directive on what approach to take; if the will of Council has changed, staff would look for direction. She informed the Committee that the FY19 budget was increased for trapping and surveillance, but no funds were earmarked for a coyote count.

Councilmember Ward stated that he would check the budget and report at the Ways and Means Committee meeting about funds for a coyote count.

C. Consideration of changes to the visitor parking passes

The Interim Administrator reported that, at the August Council meeting, City Council approved the changes to the visitor parking passes recommended by the Public Safety Committee; included in the meeting packet was a redline version of the ordinance changes needed to modify the visitor passes. This ordinance will go before City Council for First Reading at the September meeting.

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to recommend to City Council approval for First Reading of the ordinance modifications relative to the visitor parking pass; Councilmember Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

D. Consideration of dog permitting and related policies and ordinances

Interim Administrator Fragoso stated that a second redline version of modifications to the ordinance required to move forward with more specific language, requiring both residents and non-residents register their dogs with the City; in order to get a permit, proof of the dog's current

rabies inoculation would be required, and the fee for the permits would remain five dollars (\$5) for residents and would be ten dollars (\$10) for non-residents. An additional provision would add language requiring current rabies inoculation so that the Animal Control Officer could write citations when he encounters a dog without proof.

Chair Smith asked whether the changes detailed above would go before Council despite what could transpire in this meeting, and Interim Administrator Frago concurred.

Councilmember Bell commented that he has heard from residents with “the wrongful belief” that a resident walking his dog down the street would be stopped by a police officer and “read the riot act” about the City’s dog license. The Councilmember stated that the changes to the ordinance would mean nothing to residents; nothing changes for residents regarding the requirement of an IOP dog license. He opined that, if it were possible, the ordinance would read that “dogs off-leash at the Bark Park and dogs off-leash on the beach must have a City registration.” The goal was to have an ordinance that was simple and that gave the enforcement authority to the Animal Control Officer in the event of egregious behavior at the dog park or on the beach that must be addressed.

Councilmember Ward noted that Folly Beach and Myrtle Beach do not have regulations for dogs like the Committee is discussing, only Sullivan’s Island. He believed that the issue has become too complicated, and he cannot support it in its current form.

Chair Smith also agreed that the motion passed at City Council was “an overreach” in that it applied to all dogs that come on the island and lacked an effective way of getting City registration to be meaningful by switching to a colored collar system from metal tags; therefore, she would no longer support what Council passed. She offered two (2) alternates that could be considered together or separately. The first suggestion was that all dogs must have an IOP registration and tag or proof of current rabies inoculation; in the Chair’s opinion, this would be simple and as easy as possible to provide that proof. The fee would remain five dollars (\$5) for residents and ten dollars (\$10) for non-residents, but registration would be voluntary. With this suggestion, the rules would be the same for residents and non-residents.

Councilmember Bell added that property owners would also pay five dollars (\$5) for dog registration.

Chair Smith’s second advocacy would be to require all off-leash dogs, resident and non-resident, at the dog park and on the beach to have proof of City registration with a switch in the registration system from metal tags to a system of colored collars. In her opinion, this would add an extra layer of accountability attached to the privilege of letting dogs off-leash in the public setting; she also thought that the colored collar system would compel compliance and make the ordinance easily enforceable.

The Interim Administrator stated that, if the goal was to provide public safety, it must be enforced island-wide; the City has reports of incidents involving dogs all over the island, not just in the dog park or on the beach.

Councilmember Bell asked if City Council could legally limit enforcement only in the dog park and on the beach for enforcement.

Attorney Copeland stated that for enforcement, the City could do what Councilmember Bell was suggesting.

Councilmember Bell was of the opinion that, if enforcement were to be island-wide, it would create an uproar among the citizens; he reiterated that the original issue the Committee sought to address was off-leash dogs on the beach or in the dog park.

Interim Chief Usry stated that, for the police officers to enforce and for the general public safety, the ordinance should apply island-wide and not in certain areas; she added that dogs are off-leash in other areas, for instance, the dog that escapes the back yard. Researching records from January to September 2, 2018, the Interim Chief found that forty-seven (47) citations have been issued for dogs-at-large; of that number, twenty-two (22) were issued on the beach and twenty-five (25) were in other areas of the island. No tickets have been issued for dog issues at the dog park.

The Interim Chief distributed to Committee members a sheet comparing the dog policies for Sullivan's Island, Folly Beach and the Isle of Palms.

Chair Smith stated that the collars are expected to cost less than two dollars (\$2), so the five dollars (\$5) that residents would continue to cover the cost. She repeated that colored collars would encourage compliance and that the City would sell more collars than it currently sells tags.

Interim Administrator Fragoso was hearing two (2) different goals from the Committee; in previous meetings, she had heard concerns about dogs without current rabies inoculations coming to the island. If that is the goal, the ordinance Council approved provides an equal process for both residents and non-residents and solves the current inoculation issue. If the goal is to reduce the number of dogs coming to the beach or to the dog park, that is a different discussion.

Councilmember Bell stated that the number of dogs coming to the island is growing along with the population of Mount Pleasant, but the City has one (1) Animal Control Officer – the problem is an inability to enforce. He opined that the IOP beach is the dog park for people residing on the other side of the Connector, and the hours that dogs are legally allowed to be off-leash are not adhered to. In his opinion, the issue has become convoluted and it is no longer just a public safety issue but a growing population issue.

Being responsible for adding this item to the Agenda, Chair Smith stated that her goal primarily was to add an extra layer of accountability attached to the privilege of allowing dogs to be off-leash; she was not trying to discourage people from bringing their dogs to the island or to reduce the number of dogs coming to the island, but to assure dog owners that all off-leash dogs have been properly inoculated.

When the Chair was told that she could make a motion in this meeting, she stated that her understanding was that she could not.

Interim Administrator Fragoso explained that the ordinance as presented to the Committee would go to City Council for First Reading at the September meeting; during Second Reading, Councilmembers could submit an amendment. She continued noting that this item was presented to Council at the August meeting as an amendment and did not pass, and only someone who voted with the prevailing vote could submit a motion to reconsider and that motion must be made within twenty-four (24) hours of the meeting.

Attorney Copeland stated that a Council member who was on the side of the prevailing vote could have motioned on the record in the meeting that he/she wanted the item to be reconsidered at the next meeting. That action would mark in time the request and satisfy Robert's Rules.

Councilmember Bell noted that making the dog registration voluntary has ramifications for enforcement, but any changes could be made via an amendment at Second Reading.

5. New Business

A. Discussion of allowing golf carts on the beach for handicapped persons

MOTION: Councilmember Ward moved to allow golf carts on the beach to allow handicapped persons easier access to the beach; Chair Smith seconded.

The Chair reported that a resident of Wild Dunes who is unable to walk from the Citadel Beach House to chairs on the beach reached out to Council about his situation. In the past, the resident's spouse drove him to the beach in a golf cart, but they have been told that driving the golf cart on the beach is not allowed.

The resident has researched Sullivan's Island's Code relative to motor vehicles on the beach and learned that, upon written request, Council can grant an exception when the person making the request has either a handicap placard or license plate. The Sullivan's Island Code states the following:

“by allowing [party requesting] to have vehicle on the beach for a specific purpose that will not be injurious to health, safety or welfare of injurious to natural resources and habitats”

In addition to the state issued placard or license tag, the Sullivan's Island issues a placard that must be displayed on the cart at all times for easy identification by the police; they have additional regulations that must be followed.

The City acknowledges the difficulties in accessibility to the beach and embraces opportunities to improve accessibility for the handicapped. The City does have concerns about public safety and sea turtle nesting and habitat that need to be discussed by staff, as well as what regulations should be established if City Council wants to proceed with such a policy. The Interim Administrator has learned that in the past ten (10) years, Sullivan's Island has only issued eight to ten (8 – 10) tags for golf carts indicating that it is a little used policy there, but she stated that she would expect a much higher usage at the Isle of Palms. The Interim Administrator thought a policy might be more workable here if they were restricted to an area of the beach on or near emergency vehicle accesses. The Edisto Beach State Park also allows golf carts on the beach, but Folly Beach does not; however, they do provide beach wheelchairs to handicapped persons at no charge. The beach wheelchairs cost between twelve hundred and fifteen hundred dollars (\$1,200 - \$1,500) each.

Responding to Councilmember Bell, Interim Administrator Fragoso stated that the City does not own a beach wheelchair. The purchase of one (1) or more of these wheelchairs was not contemplated in the FY19 budget; she, therefore, thought staff should do more research with a possible purchase in FY20.

Councilmember Ward withdrew his motion, and Chair Smith withdrew her second.

Councilmember Bell recounted have seen a golf cart heading to the beach that got stuck in the sand; three (3) men were needed to get it to and from the beach.

Interim Chief Usry added that, if people are not available when a golf cart becomes stuck, it has become a public safety/first responder issue. She shared other concerns, such as the fact that state law does not address the state's beaches; therefore, a child could drive a golf cart on the beach. She displayed a photograph of a beach wheelchair and noted that they have wide tires so that they displace more sand and are less likely to become stuck.

Believing that the residents of the island are caring and giving people, Councilmember Bell asked if the City could establish a GoFundMe account so that the City could provide the same service Folly Beach offers.

Councilmember Ward said that the City should not get involved, but he would be happy to do it as a private citizen, but he asked where the City would store one (1) or more wheelchairs.

Chief Graham agreed that storage would be a problem, but she questioned how the wheelchair would get to the beach. She also reported that the personnel from the Fire and Police Departments drive handicapped persons to and from the beach whenever called upon.

The Committee agreed to delay a decision until staff could provide them with additional information.

B. Update on crosswalk request on Palm Boulevard at 5th Avenue

Interim Chief Usry reported that she had reached out to SCDOT traffic engineers about installing a crosswalk on Palm Boulevard at 5th Avenue and was told that, unless the City was planning to install a sidewalk, they would not approve the request. When pressed, SCDOT said that a sidewalk system would need to extend from the Exchange Club to the last house the other side of 5th Avenue where the last house on Merritt is located.

Interim Administrator Fragoso noted that the City has been successful in receiving funding from Charleston County CTC and TST for the construction of sidewalks and that this was a project that could be requested in the next cycle for local funding requests.

Chair Smith asked that the Interim Administrator contact Alice Bova, who made the request, with the status after contacting SCDOT.

6. Highlights of Departmental Reports

Between the Labor Day holiday and the meeting being held early in the month, neither the Police Department nor the Fire Department had completed their reports for August; they will be posted to the City's website upon completion.

Councilmember Bell reported having been on a five (5) hour ride-along with a patrol officer on Saturday, September 1st and that he found it to be an eye-opening experience. He recommended that all members of City Council should arrange to do the same.

7. Miscellaneous Business

Next Meeting Date: 5:00 p.m., Monday, October 1, 2018 in the Conference Room.

8. Executive Session – not needed

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Councilmember Bell moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:22 a.m.; Councilmember Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk

DRAFT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

British television production company Mallinson Sadler Productions is in Charleston from 12-15 October making an episode for season 2 of National Geographic's documentary series DRAIN THE OCEANS.

The series is about naval archaeology – using state of the art scanning technology to unlock hidden histories on our ocean beds. Please feel free to explore the series more: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/tv/drain-the-oceans/>

For one episode we are telling the history of the Civil War through three wrecks – the USS Monitor in Hampton Roads, the USS Tecumseh in Mobile and the HL Hunley and USS Housatonic in Charleston. We are spending time with the team at the Warren Lasch Conservation Centre to see their work on the wreck of the Hunley, and intend to interview our historian Jim Delgado at Fort Moultrie.

We are keen to shoot atmospheric B-roll footage that shows off the beauty of coastal Charleston and are keen to come along to Isle of Palms beach for a maximum of two hours on the afternoon of Saturday 13 October to film some beauty shots of the beach. This would involve a crew of about four or five persons, a camera on a tripod and perhaps a drone (weather dependent). There will be no actors or extras, no special effects, no road closures, no vehicles bar the two cars we arrive in, no props or set dressings and no need for any supervision from a city representative. We would be simply looking to capture time-lapses and panoramas of beach vistas such as the below.



I would be incredibly grateful if you could consider granting us a permit to film on Isle of Palms beach and am happy to take any further calls or emails relating to our trip and/or documentary. I can be reached on tom.vaughan@msptv.co.uk or +447974920033.

Kind regards,
Tom Vaughan
Producer
Mallinson Sadler Productions