

PLANNING COMMISSION
September 9, 2020
REVISED

Virtual Meeting Due to COVID-19 Pandemic

The public may view the public meeting at:
www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms

Public Comment: Citizens may provide public comment here:
<https://www.iop.net/public-comment-form>

AGENDA

The Isle of Palms Planning Commission will hold its regular meeting on Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at **3:00 p.m.**

- A. Call to order and acknowledgment that the press and the public were duly notified in accordance with state law
- B. Approval of minutes August 12, 2020
- C. New business
 - meet with Stuart Day of Stantec regarding traffic
 - meet with Chief Cornett regarding traffic
- D. Old business
 - 1. Review Comprehensive Plan
<https://www.iop.net/comprehensive-plan>
 - review Natural Resources Element
 - discuss Transportation Element
 - discuss Community Facilities Element
 - 2. Make recommendation on MOU with Water Sewer Commission
- E. Miscellaneous business
 - 1. Update on drainage planning
 - 2. Update on short term rental recommendations
- F. Adjourn



Planning Commission
3:30pm, Wednesday, August 12, 2020
Virtual Meeting via Zoom call due to COVID-19 Pandemic
broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Present: Marty Brown, Scott Pierce, Ron Denton, William Mills, Vince DiGangi, Rick Ferencz, and Douglas Kerr, Director of Planning

Absent: Lisa Safford

2. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes – July 8, 2020

Mr. Denton made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. DiGangi seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Citizen's Comments -- none

4. New Business

A. Make recommendation on MOU with Water & Sewer Commission

Director Kerr reviewed the changes to the MOU suggested by the Commissioners from the July meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Mills made a motion to approve the MOU as amended and recommend that City Council approve the document. Mr. Denton seconded the motion.

Chairman Ferencz asked about including wording that would require the Water & Sewer Commission to report to the Planning Commission monthly about the decommissioning of the wastewater treatment plant and the construction of the new plant.

MOTION: Mr. Mills made a motion to amend the MOU to include "The Water & Sewer Commission agrees to supply the City at least a monthly report or presentation detailing the forecasted spending versus budget, construction progress versus timetable, and any unexpected events that occur within the project." Mr. Denton seconded the motion.

VOTE: The amended motion passed unanimously.

B. Discussion regarding the implementation of island-wide sewer

Mr. Ferencz mentioned that Mayor Carroll indicated to him the importance of the implementation of island-wide sewer and wondered the role of the Planning Commission in the

process. Director Kerr reminded the Commission that they have agreed to work with the Water & Sewer Commission over the next year to develop a detailed outline of the process needed to outfit the island with sewer. He suggested a meeting with Water & Sewer Commission staff to brainstorm ideas for that plan as well as identifying possible funding sources. Director Kerr also shared that the Water & Sewer Commission is in the beginning stages of discussing how to implement a financial incentive program to encourage homeowners to hook into the sewer system. As this is such a detailed and important process, Director Kerr suggested leaving this discussion until everyone could meet in person.

MOTION: Mr. Pierce made a motion to defer further discussion of implementing island-wide sewer until October or November. Mr. DiGangi seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Old Business**

A. **Review Comprehensive Plan: review of revisions to Introduction and Natural Resources Element; discussion of rest of Natural Resources Element, and discuss Transportation Element**

Director Kerr said the Commission will need to discuss at some point the best way to get the public's input on the Comprehensive Plan. They will also need to decide which sections of the plan will require professional input.

Commissioners discussed the goal and strategies of protecting wildlife and vegetation in the Natural Resources element. They agreed to leave a placeholder in this section addressing Resiliency/Planning for Sea Level Rise until the Strategic Planning process has had a chance to discuss it. Mr. Pierce suggested adding in a general goal about air quality such as, "Pursue development and implementation of ordinances, education and awareness programs to improve air quality such as smoking regulations and support of public transportation."

Commissioners then discussed the Transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan. Topics discussed included pedestrian and driver safety, traffic flow, reduction of traffic congestion, non-resident parking, and data collection related to traffic patterns. Director Kerr suggested speaking with the IOP Police and Fire Departments as well as Stantec before making any large-scale changes to this section. Commissioners did feel that safety should be the number one goal followed by traffic flow and traffic congestion. Director Kerr will schedule representatives from the Police Department, Fire Department, and Stantec to be at the next Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioners discussed the development of the final product of the Comprehensive Plan and the financing of such.

B. **Discussion assignment regarding tree fund**

Director Kerr reviewed the options under consideration for the use of the tree fund including changing ordinances to allow for tree fund money to be used more freely, creating competitive

grants for residents wanting to beautify private projects, and purchasing greenspace. Mr. Ferencz wondered if the monies could be used to beautify the marina.

MOTION: Mr. Pierce made a motion to recommend to City Council to leave the tree fund ordinance as is and to consider directing money from the tree fund towards beautifying the public space that could come available to residents at the marina adjacent to the dock. Mr. DiGangi seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Miscellaneous Business

A. Update on drainage planning

Director Kerr reported that City Council approved Thomas & Hutton to handle the construction administration and the bidding process of the smaller internal drainage projects. Director Kerr said there may not be an opportunity for the Planning Commission to review the bid packets as those projects are already behind schedule. Any individually submitted comments from the Commissioners will be sent to the engineer. Permits for the smaller projects have been received.

With regards to the Phase III drainage project, City staff continues to work with Wild Dunes on how best to cross the golf course. Requests for the permits have been submitted, but they expect to wait a year before receiving them.

B. Update on short-term rental recommendations

Director Kerr stated there will be a public hearing and Second Reading for the short-term rental recommendations at City Council's August meeting.

C. Update on short-term rental software

Director Kerr said City Council approved the renewal of the software for another year. The City has hired someone who will be focusing on business licenses who will also be handling the follow-up for rental units identified as not operating with a business license.

7. Adjournment

Mr. DiGangi made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:39pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk

NATURAL RESOURCES

Characteristics

Isle of Palms, like most South Carolina barrier islands, is characterized by a beach and dune ridge system with an extensive tidal marsh along the northeastern side of the island. The island is surrounded by navigable waters and provides some opportunities for access by boat and numerous beach access points. Prior to development, the island was covered by maritime forest.

Ground elevations on the island range from sea level to 17 feet above mean sea level (MSL) at points along a ridge on the ocean side of the island. However, the topography of the island is relatively flat, with an average ground elevation above mean sea level of only eight (8) to ten (10) feet.

The mean tide range, low tide to high tide, is 5.2 feet with the spring tide range increasing to 6.1 feet. Hurricane water levels are much higher, with the potential for reaching an elevation of 12 feet MSL and wave crests up to 18.6 feet MSL. In 1989 the storm surge from Hurricane Hugo covered most of the island with peak water levels ranging between 15.5 feet above MSL along the beach and 12.5 feet above MSL along the back of the island.

Historic shoreline maps and charts show that the beaches on the Isle of Palms are generally accreting, but the shoreline has cyclical erosional episodes particularly around the unstable inlet zones.

Despite erosion, flooding and susceptibility to coastal storms, the beautiful sandy beaches, marshes, creeks, ocean, clean air, trees, fish and wildlife make the Isle of Palms a very attractive place to live. Protection of these natural resources is essential to maintaining a high quality of life on the Isle of Palms.

Flooding

Because of low ground elevations, virtually the entire island lies within a Special Flood Hazard Area of the National Flood Insurance Program. The most common flood zone designations on the island are AE and VE zones, which delineate the statistical threat of flooding from a “100 year hurricane,”

for which there is a one percent probability of occurring in any given year. Pockets of low elevation, coupled with storm drainage that is significantly influenced by the ebb and flow of the tides, are causes for serious accumulations of storm water, whether generated by heavy rainfall or storm surge.

To minimize the potential for property damage due to flood conditions, the City adopted a comprehensive set of regulations in 1983, which are found in Title 5, Chapter 2, of the Code of the City of Isle of Palms. The City is in compliance with the requirements of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the federal agency responsible for administering the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) which allows its citizens to secure federally backed flood insurance policies. Furthermore, the City participates in the Community Rating System (CRS), which is a program that rewards communities that are doing more than meeting the minimum requirements of the NFIP. The City is presently designated as a “Class 67” CRS community, which entitles its citizens to a 2+5% discount on flood insurance rates. The goal of the CRS is to reduce the loss of life and property in the event of a flood and to protect the natural and beneficial functions of the floodplain.

Water Quality

The quality of waters surrounding the island is inextricably connected to the quality of life on the Isle of Palms. Early in the 1990s the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) conducted a water quality monitoring program along the Intracoastal Waterway from Charleston harbor to McClellanville. The program monitored water quality at 51 sites in the study area, three of which were located on the Isle of Palms. In addition, DHEC routinely monitors shellfish beds in the Waterway.

Results of the above testing indicate that of the 51 sites in the testing area, as many as 41 sites have not met water quality safety standards for harvesting oysters, and 26 sites have not met safety standards for swimming.

An informed City government and population are required to protect the sensitive ecosystem of the island and the impact of pollutants on its water quality. In an effort to better understand, and ultimately address, the island’s water quality issues, the City Council voted in August 2001 to apply for grant monies to study the waters behind the island. The grant monies were

offered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through DHEC under a program entitled “319 Non-point Source Pollution;” to match funds allocated by the City to pay for the cost of such a study. The study began in August 2001 and was completed in March 2004. Pollutants that adversely impact the island’s back waters are nutrients, pesticides, heavy metals and fecal coliforms.

In 2007, the City developed a program in conjunction with Charleston County to improve water quality and comply with the requirements of the Clean Water Act. This program is explained in more detail in the Community Facilities element of this Plan.

Beach

The Isle of Palms shoreline generally is accreting, with sand bypassing Dewees Inlet and moving onto the northern shoreline in the form of large sand shoals. Once the shoals attach to the beach, the sediment shifts laterally along the shoreline, with the majority moving along the island’s beaches in the direction of Breach Inlet and some moving in the opposite direction onto the Dewees Inlet shoreline. Sediment that moves down the shore accumulates along the southwestern 1.5 miles of the Isle of Palms shoreline, which is accretional over the long-term. Some of the moving sediment bypasses Breach Inlet in the form of sand bars that ultimately attach to Sullivan’s Island.

As a result of the episodic nature of shoal attachment and sediment redistribution, the Isle of Palms shoreline closer to Dewees Inlet tends to exhibit unstable characteristics.

State regulatory responsibility for protecting the beach and dune system rests with the South Carolina Office of Ocean and Coastal Resources Management (OCRM), which is a division of South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). This state agency was created in 1977 as the South Carolina Coastal Council, when the State Legislature adopted the South Carolina Coastal Zone Management Act, SC Code section 48-39-10, et. seq. The Act also established the first comprehensive set of regulations for protecting coastal resources in the eight South Carolina coastal counties. In 1988, DHEC’s jurisdiction on the beachfront was amended by passage of the South Carolina Beachfront Management Act, SC Code section 48-39-270, et. seq. which was further amended in 1990. In

1998, OCRM began a program to periodically test the quality of water along the shoreline. This testing has proven that the water at the beach is very clean, with only two swim advisories ever issued and the most recent advisory being in summer of 2002.

In addition to state regulatory authority over the beaches, the City of Isle of Palms also exercises jurisdiction over the beach on some issues. In areas where the City retains jurisdiction, it has adopted amendments to the zoning ordinance to protect areas abutting the OCRM jurisdiction. The City has marked the beach access paths with a numbering system that corresponds to the opposing street number. Also, provisions for handicapped accessible parking spaces and paths have been added at the 9th and 21st Avenue beach accesses.

The Isle of Palms Local Comprehensive Beach Management Plan was approved by the City and OCRM in April of 2008. The Plan, which is required by state law and must be updated every ten years, reports on the state of the island's beaches and dunes and provides guidance for the City in managing these important assets.

As a result of ~~a recent episode of excessive~~ erosion on the northeastern end of the island near Dewees Inlet, a \$10M beach restoration project was undertaken in 2008 ~~and a \$14M project was undertaken in 2018~~. ~~These projects is~~ consisted of an off-shore dredge pumping sand onto the shore and subsequent monitoring. ~~Theis projects were was~~ funded by private and public funds. The method of restoration, off-shore dredging, was recommended by a Long-Term Beach Management Report (not to be confused with the overall Local Comprehensive Beach Management Plan, mentioned above). This report was developed by a group of people with varying interests working with a coastal engineer to develop recommendations that reflect the consensus of the community for future beach management policies and actions. The City continues to monitor erosion on the entire shoreline and occasionally undertakes projects to address affected areas.

In 2015, the City Council approved a resolution expressing the City's opposition to seismic testing and offshore oil and gas development off the South Carolina Coast. Additionally in 2015, the City became the first community in South Carolina to ban the use of single-use plastic bags in commercial operations.

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Wildlife and Vegetation

Seven species of birds are listed on the federal endangered or threatened list which may be found in the area. The endangered species are the bald eagle, Bachman's warbler, wood stork and red-cockaded woodpecker. Threatened birds are the piping plover, peregrine falcon and red knot.

The loggerhead sea turtle, a threatened species, visits the island to lay eggs along the beach. South Carolina beaches have the largest number of nest sites in the "population" tracked between North Carolina and Northern Florida. In recent years the nests have numbered between 20 and 60 on the beaches of the Isle of Palms. It is thought that individual turtles may return to historical/ regional nesting sites every two to five years, accounting for the wide fluctuation in the number of nests from year to year. Enforcement of the island's lighting ordinance, which prohibits lighting directed at the beach, as well as ordinances requiring the removal of overnight beach furniture, filling in holes in the sand and properly disposing of all trash and garbage is going to help save this threatened species by protecting nests on the island.

No federally listed endangered or threatened plants are known to be located on the island. The primary tree species on the island are palmetto, live oak, loblolly pine, wax myrtle, and crepe myrtle. In 1989 the City adopted its first tree ordinance to prevent parcels from being completely cleared during development. In 2002, the ordinance was amended to include further protection for all live oak trees and other trees in excess of eight inches diameter.

After hurricane Hugo, Palm Boulevard was lined with palmetto trees through a privately organized and funded "Plant-a-Palm" program.

Resiliency

Currently this section serves as a placeholder only. The section will be written as progress is made on the Strategic Plan.

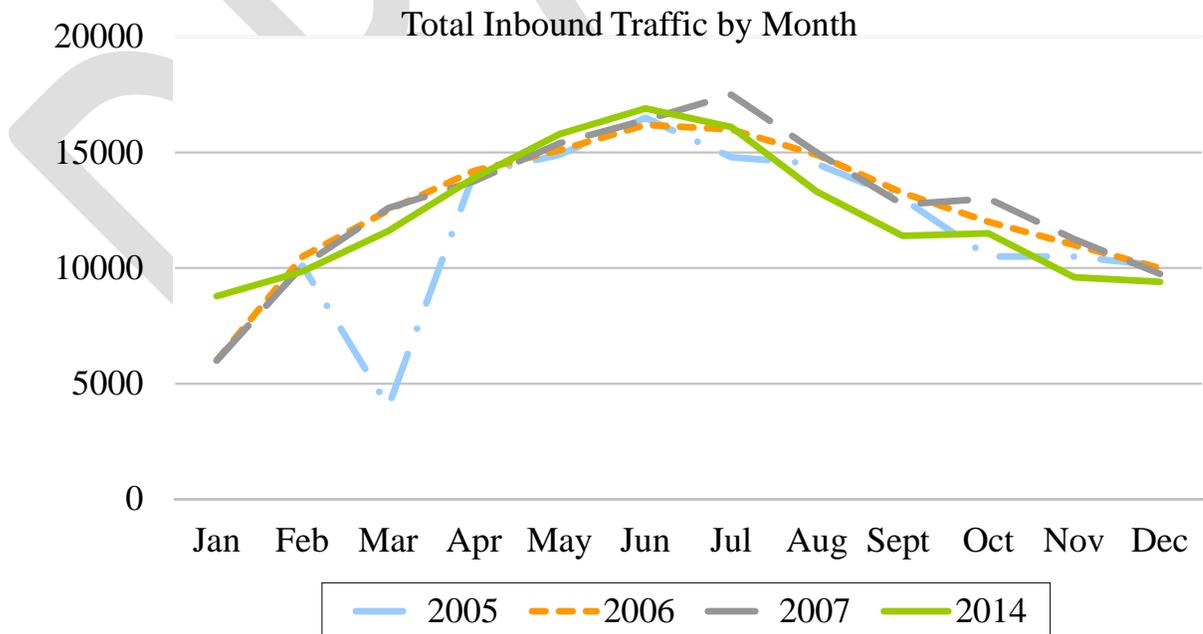


Recommendations

- **Public education**
- **Deter wild animal populations**
- **Vegetated buffers**
- **Alternative stormwater treatment**
- **Clean-up of existing ditches**
- **Inspection of septic systems and sewer lines**

TRANSPORTATION

The Isle of Palms is accessible by two routes. First, SC 703 connects the island to Sullivan’s Island by way of the Breach Inlet bridge as well as Sullivan’s Island to Mount Pleasant by way of the Ben Sawyer Intracoastal Waterway bridge. Second the Clyde M. Dangerfield Highway SC 517 (Isle of Palms Connector) provides a fixed span, direct connection to Mount Pleasant. The illustration below is based on the traffic counts coming on and off the island from the years of 2004 to 2008. As expected, the traffic increases dramatically in the summer months as a result of seasonal visitors (additional traffic counts are available in Appendix C-1).



The total length of roads on the island is estimated to be 35 miles. Most roads outside Wild Dunes are under the jurisdiction of the SCDOT. The

total miles of state roads on the island is estimated to be 21.75 miles. A few roads or sections of roads have been accepted by the City. Some roads, however, have never been formally accepted by any government jurisdiction. Roads within the Wild Dunes gates total 12 miles and are privately owned and maintained.

Maintenance for roads within the State system is provided through an agreement between Charleston County and the SCDOT. The City is responsible for Ocean Boulevard between 10th and 14th Avenues, 18th Avenue, part of Hartnett Boulevard, most of Forest Trail, the cul-de-sac on Pavilion Boulevard, and 27th, 28th, and 29th Avenues between Hartnett and Waterway Boulevards.

Currently, bikeways and sidewalks are provided in only a few areas outside Wild Dunes. These existing bikeway/sidewalk facilities are not interconnected and some are in need of repair. There is a recognized need to fund bikeways and sidewalks to facilitate non-vehicular traffic on the island to reduce vehicular/pedestrian/bike conflicts. Various projects are underway in the Charleston area including a bike route that will connect the Isle of Palms to downtown Charleston and ultimately Folly Beach

In the summer months, the number of cars parking near the beach increases dramatically. Beach visitors typically park at the Front Beach Area or on the edge of the road on Palm Boulevard or other rights-of-way near the beach. On the edge of the roadways, currently there is no system to manage where or how visitors park, which creates confusion and congestion for visitors and residents. However, the City has initiated efforts to address these issues including making physical improvements, gathering public input and hiring a professional transportation firm to advise on the matter.

Key Issues

- Improvements in transportation facilities.
- Planning for a parking system that would balance the needs of visitors and residents.

Goals and Implementation Strategies

Goal 8.1: Improve traffic flow and reduce congestion on the roadways of the island.

Strategy 8.1.1: Continually assess stop sign locations on the island to determine proper and legal placement. (*Ongoing; Public Works*)

Strategy 8.1.2: Ensure an adequate number of speed limit signs on all streets to encourage compliance and improve safety. (*Ongoing; General Government and Police Department*)

Strategy 8.1.3: Develop a plan to improve alternate modes of transportation on the island including bikeways, golf carts and low speed vehicle facilities and sidewalks while improving pedestrian safety. (*2008; Building Department and Recreation Department*)

Strategy 8.1.4: Develop a management plan to lessen the effects beach traffic has on the island's roadways. (*2009; Building Department*)

Goal 8.2: Discourage non-resident parking and traffic in residential neighborhoods.

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Strategy 8.2.1: Encourage appropriate measures including signs, traffic restrictions and parking restrictions. (*Ongoing; Police Department and City Council*)

Goal 8.3: Improve accuracy of data collection related to traffic patterns.

Strategy 8.3.1: Encourage appropriate measures to collect accurate traffic counts including the installation of new hardware at the key points of ingress and egress of the island. (*Ongoing; Police Department and City Council*)

DRAFT

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Public Safety

Isle of Palms is currently served by a police force of twenty sworn officers, eleven auxiliary staff, twenty-one patrol cars (five of which are four wheel drive SUVs for patrol supervisors) , one animal control truck, one all-terrain beach patrol truck, and one all-terrain golf cart for parking enforcement. Additionally the police department adds six part-time beach officers for the summer season for parking enforcement and beach patrol. The heavy volume of vehicular traffic, parking, and the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians are currently problems on the island. Also, as the numbers of boats and jet skis on waters around the island increase, regulatory measures may be necessary in the future to ensure that the City's waterways remain safe.

The island has two fire stations which house a total of five apparatus (two fire engines, two ladder trucks and one ladder service vehicle), four pickup trucks and four rescue boats. The Fire Department consists of thirty-five paid firefighters and ten volunteers. The City's current Insurance Service Organization classification is three.

In 2013 the City transitioned from handling emergency calls and dispatching services from within the City to the Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center (CCCD 9-1-1 Center). The CCCD 9-1-1 Center is a state-of-the-art facility located in North Charleston that handles emergency dispatch

services for most of the municipalities in the Charleston area. When the City transitioned to the CCCD 9-1-1 Center, the response protocol changed from one dispatcher handling each call to a system of a call-taker, who focuses on the caller, and a dispatcher, who focuses on dispatching emergency personnel. The City continues to maintain public safety personnel to answer administrative phone lines, transferring emergency calls to the CCCD 9-1-1 Center and monitor radio transmissions

Currently there are no advance care Emergency Medical Service (EMS) vehicles stationed on the island; however, the EMS station is less than four miles away on the Isle of Palms Connector. More than 75 percent of the calls for assistance are medically and/or safety related, and the City has at least four trained first responders on duty each day. First responders are emergency medical technicians who are authorized to provide basic life support services, including the use of an automated defibrillator. In contrast to County EMS paramedics, City first responders do not transport patients or administer drugs.

In an effort to provide immediate emergency medical response to City residents and visitors, the City will need to ensure that training and funding continues to be available to the Fire Department for this purpose. Concurrently, the City must continue to work with the County EMS authorities to facilitate optimum response to medical emergencies.

An emergency preparedness plan was developed following Hurricane Hugo which requires annual review and assessment.

Water Sources

The public water on the island is provided by the Isle of Palms Water and Sewer Commission, which was established as a separate entity by City Council in 1992. Previously the utility was privately owned by The Beach Company; it subsequently was purchased by the City in 1991.

The Isle of Palms has developed a two-pronged approach to meet current and future needs for providing potable water that satisfies the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) drinking water standards: ground source water on the island is combined with surface water from the Charleston Commissioners of Public Works (CPW), the largest water and sewer utility in the area. Although abundant on the Isle of Palms, ground source water from wells has high, naturally occurring concentrations of fluoride and

minerals. To improve ground source water quality to EPA standards, a reverse osmosis water treatment facility was constructed and placed into service in 1993. However, this facility provides only a portion of the potable water needed for the community. Therefore, in 1994 the Isle of Palms Water and Sewer Commission and the adjacent Town of Sullivan's Island initiated a project to buy potable surface water from the Charleston CPW.

A water main was constructed under Charleston Harbor from Fort Johnson to Sullivan's Island, across Sullivan's Island, and under Breach Inlet to connect with the Isle of Palms Water and Sewer Commission lines. In conjunction with this project, a new water main with fire hydrants was installed across Isle of Palms to enhance fire suppression capabilities and provide a major service connection between the two water systems on Isle of Palms. Also, construction of a new ground storage tank to provide extra water storage capacity for the Wild Dunes area of the island was completed in 1997. The Water and Sewer Commission plans to continue upgrading older, small diameter lines with new, larger diameter pipes to increase water distribution capabilities for the entire island.

To encourage conservation of water, the Water and Sewer Commission uses a conservation rate structure. The Commission uses 300 gallons per day as the average amount used per household.

Wastewater Treatment

A significant portion of development on the Isle of Palms is served by septic tanks. Although all of the development in the gated section of Wild Dunes is served by a sewer treatment system, which incorporates spray irrigation of the golf courses, only some 40 percent of the development outside the boundaries of Wild Dunes is served by a sewer system. Over the years, septic tanks have been permitted in areas where the soils are only marginally suitable for this type of waste treatment.

Installation of public sewers in areas prone to flooding near the beach between 42nd and 53rd Avenues, adjacent to the Recreation Center from 26th to 29th Avenues, and other low areas of the island is supportable from a public health standpoint. Eliminating all septic tanks and replacing them with a public sewer system for the entire island is not a public health necessity at this time but should not be excluded from consideration as conditions and public health standards change. Since the number of

residential units constructed in the Wild Dunes community is expected to be considerably less than the total number of units allowed by the original planned development agreement, there may be excess capacity available for extending sewer service to the problem areas on the island. The Forest Trail Wastewater Treatment Plant was replaced in 2014 and was designed to be expanded, if necessary.

To improve the accuracy of water quality monitoring at the Forest Trail Waste Water Treatment Plant, new monitoring equipment was installed in 1994 during a major rehabilitation of the plant. In 2000, a new blower building and new blowers were installed to reduce the amount of noise generated by the facility. The Water and Sewer Commission attempted to improve control of the noise and odors from both systems in recent years. The City should continue to work closely with the Water and Sewer Commission to assess those areas of the island where the public good would be served by sewer service.

Electrical/ Telephone

Like most jurisdictions, the City is provided with satisfactory electrical power and telephone service by professional and responsive public utility companies. As with many older communities, the majority of these distribution systems are above ground and aging. Wild Dunes has successfully undertaken a project to place all of the utility lines within their community underground. In an effort to reduce outages due to storms and to provide for a more pleasing appearance for the City, those utility providers should be encouraged to replace above ground systems with underground distribution. The City should encourage other utility providers (cable, internet, etc.) to provide a full array of options to City residents.

In 2013, SCE&G installed a second transmission line from the mainland of Mount Pleasant to the Isle of Palms to increase reliability of service in inclement weather and times of high demand. The line was installed by burrowing under the marshes and waterways on the back side of the island.

Stormwater Drainage

During the spring of 1995, an engineering firm hired by the City conducted a comprehensive study of drainage problem areas and recommended how to

best drain the areas in question. Cost estimates were also provided in anticipation of a bond referendum to fund these capital improvements. The areas studied included:

53rd Avenue
23rd Avenue and Waterway Boulevard
Sparrow and Waterway Boulevard
41st Avenue and Hartnett Boulevard
3rd Avenue and Charleston Boulevard
56th Avenue and Palm Boulevard

The drainage improvement project was estimated to cost in the vicinity of \$7 million. On November 7, 1995 the referendum to fund this project was soundly defeated by a margin of 9 to 1. Without the authorization of funding, these major drainage improvements are not contemplated for the foreseeable future.

During 2001 Wild Dunes undertook a major drainage project to accommodate the run-off of an upcoming project. The City was able to work in conjunction with Wild Dunes and agreed to pay to upgrade the size of the drainage pipe to accommodate additional drainage from an abutting neighborhood.

In the fall of 2011, the City collaborated with Wild Dunes and completed a \$1.1M drainage project that alleviated many of the drainage problems between 53rd Avenue and 57th Avenue.

In addition to the routine maintenance of existing drainage facilities, which is done with the assistance of the Charleston County Public Works Department and the SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT), the City has been employing an innovative rehabilitation technique that utilizes a water jet and sewer vacuum truck to re-grade and re-sculpt ditches while simultaneously removing spoil material and vegetation. This process has been successful in shaping ditches that were previously difficult to access with heavy equipment. The City plans to continue funding for future maintenance using this same technique.

In 2007 the City developed a stormwater management program to satisfy the requirements of the federal Clean Water Act and participate in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The program includes a

series of regulations aimed at controlling stormwater runoff in an effort to reduce pollution and sedimentation. Charleston County is handling the compliance and administration of the program through an inter-governmental agreement with the City.

Parks and Recreation

In addition to the seven mile long public beach, Isle of Palms is served by a centrally located, 9.8 acre Recreation Center bounded by 27th and 29th Avenues, just north of Hartnett Boulevard. The site includes softball, baseball and soccer fields, tennis and basketball courts, a children's playground, a dog park and a recreation building that was constructed in 2003, housing offices, large multipurpose rooms and a gymnasium.

The Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) owns and operates a regional park on a nine acre tract located between 14th Avenue and the Beachside residential community along the Atlantic Ocean. Like other PRC parks on Folly Beach and Kiawah Island, the Isle of Palms Park has 350 parking spaces with restroom, shower, changing, picnic and volleyball facilities, life guard services, children's play area and beach access for the handicapped. Limited food and beverages are available for sale and chairs and umbrellas can be rented. The Park site is buffered from the Beachside neighborhood by a landscaped berm and is accessible by car only from 14th Avenue. There is a parking fee.

Two 18-hole championship golf courses and a world-class tennis facility, which are available to the public for a fee, are located on the island within the Wild Dunes gated community.

In 2013, the City acquired a one acre tract of land at Palm Boulevard and 18th Avenue. The property is a passive park and has been named Carmen R. Bunch Park. A portion of the funding used to purchase the land came from the Charleston County Greenbelt Program, which dictates that the land always be used as a park.

Public Properties

In January 1999 as a result of a referendum, the City purchased the 5.5 acre marina site and facilities at the north end of 41st Avenue for \$4.25M. The

City arranged financing for the purchase through a 20-year bond. The site is bordered by the Intracoastal Waterway and Morgan Creek, providing a premier location for marina, entertainment, and recreational activities. This complex offers a full service marina and overnight berthing, a convenience store, restaurant, boat storage area, a boat launching ramp and other privately operated water-sport businesses.

Prior to purchase, the City contracted for a complete inventory and facilities baseline assessment to ensure that the condition of the facilities was known. In general the facilities include the marina proper with docks, piers, headwalls, and boat refueling equipment; the convenience store that includes restrooms, offices, and gasoline pumps; the boat launching ramp with a small utility building/restroom abreast of the ramp; and a large two-story restaurant with some built-in food service equipment. In recent years, the City has undertaken major maintenance projects on the marina site including bulkhead replacement, dredging and dock replacement and improvement.

Because of the timing and conditions of the purchase, leases to various businesses vary in length and circumstance. In general, turnover in the marina tenants is extremely rare and vacancies have been filled quickly. While lease revenue is stable, it is not sufficient to fund 100% of the marina cash needs including debt service on both the bond issued to purchase the marina and the subsequent bond issued to replace the bulkhead. The funding gap between marina revenues and expenditures has historically been filled using tourism revenues such as Municipal Accommodations Taxes, Hospitality Taxes and/or State Accommodations Taxes. Once the bonds are satisfied in 2019 and 2016, respectively, the marina is expected to be financially self-sustaining. Meanwhile, the marina has provided the desired marina-type facilities and services to the City population, which was the primary objective of the purchase.

In the short to mid-term, the marina is expected to provide the desired level of marina services to the population and operate on a fiscally sound basis from year to year. Over the longer term, services will continue but not without close attention to modernization and maintenance of the facilities and monitoring of the site's impact on neighboring residential areas. It should be anticipated that capital improvements and some major maintenance costs will surface in future years. These expected costs will be

mitigated to a significant extent as the balance owed on the purchase bond decreases and is satisfied in 2019.

In addition to the Marina and recreation facilities, the City owns various buildings on the island. City Hall at 1207 Palm Boulevard is a two story-6,800 square foot building completed in December of 1991. At the base of the connector, a 3,500 square-foot Public Works building was finished in April of 1991, which replaced the original building that did not survive Hurricane Hugo. The City owns two vacant parcels behind the Public Works property. The City's two fire stations, #44-41st Avenue and 30 J.C. Long Boulevard, were built in 2007 and 2008 respectively. These stations replaced structures that were built in 1991, but had to be demolished because of extensive mold infestation. The Water and Sewer Commission's facilities at 1300 Palm Boulevard were owned by the City; however, in 2014, the City transferred ownership of this and other properties with a contingency clause that the property would come back to the City if it ceased to be used for the provision of public water and sewer service. . The City constructed a public restroom facility at 1118 Ocean Boulevard in 1991 along with a walkway to the beach to ensure that the physically challenged have access to public restrooms and the beach. In future years, the renovation or replacement of this facility will need to be contemplated.

Water access

Public beach access is provided at 56 points between Breach Inlet and 53rd Avenue. Fifteen additional beach access points are provided within Wild Dunes community for residents and guests of Wild Dunes.

Public access to tidal creeks and marsh on the northwest side of the island is limited. At several locations, streets were originally platted to extend to the edge of the marsh but never constructed. The City has formally accepted The Beach Company's dedication of several of these streets to the public.

Five marinas are located on the island: two are located at Breach Inlet, and the remainder are on 41st Avenue- the Isle of Palms Marina, Wild Dunes Yacht Harbor and Dewees Island Marina. The Isle of Palms Marina has received approval by the Board of Zoning Appeals to construct a boat storage building with a 192 dry-stack storage capacity but no action on this approval is imminent.

Two City-owned boat ramps are located on the island: a boat ramp near Breach Inlet is available for an annual fee, and a boat ramp at the Isle of Palms Marina is available for either an annual fee or a fee per launch.

Key issues

- Maintenance and improvement of public safety
- Maintenance and improvement of water and sewer facilities
- Expansion of recreational opportunities for island residents
- Improvements of storm water management
- Continued operation and overall stewardship of the City marina facilities

Goals and Implementation Strategies

Goal 5.1: Improve public safety.

Strategy 5.1.1: The City should continue to work with County officials to ensure optimum EMS services on the island and maintain basic medical emergency services through the Fire Department. *(Ongoing; Fire Department)*

Strategy 5.1.2: Develop and implement a method of distribution for the Disaster Preparedness Plan. *(Ongoing; General Government and Fire Department)*

Goal 5.2: Support the installation of water and sewer services where required for public health.

Strategy 5.2.1: The City should meet periodically with the Water and Sewer Commission and strive for a “team approach” to addressing waste water and water

issues that will arise in future years. *(Ongoing; General Government and City Council)*

Strategy 5.2.2: In conjunction with the Water and Sewer Commission, the City should take those steps appropriate to facilitate additional sewer service on the island where public health is benefited. *(Ongoing; General Government and City Council)*

Goal 5.4: Improve recreational opportunities for all island residents.

Strategy 5.4.1: Develop a plan to improve alternate modes of transportation on the island including bikeways and sidewalks with an emphasis on installing sidewalks and improving pedestrian safety (see also Strategy 8.1.3). *(2008; Building Department and Recreation Department)*

Strategy 5.4.2: Inventory unimproved rights-of-way extending to the creeks or marsh for possible use as passive recreational sites not unlike the street ends in the Old Village of Mount Pleasant along the Harbor. *(2008; Building Department and Recreation Department)*

Strategy 5.4.3: Consider additional improvements to the Recreation Center to offer a wider spectrum of leisure activities for pre-school children to senior adults (see also Strategy 1.1.2). *(Ongoing; Recreation Department)*

Goal 5.5: Improve the appearance of the island.

Strategy 5.5.1: The City should continue to support tree-planting programs along streets and develop a long-term plan which prioritizes streets and identifies the types of trees to be used. *(Ongoing; General Government and Building Department)*

Strategy 5.5.2: Consider additional ways of reducing littering on the island. *(Ongoing; Police Department and City Council)*

Strategy 5.5.3: Consider ways of restricting the construction of structures at the ends of docks working in conjunction with the OCRM and the U.S. Corps of Engineers. *(Ongoing; Building Department, General Government and City Council)*

Strategy 5.5.4: Encourage new or replacement electrical distributing systems to be constructed underground. *(Ongoing)*

Strategy 5.5.5: Seek funding sources to place electrical distributing systems underground. *(Ongoing)*

Goal 5.6: The City should take initiatives to address drainage and storm water runoff on the island.

Strategy 5.6.1: Continue to work closely with County and State agencies to properly maintain existing storm water and drainage systems. Clearly delineate the City's areas of responsibility and take appropriate action where feasible. *(Ongoing; General Government and City Council)*

Strategy 5.6.2: Consider funding for a comprehensive drainage study that would isolate the highest priority areas and provide engineering options and costs. *(Ongoing; General Government, Public Works and City Council)*

Strategy 5.6.3: Consider funding options, including special assessments, to address drainage problems. *(Ongoing; General Government and City Council)*

Strategy 5.6.4: The City should continue to work to remain in compliance with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Phase II as a small MS4 community. *(Ongoing; Building Department, General Government and City Council)*

Goal 5.7: Provide comprehensive and reasonably priced marina services to the public consistent with considerations of the neighborhood location.

Strategy 5.7.1: Ensure facilities are capable of the highest levels of professional service and provide services at competitive prices. *(Ongoing; General Government and City Council)*

Strategy 5.7.2: Constantly assess potential improvements and changes to the Marina business make-up to expand Marina service consistent with the existing neighborhood environment. *(Ongoing; General Government and City Council)*

Goal 5.8: Protect and enhance the City's investment in real property.

Strategy 5.8.1: Periodically review and update the Baseline Facilities Assessment of the Marina complex to ensure the conditions of the facilities are monitored for safety, physical condition, and utility. *(Ongoing; General Government and City Council)*

Strategy 5.8.2: Make plans to set aside funds for future year maintenance and capital improvements that will be required to protect and maximize the City's investment. *(Ongoing; General Government and City Council)*

Strategy 5.8.3: Aggressively pursue grants or other external funding sources that will enhance the safety, environmental conditions, facilities, or other features of the Marina. *(Ongoing; General Government and City Council)*

Strategy 5.8.4: Develop plans for continuous maintenance/repair of various City buildings such as City Hall, the Public Safety building, Fire Station 2, the Recreation Center and the Public Works building. *(2008; General Government and City Council)*

Strategy 5.8.5: Develop a beautification plan for the Marina complex and lower 41st Avenue corridor to include vegetation, signage, beautification, and

architectural scheme. (2008; General Government and City Council)

Goal 5.9: Ensure maximum financial return on the Marina facilities consistent with Goals 5.7 and 5.8 above.

Strategy 5.9.1: Encourage imaginative proposals from marina businesses that will enhance revenues to the City. (Ongoing)

Strategy 5.9.2: Constantly review prevailing rates and fees to ensure revenues are consistent with comparable facilities. (Ongoing; General Government and City Council)

HOUSING

Characteristics

Over the years the island has attracted those seeking a permanent residence, a vacation home, an investment opportunity or a retirement home. At the present time, approximately 33% of the housing units on the island are owner-occupied, year-round residential units.

The cost of insurance and the possibility of a major storm are concerns for many of the residents of the island. In 2012, the U.S. Congress passed the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012. One of the provisions of the Act is expected to result in the increase of flood insurance rates to reflect the true flood risk. This provision could significantly increase the cost of flood insurance for the older houses on the island that are not elevated.

Many of the older homes on the island are small, with small kitchens, bathrooms and closets, making them less desirable in the current market. In some instances, the land by itself would be worth more if the house were removed. For these reasons many of these older homes are being replaced by updated structures.

Many homes on the island are on a septic system. Some of these septic systems have no problems and would pass all present requirements for a new system. However, some septic systems that pre-date health regulations do not meet the current requirements. At the present time, the Isle of Palms

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
)
COUNTY OF CHARLESTON)

THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (~~“this “MOU”~~) is entered into this
day of _____, 2020, by and between the City of Isle of Palms (~~“hereinafter, the “City”~~) and
the Commissioners of Public Works of the City of Isle of Palms, doing business as the ~~IOP-WSC,~~
~~“WSC”~~). ~~The City of~~ Isle of Palms Water and Sewer Commission (hereinafter, the
“Commission”). The City is an incorporated municipality (1953) with a nine-member elected
body in a Council form of Government. ~~The Isle of Palms Water and Sewer~~The Commission is a
water and wastewater utility with a five-member elected body. Both public entities serve the same
citizen customers in the same geographic area but operate separately, except that in order for the
~~Isle of Palms Water and Sewer~~ Commission to borrow money, bond issues must be approved, via
ordinance, by the City ~~of Isle of Palms City~~ Council.

PREAMBLE

BACKGROUND OF MOU

1. In 2015, the Isle of Palms Planning Commission received a request from City Council to investigate ways to expand the public wastewater collection and treatment system. This work was accomplished over a series of months culminating in a presentation to City Council on August 22, 2017, where the Planning Commission presented suggestions regarding possible courses of action to facilitate that effort and goal.
2. In October ~~4,~~of 2015, in October of 2016 and again in September of 2017, the City experienced flooding associated with three extreme weather events. During two of these events, the flooding caused individual septic systems to malfunction, rendered homes uninhabitable, and created unsanitary conditions in flood waters.

3. Following these weather events, two citizen forums were organized to discuss citizen priorities for Council action. The citizens identified, among other items, drainage and extension of the public sewer as priorities. The City and ~~WSC~~[the Commission](#) met on March 21, 2018, to discuss various forms of wastewater treatment to address these citizen concerns. The City and ~~WSC~~[the Commission](#) have jointly expressed an interest in investigating the requirements necessary to provide sewer service to the areas of the Isle of Palms not presently receiving sewer service from the ~~WSC~~[Commission](#).
4. The City ~~of Isle of Palms~~ budgeted and adopted \$50,000 in the Fiscal Year 2019 budget to facilitate its ability to fund the updated cost estimates for expansion of the public sewer system.
5. On May 30, 2018, the City and ~~WSC~~[the Commission](#) entered into an initial memorandum of understanding agreeing to a 50:50 cost share of a \$38,600 study to update the island's sewer master plan.
6. In December 2018, Thomas ~~and~~[Hutton Engineering Co.](#) presented the updated sewer master plan that included a phasing plan and ~~a~~ construction cost estimate of \$34,588,806. This amount does not include the \$18,990,000 necessary to ~~consolidate the Wild Dunes treatment facility into~~[expand](#) the Forest Trails treatment facility.
7. The City ~~of Isle of Palms~~ and ~~WSC~~[the Commission](#) further agree that the proliferation of non-traditional treatment systems, like grinder pump systems, are less than ideal, unsightly, rarely have alternative power supplies making them non-functional during periods of power outages.
8. ~~WSC~~[The Commission](#) has previously taken the proactive position in their agreements with customers having grinder pump systems that when public sewer becomes

available, those customers are required to abandon the grinder pump systems and connect to the public sewer at their expense.

9. ~~WSC~~The Commission has engaged the services of a rate consultant who has completed a study on impact fee increases, and this modeling will facilitate gathering of needed rate and cost information for future extensions.

FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

10. The City and ~~WSC~~the Commission commit to a goal to improve the barrier island environment, increase sustainability and improve property values. This MOU is intended to establish guidelines for collaboratively working together and sharing information.
11. The City and ~~WSC~~the Commission commit to a goal of developing an additional ~~MOU~~memorandum of understanding within one year from the date of this ~~memorandum~~MOU that will provide a detailed strategy detailing how to systematically expand ~~WSC's~~the Commission's public sewer system in a planned, safe sequence that is not only economically viable but also maximizes grant resources to mitigate costs to the customers.
12. The City and ~~WSC~~the Commission agree that they are providing public service to the same customers.
13. The City and ~~WSC~~the Commission set a target of realizing this goal for their citizen customers ~~by no later than~~within ten (10) years from the date of this ~~agreement~~MOU, with the understanding that this target date may need to be updated and modified as the expansion progresses.

14. This work and analysis will comprise data provided by Thomas & Hutton, as well as information on flood complaints; repetitive losses from flooding; the concentration of grinder pumps, new grinders and grinder requests; malfunctioning septic tanks; requests for sewer service; areas lacking service; and downstream improvements/impacts.
15. The City and ~~WSC~~[the Commission](#) agree to support one another in the pursuit of available grant funding for areas ~~which~~[that](#) may qualify. Funding, and issues related to proximity to the treatment plant, may also become a determining factor in the timing and location of phases towards accomplishing the goal.
16. When necessary, the City and the ~~WSC~~[Commission](#) shall develop any required ordinances as a means of facilitating individual homeowners connecting their properties to the system, once available, without undue financial hardship to the homeowners. Factors to be considered might be length of home ownership, owner occupancy and [any](#) homestead exemption.
17. The City and ~~WSC~~[the Commission](#) commit to sharing information that would not violate any ~~confidentialities~~[confidential information](#) or risk [exposing any](#) proprietary material~~-, not otherwise subject to disclosure under the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.~~
18. The City and ~~WSC~~[the Commission](#) will improve and facilitate communication during the budgetary process and planning process, continuing to create awareness of the stated goals, will share reports, and [will](#) work to coordinate projects for possible cost saving opportunities created by economies of scale. The ~~WSC~~[Commission](#) agrees to supply to the City ~~at least~~[a](#) monthly~~-a~~ report or presentation detailing: (a) forecasted

spending versus original budget, (b) construction progress versus original timetable, and (c) any unexpected events that affect the construction projects associated with eliminating the Wild Dunes facility and consolidation at the Forest Trails facility. The City acknowledges its attendance at the monthly Board of Commissioners meetings and receipt of the Manager's monthly report to the Commissioners satisfy such requirement.

19. The City and ~~WSC~~the Commission commit to ~~maximizing~~working together to seek grant sources and ~~identifying~~identify potential sources of funds, to support and facilitate the necessary upgrades to accommodate the eventual connection of all individual systems to the Citypublic system.

20. Represented fully and inclusively, the City and the ~~WSC~~Commission shall acknowledge the need to trust that both are moving in the same direction with the same goal to serve the same citizen customers and so will participate together in meetings and, at least, annually, review the goals, performance and accomplishments of this ~~Memorandum of Understanding~~MOU.

NOW, THEREFORE, the City and ~~WSC~~the Commission agree that it is the intent of this ~~Memorandum of Understanding~~MOU to formalize their agreement to cooperate in this joint endeavor and to the terms of this MOU, and ~~the City~~each party requests ~~WSC~~the other to sign this ~~Memorandum of Understanding~~MOU and proceed as diligently as reasonably possible with achieving the overall goal by within the target ten-year ~~deadline~~timeframe.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have duly approved this MOU and their respective representatives have duly signed, ~~sealed,~~ and delivered this MOU, as of the ~~dates~~ indicated by each parties' signature date first set forth above.

CITY OF ISLE OF PALMS _____

COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS OF _____

Date: _____

By: _____

PALMS, d/b/a Isle of

Mayor, City of THE CITY OF ISLE OF

Palms Water and Sewer Commission

IOP WSC

Date: _____

By: _____

By: _____
Jimmy Carroll, Mayor

By: _____
Jay Leigh, Chair

DRAFT