



Environmental Advisory Committee

4:30 p.m., Thursday, January 13, 2022

Council Chambers

1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC 29451

Agenda

1. **Call to order** and acknowledgment that the press and the public have been duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.
2. **Approval of previous meeting's minutes** – November 18, 2021
3. **Citizen's Comments** – Citizen's comments shall be limited to 3 minutes.
4. **Old Business**
 - a. Discussion of main priorities to pursue identified by the subcommittees:
 - i. Water Quality
 - ii. Climate Change
 - iii. Wildlife
 - iv. Litter & Pollution
 - b. Review and consideration of Vision Statement
5. **New Business**
 - a. Presentation by Dr. Stewart Weinberg regarding the City of Charleston's Climate Action Plan
 - b. Discussion of establishing quarterly public education campaign
6. **Miscellaneous Business**
 - a. Request for all members to submit a 2-3 sentence bio for City's website
 - b. Next meeting date: 4:00 p.m., Thursday, February 10, 2022
7. **Adjournment**



ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

4:00pm, Thursday, November 18, 2021

1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC

and broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>

MINUTES

1. Call to order

Present: Sandra Brotherton, Deb Faires, Doug Hatler, Jonathan Knoche, Molly Marino, Belvin Olasov, Linda Plunkett, Mary Pringle, Grace Jurgela and City Council Liaison Susan Smith

Staff Present: Director Kerr

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

MOTION: Ms. Plunkett made a motion to nominate Mary Pringle as Chair of the Environmental Advisory Committee. Ms. Brotherton seconded the motion.

MOTION: Ms. Pringle made a motion to nominate Linda Plunkett as Chair of the Environmental Advisory Committee. Mr. Halter seconded the motion.

There being no other nominations, nominations were closed and vote was taken.

VOTE: A vote for Ms. Pringle as Chair of the Environmental Advisory Committee was taken with all in favor except Ms. Pringle who did not vote. Ms. Pringle was elected as Chair of the Environmental Advisory Committee.

MOTION: Ms. Brotherton made a motion to nominate Ms. Plunkett as Vice Chair of the Environmental Advisory Committee. Mr. Halter seconded the nomination. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of previous meeting's minutes – none

MOTION: Ms. Plunkett made a motion to approve, and Mr. Knoche seconded the motion.

Ms. Plunkett noted that the words “needs to be elected” should be added to the first paragraph.

VOTE: The amended minutes passed unanimously.

4. Citizens' Comments

Ms. Kelly Thorvalson, Conservation Programs Manager of the South Carolina Aquarium, gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation on litter data from 2018-2021. There have been 687

documented beach sweeps in that time period in which over 240,000 pieces of trash were picked up, 157,000 of which came from the beaches. Of the litter picked up from the beaches, 80% was plastic including items such as balloons, bags, straws, cigarettes, and Styrofoam, all of which have been banned from local beaches. She did note that the presence of plastic bags has dropped by 50% since the ban on single-use plastic bags has been instituted. She also pointed out a decline in smoking-related litter from 1/3 to 1/5 of all trash picked up.

Ms. Thorvalson said that groups and or individuals picking up trash off of the beaches could track their collections via app, which will be sent to all members of the Committee.

The entire presentation can be seen on the YouTube recording of this meeting on the City's website. Some of the recommendations Ms. Thorvalson made to the Committee included stricter enforcement of litter-related ordinances, especially during the summer season; additional signage indicating banned products on the beach, additional smoking trash receptacles, recognition of businesses using sustainable packaging products, Adopt-an-Access program, and toy bins where visitors can take and leave used beach toys.

It was decided that Ms. Thorvalson should return to the Committee for similar presentations on a semi-annual basis.

5. Old Business

Discussion of priorities and projects for the Committee to address

The Committee determined four areas of focus: water quality, wildlife & habitats, litter, and climate action. Mr. Olasov suggested inviting Stuart Weinberg to the next meeting to discuss the City of Charleston's Climate Action Plan and help the Committee create such a plan for the Isle of Palms.

Director Kerr suggested the Committee come up with an all-encompassing vision statement supported by goals and measurable strategies. Ms. Plunkett offered to come up with a draft vision statement and goals before the next meeting.

Council Member Smith suggested the formation of small working groups to begin discussion on the priorities. Working group membership includes:

- Wildlife & habitats – Faires, Pringle, Jurgela
- Water quality – Knoche, Halter, Olasov
- Litter – Plunkett, Brotherton, Marino
- Climate Action – Olasov, Brotherton, Halter

6. New Business – none

7. Miscellaneous Business

MOTION: Mr. Olasov made a motion for the Committee to meet monthly beginning January 2022. Mr. Halter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Committee will be Thursday, January 13, 2022 at 4:30pm.

Ms. Plunkett asked Director Kerr to follow up with the Committee about IOP emails for Committee members and the information from Ms. Thorvalson regarding the app for recording trash pickup.

Ms. Brotherton suggested that working groups could begin to exchange ideas over email between now and the next meeting. Director Kerr reminded the Committee about the FOIA rules as related to responding to emails.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:29pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk

Goals and Strategies for Protecting City Wildlife and Habitat

Mary Pringle, Debbie Faires, Grace Jurgela

- Increase police enforcement of the existing lighting ordinance during sea turtle nesting season (May 1-October 31). Any light visible from the beach is prohibited by city law. We are working on a “rack card” with information about birds and sea turtles for tourists to be placed at the desks of hotels and motels on the IOP to be picked up by guests who check in and hope that ATAX money can fund its printing. Be aware of Dominion Energy’s proposed offer to change to bright white LED streetlights and consider alternative options for lights on beachfront roads which include shielded models and/or amber colored lights that they offer if these changes are made. Amber lights do not attract emerging hatchlings or discourage adult loggerheads from nesting as bright white light does. And consult with the IOP Turtle Team who are affiliated with SCDNR before making this decision.
- Consider the possibility of an ordinance against metal shovels on the beach to stop the ongoing problem of people digging and leaving large deep holes that are a danger to sea turtles as well as people. This is working well on Kiawah and Hilton Head.
- Work with Audubon SC in their program to protect migratory sea birds, perhaps by putting up educational signs near Breach Inlet where these birds stop to rest and feed. Audubon has been training volunteers on IOP to be Shorebird Stewards on the beach to educate people about the effect of letting dogs and children chase and disturb them.
- Continue to work with SCDNR in posting and roping off areas in Wild Dunes where endangered least terns and plovers have nested for the last two years.
- Continue and expand coyote management that the City has been doing. Also begin to educate the residents about the danger of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides that cause the deaths of beneficial predators such as hawks, eagles, bobcats and owls that may eat poisoned rats and mice. Consider using Nextdoor neighborhood social media or the Island Eye newspaper to educate residents about coyotes and rat poison issues.
- Promote the use of native plants and trees on the Isle of Palms through education of residents and by the use of them in any public green spaces that now exist or are created in the future. Study the use of plastic artificial turf and its effect on wildlife habitat and feeding, including small wildlife such as insects and songbirds.

Environmental Advisory Committee
Isle of Palms, SC
Litter Suggestions for Meeting on January 13, 2022
Sandy Brotherton, Molly Marino, Linda Plunkett

Problem: Trash and Waste on Beach and Streets

Debris, food wrappers, cans, cups, etc. that are left as litter on our beach and streets diminish the beauty and ecology of the IOP. Much of the waste consists of plastic matter, but there is a lot of other debris as well, negatively impacting the local environment and wildlife.

Suggestions:

- Become an affiliate of Palmetto Pride's "Keep SC Beautiful." There are opportunities for awards, PR, and funding. (<https://www.palmettopride.org/>)
- Add more colorful signage of items prohibited on the beach.
- Appoint Neighborhood Litter Captains to monitor street trash and encourage neighbors to pick up trash and litter left by others.
- Remind rental companies and rental house owners about existing beach rules and importance of litter clean up.
- Continue and encourage "Clean Sweep" efforts.
- Include lids or slots on new trash cans to reduce wind-born debris.
- Add more rubbish bins and cigarette butt receptacles near parking lots and spaces.

Although garbage collection is efficient and reliable, yard debris and household waste may sit at roadside for weeks before pick-up. Esthetically, it is an eyesore. Over time, the leaves from the branches drop off and flow into the drainage system during a storm, which makes it more difficult to manage water flow and increases the risk of localized street flooding. Leaf bags fall over on the side or rip open after weeks in the weather further contributing to the problem. When the debris is removed, grass and topsoil are often lost in the process, which adds to erosion and washing of soil into the street drains.

Suggestions:

- Establish a designated day each week for pick-up of yard debris and household waste. If there is a specific day, individuals who are interested in salvaging a roadside treasure can cruise the area and remove items of interest resulting in less for public works to pick up. A specific day for debris may result in residents putting out limbs and leaves the day before.
- Investigate the possibility of obtaining bids for debris pick up and clean-up to relieve some of the workload on our public works department.

Problem: Microplastics

The potential for dangerous microplastics arises from the slow decomposition of polyethylene terephthalate (PETs), polypropylene, polystyrene, and other polymers. Release of toxic chemicals may occur from water bottles sitting in direct sunlight. Plastic water bottles are not biodegradable and break down into microplastics, which end up in the water supply. Microplastics are consumed by wildlife as well as human consumers.

The production of these plastic bottles requires the use of non-renewable fossil fuels (oils). Energy is also used to transport, store and dispose of these water bottles (76 million barrels according to <https://get-green->

now.com/environmental-impact-plastic-bottled-water/). Plastic containers are the 5th most common items in coastline cleanups. Plastic straws, sold at the local Harris Teeter, are also a litter problem on the IOP.

Suggestions:

- Foster greater cooperation with local IOP businesses to reduce wasteful packaging, especially plastics (HT, Circle K, Subway, Domino's, Front Beach, Target and others).
- Eliminate sales of cases of water at local businesses.
- Provide opportunity to purchase reusable water bottles.
- Provide filling stations/attachments at municipal water fountains.
- Discourage use of plastic water bottles in rental properties.
- Establish a "Bring your water bottle campaign" for visitors in partnership with rental companies and local businesses, possible selling some as tourist souvenirs.
- Educate public about the rationale for reusable water bottles vs disposable plastic.
- Recognize local businesses that eliminate plastic containers.

Problem: Cigarette butts

At the November 18 meeting Kelly Thorvalson from the SC Aquarium presented problems caused by cigarette butts and provided examples of signage regarding a "no smoking" policy.

Suggestions:

- Consider appropriate (colorful) signage in the municipal parking lot, at parking kiosks, primary beach path.
- Add containers to be used for disposal of butts.
- Educate public about the rationale for the ordinance.

Problem: Need for More Education and PR re: Litter Problems on IOP

One of the Committee's primary goals is to engage residents and citizens to take responsibility for litter prevention and reduce their use of plastics. In addition to the ideas offered above, our group can keep the issue in the forefront by regular litter reminders via:

- IOP web site and newsletters
- *Island Eye News* and *Moultrie News*
- Social media
- Information given to renters
- School projects
- Appointment of Environmental Enforcement Officer (seasonal, part-time)
- Collaboration with other organizations involved in elimination of litter: Palmetto Pride SC Aquarium, Coastal Conservation League, SIES, summer camps et al.

Environmental Advisory Committee

City of Isle of Palms, SC

Draft of Vision Statement

From Linda Plunkett
Vice Chair
lplunkett@iop.net
December 17, 2021

At its inaugural meeting on October 14, 2021 Members agreed that the purpose of the Committee is:

...to advise City Council on matters of environmental impact, protections, conservation and sustainability by exploring innovations, best practices & data around changes. (Minutes, October 14, 2021)

This purpose may be viewed as the Committee's **mission statement** because it describes what the entity is charged to do in the present.

At its meeting on November 18, 2021 the Committee agreed to formulate a **vision statement**, an outline of what the committee would like to achieve in the future.

Based on the Committee's discussion at the meeting, the following is a **draft vision statement**.

The Environmental Advisory Committee of the City of Isle of Palms SC seeks to make the City a coastal leader in environmental best practices by focusing on four ecological issues:

- *Reduction and elimination of litter*
- *Review and maintenance of high quality of water*
- *Protection of the City's habitat and wildlife*
- *Advocacy and leadership in climate action to build a sustainable environment*

Next the Committee will form four working groups to develop strategies, actionable goals, and metrics for each of the areas of focus.