





**Planning Commission Meeting  
4:30pm, Wednesday, December 14, 2022  
1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC and  
broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>**

**MINUTES**

**1. Call to Order**

Present: Steve Corney, Sue Nagelski, Sandy Stone, Marty Brown, Ron Denton, Jeffrey Rubin, David Cohen, Matt Sims, Zoning Administrator and Douglas Kerr, Director of Planning

Also present: Director Kerr, Zoning Administrator Simms

**2. Approval of minutes**

Mr. Stone made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2022 regular meeting. Ms. Nagelski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**3. Old Business**

**A. Update on short-term rentals**

Director Kerr stated that City Council has the Planning Commission recommendations as well as feedback from the short-term rental listening sessions. The general response from the public has been no caps and better enforcement of current ordinances. However, there are some who still want some sort of cap on the number of short-term rentals on the island. City Council did express concern about the sharp rise in the number of short-term rental licenses that have been issued recently. It had been assumed this spike was mostly due to residents purchasing a business license, but a review of the applications shows this spike is as a result of new, actual rentals.

He reported that staff prepared an ordinance for a moratorium, but it was voted down at last week's City Council meeting. He said Council has committed itself to working on the issue at the start of the new year. He anticipates the issue to return to the Planning Commission depending on what City Council decides.

Mr. Corney said getting and maintaining better data is the key to staying on top of the issue long term. Director Kerr said that Charleston County won't allow the City to tie into its data. He said that if City Council makes any changes to policy part of it will include staff determining how to manage short-term rental data so that it is useful.

4. **New Business** – Presentation by Dr. Tucker, Morgan Creek Harbor Association

Dr. Tucker gave a brief presentation on the health and activities of Morgan Creek, the marsh surrounding it, and the Marina and how all these aspects are interdependent. He said the marina should be dredged every 7-10 years and it was last done in 2013. The current cost could be upwards of \$2.5million. He hopes the City and Wild Dunes will financially support this endeavor. He would like the MCHA to be part of any discussion about dredging.

Director Kerr said the City has engaged ATM to do a survey of the marina to the intercoastal waterway. ATM will reach out to interested parties to discuss some coordination. He suggested Dr. Tucker contact Kirby Marshall at ATM for more information.

5. **Old Business**

B. **Discuss Resiliency Element of Comprehensive Plan Update**

Director Kerr presented a new draft of the Resiliency Element. Mr. Corney noted the Army Corps of Engineers' report did not rate the Isle of Palms as a high-risk area. However, the City will need to decide what is most important to focus on, be that flooding, property damage, etc. He suggested it might be helpful to acquire the contingency plans of the IOP Water & Sewer Commission and Dominion Energy if only to mention them in this section of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Cohen said that knowing the projected recovery times from such organizations would be good to know so that the City can focus on what can be done to reduce those times.

Director Kerr will make the suggested edits to the document and bring it back to the Commission in January.

6. **Adjournment**

Mr. Corney made a motion to adjourn, and Mr. Stone seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane  
City Clerk

## RESILIENCY

For the purposes of this element, Resilience is defined as the community's capacity to withstand and recover from natural disasters and long-term changes as a result of sea level rise rather than simply reacting to impacts (National Ocean Service, NOAA).

### *Existing Conditions*

The topography of the island is relatively low and flat, with average ground elevations of 7 to 10 feet above mean sea level (MSL). There are several areas as high as 17 feet above MSL located along an ocean facing ridge.

The tide ranges from an average of 2.2 feet at low tide to 5.2 feet at high tide with the spring tide range increasing as high as 6.1 feet.

Because of low ground elevations, most of the 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 storm," for which there is a one percent probability of occurring in any given year.

Low elevations, 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.

During severe storm events, water levels can reach an elevation as high as 12 feet MSL with waves cresting up to 18 feet MSL. Storm surge from Hurricane Hugo (1989) covered most of the island with peak water levels reaching 15.5 feet MSL along the beach and 12.5 feet MSL along the back of the island.

The City's stormwater drainage system is owned and maintained by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), the City, Charleston County, and private entities. A significant percent of the stormwater drainage infrastructure is approximately 70 years old, undersized and deteriorating. However, the newly constructed sections (located??) are functioning well.

Potable water and sewer is accessible to the island either through a resident's private well and septic system or via the IOP Water and Sewer Commission, a managing branch of the Charleston Water System. Currently, Isle of Palms is in the construction phase of consolidating and upgrading their wastewater treatment facilities per Thomas & Hutton's Sewer Master Plan Update, 2018.

Considering the City's vulnerability to natural hazards and the increasing severity of flooding events over the past several years, it is readily apparent that the City must plan and identify strategies to make the community more resilient. Specifically, the city must devise a resiliency plan to address the impacts of flooding, beach erosion, and sea level rise on public infrastructure, businesses, and the community.

### *Flooding*

To minimize the potential for property damage due to flood conditions, the City adopted a comprehensive set of regulations in 1983. The City is in compliance with the requirements of 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), a program that rewards communities for **exceeding the minimum NFIP requirements**. **For example, the City now requires the lowest floor of any new structures to be elevated to at least 13 feet above mean sea level, the minimum flood elevations required by the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs.)**

Presently, **Isle of Palms** is designated as a "Class 5" CRS community **entitling** its citizens to a 30% 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.

Since 2010, the City has completed several large-scale drainage projects between 29<sup>th</sup> and 57<sup>th</sup> Avenues to reduce the likelihood of flood damage. In 2022, the City began a major project to improve the outfalls between 30<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenues. The project will **allow the flow of water** off the island quicker **and additionally, seal the tidal waters out of the system**.

**Hence, the City engaged Davis and Floyd Engineering, 2021, to develop a drainage masterplan that identifies areas of need in order to create a capital improvement program which will allow the City to prioritize future drainage projects.**

### *Beach Erosion*

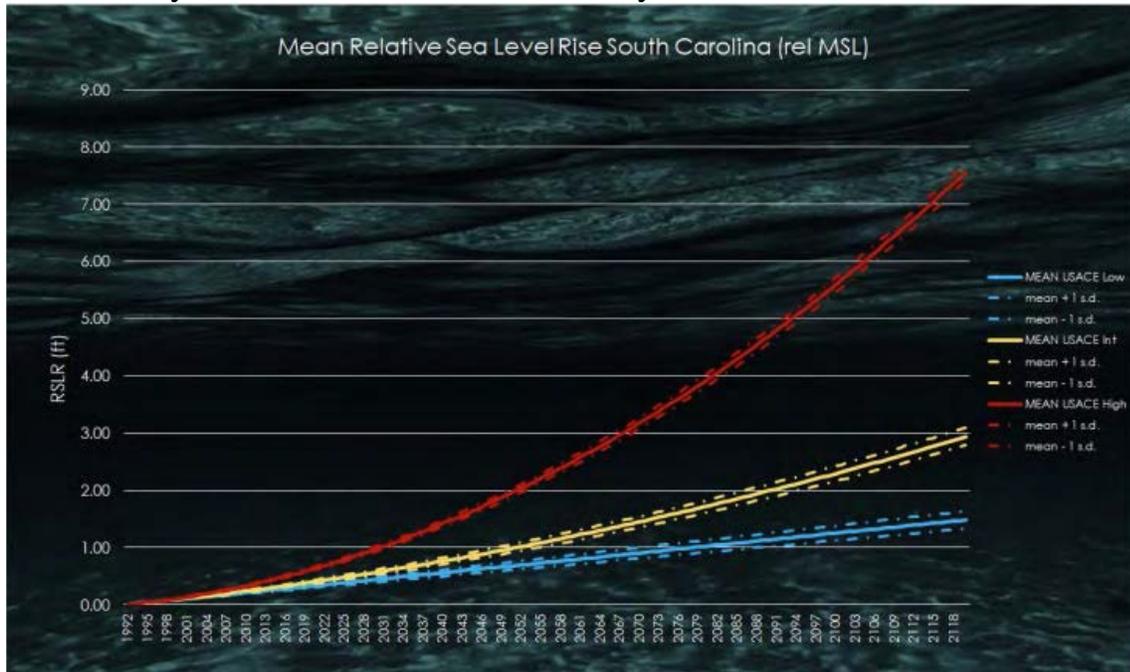
The dune system of the beach creates the first natural barrier against storm surge, flooding, and rising tides. The Isle of Palms shoreline is healthy and generally

accreting, but the shoreline has cyclical erosional episodes notably in the vicinity of the unstable inlet zones located at both two ends of the island.

As a result of the erosion occurring at the unstable inlet zone located at the northeastern end of the island adjacent to Dewees Inlet, 2 beach renourishment projects were undertaken and successfully completed in 2008 and 2018 at a cost of \$10M and \$14M, respectively. Both projects consisted of replacing lost sand to mitigate the effects of erosion by expanding the beach. Both projects were privately and publicly funded. The City continues to monitor the entire shoreline for the effects of erosion. It is expected that the City will need to facilitate another major restoration project within 10 years from the last beach renourishment project.

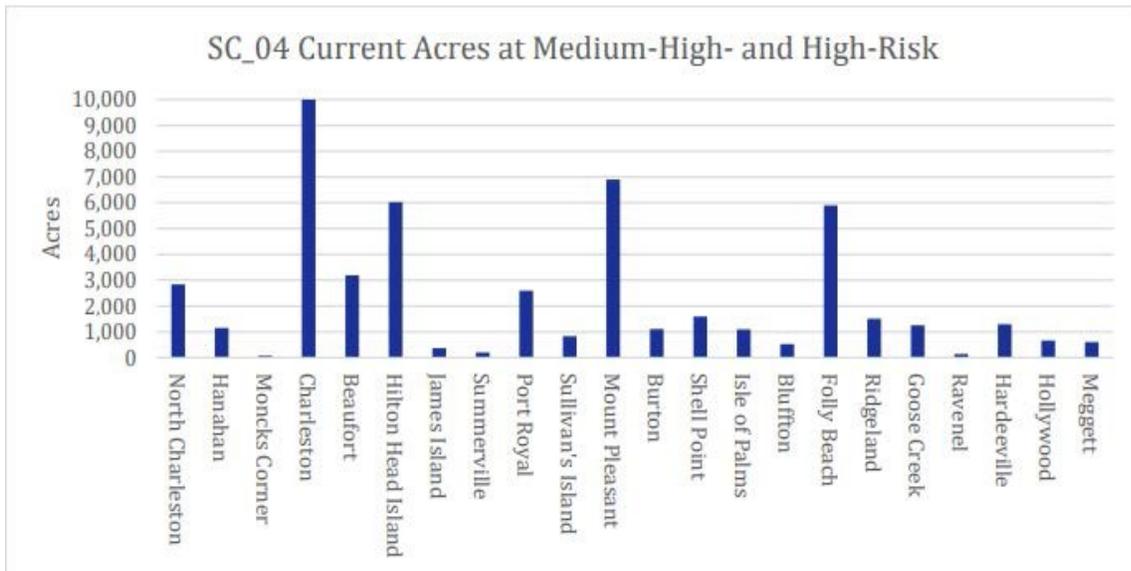
### Sea Level Rise

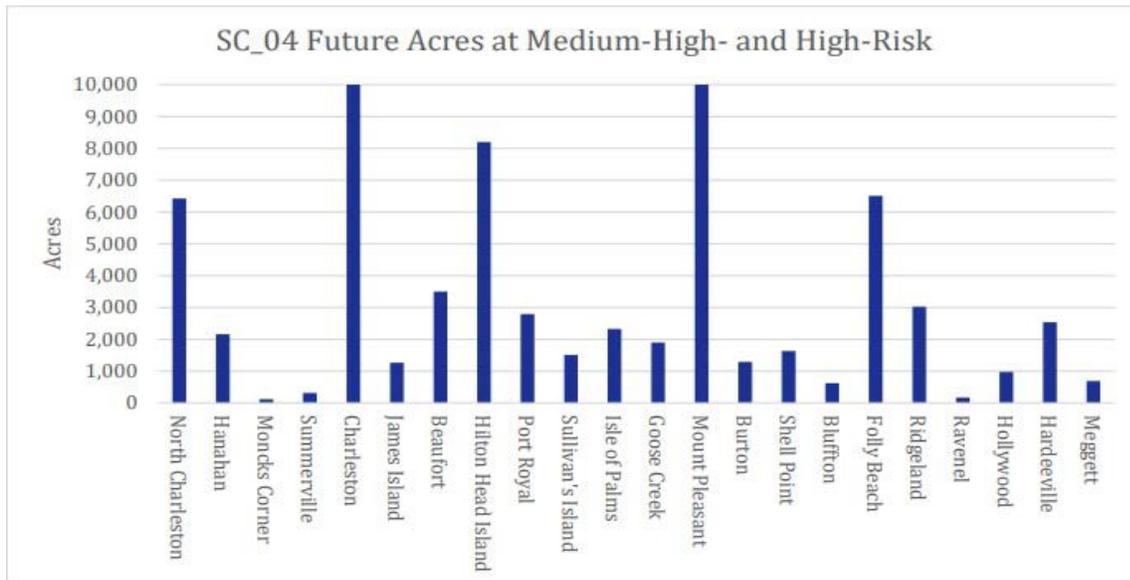
Sea level rise poses a significant threat to homes, private property, public infrastructure and services, natural resources, and ultimately, public safety and welfare. In Charleston, the sea level has risen 10 inches since 1950, and is now accelerating at a rate of 1 inch every 2 years. Further, based on data from three South Carolina three compliant gauges, the Army Corp of Engineers South Atlantic Coastal Study (SASC) estimated that mean relative sea level rise will increase anywhere from 1.39 to 7.47 feet by 2120.



While the extent and severity of the influence sea level rise will have on the island remains relatively under-examined, due to the low-lying nature of the island and the proximity to the ocean and marshlands, the City of Isle of Palms is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of rising seas. In particular, sea level rise will likely continue to exacerbate flooding from storm surge, high tides, and stormwater.

According to the Army Corp of **Engineers' South Atlantic Coastal Study (SACS)** that identified risks and vulnerabilities of coastal areas to increased hurricane and storm damage as a result of sea level rise, the primary impact to the Isle of Palms will likely be structural and infrastructural damage. Their modeling found that over 2,000 acres of Isle of Palms' total 3,481 acres are at medium-high risk of exposure and probability of hazard occurrence, more than twice the acreage currently at medium-high risk. Many of the City's roads are low and at risk of being damaged by high tides and storm surge. Additionally, utilities are installed below ground within the roadway rights-of-way would be impacted by scouring and storm surge.





In 2022 the City requested grant funding to construct an elevated berm on the backside of the island to prevent minor storm surges from being able to inundate the neighborhoods on the inland side of Waterway Boulevard. These neighborhoods are some of the lowest on the island and most susceptible to the increased sunny day flooding associated with sea level rise.

### *Key Issues*

- Maintain healthy beach and shoreline
- Encourage elevation of low existing structures
- Work with utility providers to improve resilience of infrastructure
- Seal tidal canals
- Support renourishment
- Healthy disaster recovery account
- Budget for large scale drainage improvements identified in the Davis and Floyd masterplan

## Goals and Implementation Strategies **TO BE WRITTEN**

Goal 4.1: Continue to manage and promote a healthy beach.

Strategy 4.1.1: Support beach renourishment

projects Strategy 4.1.2: Encourage private dune

restoration projects

Goal 4.2: Continue efforts to seal the low areas of the back side of the island, including drainage systems, to reduce tidal intrusion into the highland of the island.

Strategy 4.2.1: Support efforts to build berms along the back side of the island to keep abnormally high tides from entering the highland areas, including elevating the multiuse path adjacent to Waterway Boulevard.

Strategy 4.2.2: Support OCRM in administering measures that protect marshes on the backside of the island.

Goal 4.3: Continue to work closely with state, federal, and local partners and coordinate resiliency efforts.

Goal 4.4-Work with utility providers to ensure infrastructure on the island is constructed to be as resilient as practical.

Goal 4.5 Ensure that the City's code of ordinances allow future construction projects to be constructed to be resilient.

Goal 4.5.1 Review and implement recommendations from the City's consultant working on a drainage masterplan, which includes a task to review and recommend improvements to the City's development standards.

## POPULATION

### *Characteristics*

According to the 2010 Census, the population of the City of Isle of Palms has been fairly stable over the last decade. Between 1990 and 2000 the total population rose from 3,680 in 1990 to 4,538, and then between 2000 and 2010 it dropped slightly to 4,133. During the summer beach season, the island's population rises to 12,000 people and may increase to as many as 20,000 people during peak weekends such as Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day, based on Police Department estimates.

The number of year-round residents of the Isle of Palms is not expected to change significantly in the near future. This can be attributed to: a decreasing supply of residential development sites on the island, especially sites aimed at year-round residents, and a continuing decline in the average number of persons per household.

The 2010 Census indicates a 34% increase in the number of people over the age of 65, with the number of people in every other age category decreasing.

The 2010 Census indicates that the number of housing units increased by ten percent over the 2000 Census to 4,274 units. However, the number of owner-occupied units decreased six percent over the same period to 1,828 units. The Census category that includes units rented on a short term basis and second homes increased by 26% from 1,939 units to 2,446 units.

<b>Population- year round</b>								
		<b>1960</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% change</b>
	Isle Of Palms[Census]	1,183	2,657	3,421	3,680	4,583	4,133	-10%
	East Cooper[Census]		23,000	33,200	45,300	59,554	67,843	14%
	Other Barrier Islands[Census]							
	Sullivan's Island				1,623	1,911	1,791	-6%
	Folly Beach				1,398	2,116	2,617	24%
	Kiawah Island				718	1,163	1,626	40%
	Seabrook Island				948	1,250	1,714	37%

<b>Isle of Palms Housing Units</b>							
		<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% change</b>
	Total[Census]			3,063	3,881	4,274	10%
	Occupied[Census]	821	1,305	1,482	1,942	1,828	-6%
	by Owner			1,172	1,568	1,481	-6%
	by Renter			310	374	347	

	Seasonal/Vacant			2,109	1,939	2,446	26%
	Total within Wild Dunes[as of 4/8/2012]				1,923	2,067	
<b>Vacant Residential Sites</b>				<b><u>1995</u></b>	<b><u>2001</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	
	Total			975	375	215	
	Single Family			825	206	117	

Income (per census)

Per capita income- median

Isle of Palms

1980- \$9,177  
 1990- \$25,421  
 2000- \$44,221  
 2010- \$68,759

Mount Pleasant

1980- \$9,038

1990- \$25,421  
2000- \$30,823  
2010- \$40,808

Charleston County

1980- \$6,358  
1990- \$13,068  
2000- \$21,393  
2010- \$29,738

Household income- median

Isle of Palms

1980- \$24,096  
1990- \$60,682  
2000- \$76,170  
2010- \$86,477

*Key Issues*

- The impact of a growing seasonal population.
- The impact of a growing year-round population of retirement age (60 years and over).
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*Goals and Implementation Strategies*

Goal 1.1: Improve services for residents.

Strategy 1.1.1      The City should continue to monitor the  
Emergency Medical Services serving the island

(see also Goal 5.1). *(Ongoing; Fire Department, General Government and City Council)*

Strategy 1.1.2 Recreational opportunities for residents should be expanded or added, including additional safe walking or biking areas on the island (see also Strategy 5.4.3). *(2008; Recreation Department, General Government and City Council)*

Goal 1.2: Balance the needs of island residents with seasonal visitors.

Strategy 1.2.1 Support commercial development only within the parameters set by the existing zoning regulations and consistent with the City's established character as a residential community. *(Ongoing; Building Department and City Council)*

Strategy 1.2.2 While the needs of island residents should be paramount, efforts should be made to adjust the level of City services to meet the needs of seasonal visitors as well. *(Ongoing; General Government and City Council)*

Strategy 1.2.3 The City should continuously monitor and keep records of the effect of seasonal visitors on the quality of life of the permanent residents; this should include, but not be limited to the issues of parking, noise, trash, and general livability. *(Ongoing; General Government and City Council)*