



SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
5:00pm, Tuesday, January 3, 2023
1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC and
broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>

MINUTES

1. Call to order

Present: Council members Hahn, Bogosian, Ward, Streetman, Anderson, Popson, Miars, Pierce, and Mayor Pounds

Staff Present: Administrator Fragoso, Director Kerr, various department heads

2. Citizen's Comments -- none

3. Purpose

A. Mayor's Remarks

Mayor Pounds said, "Before we started with the business of 2023, I wanted to make a few remarks and then we'll touch on some of the highlights of 2022. I want to address Council and then our residents, but first I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year! I hope 2023 is a healthy and happy one for you and your families.

"I'm so proud of how each Councilmember has filled the role they were elected to do. It's only been one year, and as a reminder, last January we swore in 4 new council members that had never held a political office. We've tackled numerous, contentious issues and each member has done what they thought was right for the constituents they were elected to serve. With each member bringing a diverse background to the table, it has made us better and allowed for good dialogue and discussions to get to a decision. We've all been the target of social media bullying and I've seen you support each other and me on several occasions when things got out of hand. I'm proud of how we've focused on residents which is what we said we would do! We've done this by creating multiple venues for our residents to provide their opinions and suggestions - we had an open forum with the new marina operator; we had 3 listening sessions focused on short term rentals; we held a public hearing at the Rec Center for the 5 ordinances dealing with future Wild Dunes development. I thank you, Council members, for keeping kindness and empathy at the forefront of everything we do. Given that we've all been around a few years, we know people "got stuff". We have no idea what each other may be going thru or dealing with so as we move into the new year, let's continue to start with the default assumption that we all have obstacles in our lives we are dealing with, and approach each other with compassion. Let's continue to focus on finding common ground and building each other up.

“To our residents, thank you for attending the sessions and providing input and suggestions and for your continued engagement in making our island better. Your attendance and emails and other communications with Council are critical as we try to make sure our decisions are focused on what you want and not how we may personally want things to turn out. Many of you, about 160, have attended the coffees that have been scheduled throughout the year or dropped in during office hours and shared your thoughts – thank you! I would also ask you to continue to focus on finding our common ground and building each other up. Your Council are your neighbors and friends trying to do their best in essentially a volunteer role – there is no playbook for how to be a good mayor or council member so for all of us patience is key.

“I have been so pleased to see that no matter our differences in values or opinions, we all want what’s best for our City. We love it, we want to protect it and we are in a position to do that. We might disagree on an approach or strategy to get there, but we have time and time again had meaningful and respectful discussions when it comes to issues facing us on the island. We will continue to create public hearings and other opportunities – office hours, coffees, one on one meetings – for residents to weigh in on an issue or project or to just chat. I hope you will take the opportunity to get to know your elected officials as we all try to determine what’s best for our piece of paradise!

“I think perspective is so important – generally in life and especially when dealing with the issues facing our city. I have the privilege of meeting quarterly with other mayors around our state. I hear the struggles they have – ensuring clean water for their residents, trying to entice a grocery store to their town so residents don’t have to drive 45+ minutes to the closest one, trying to get a restaurant to open in their business district.... It makes me grateful for the issues that we face. While things may not move as fast in municipal government as any of us would like them to, it’s important we maintain perspective and keep things moving at an acceptable pace.

I saw this 2023 comment recently – ‘everybody will be wrong about something, myself included. Stay humble, flexible, open minded but with a razor-sharp focus and minimize distractions/noise.’ Good advice to enter the new year with.

“Now, let’s do a quick review of 2022 initiatives and projects which shows great progress. Our staff has put together a slide deck detailing the major accomplishments for 2022.”

B. Report of 2022 Accomplishments Report

Administrator Fragoso gave the 2022 Accomplishments Report:

1. Manage pressure from population growth in surrounding communities
 - a. Collaboration with SCDOT in a comprehensive study of the IOP Connector and development/presentation of alternative lane configurations to move traffic on and off the island more efficiently.
 - b. Participated in the “Know B4 you Go” Campaign - Partnerships w Town of Mount Pleasant, Sullivan’s Island, Charleston County Parks and ABC News 4 to raise awareness and promote beach information for visitors to better plan their trips to the beach

- c. City Council adopted zoning amendments to expand the existing conservation district to include preservation of public and private recreation facilities, including the golf courses inside and outside Wild Dunes and the tennis facility inside Wild Dunes, and to cap the density in the Wild Dunes PRD to reflect the current existing units and approved lots.
 - d. Implementation of island wide speed limit of 25mph on all secondary roads
- 2. Effective, consistent and timely communications plan
 - a. Created Public Relations and Tourism Coordinator position. This position is expected to be filled by early 2023 to help meet the City's strategic priority and improve City communication efforts with the community.
 - b. Held quarterly meetings with our local business owners to facilitate effective communication between our business community and City government and provide them with current information about City events, policies, projects and programs that may impact their operations.
 - c. Created social media accounts/presence for the Fire Department
- 3. Financial Sustainability
 - a. City ended FY23 with over \$30M in cash reserves, maintained the highest credit rating possible and have a manageable debt load with rates ranging from 1.6% to 4.14% with a significant portion maturing in the next five (5) years.
 - b. City received a clean audit for FY23.
- 4. Resident's quality of life from impact of STRs
 - a. Facilitated Planning Commission's review of short-term rental regulations and development of recommendations for Council
 - b. Facilitated several community listening sessions to get community feedback regarding short term rental regulations
- 5. Environmental protection efforts
 - a. Initiatives recommended by the newly appointed Environmental Advisory Committee
 - i. Glass recycling program in partnership with Harris Teeter and IOP Marina tenants
 - ii. Installation of educational signage at each beach access path regarding turtle nests, lights and trash on the beach
 - iii. Initiated water quality testing efforts with Charleston Waterkeepers
- 6. Employee retention and succession planning
 - a. Implemented competitive market-based wage and compensation adjustments for all City employees
 - b. Adjusted the annual leave accrual rates and policy to increase competitiveness
 - c. Added the day after Christmas as additional holiday
 - d. Implemented a onetime cost of living adjustment of \$5K and 2.5% adjustment to go into effect 1/1/23
 - e. Held the annual Employee Appreciation Event where 19 employees were recognized for their longevity and the Employee of the Year award was presented to Debbie Suggs, Finance Director

- f. Held a Holiday party for all city employees, Council members and volunteers who serve on Boards and Commissions
- g. Police Department held an Annual Awards ceremony where Det. Tumminelli was recognized as the Officer of the Year, Patrol Officer Kowsky as Rookie of the Year, Sergeant Storen as Supervisor of the Year, and Code Enforcement Officer Kowsky as Professional Staff of the Year. Additionally, local restaurant Luke n' Ollies was presented with the Community Partnership Award.
- h. Initiated the renovation of employee fitness centers at Public Safety Building and Fire Station 2
- i. City appointed Craig Oliverius as the new Fire Chief to lead the Fire Department after a thorough recruitment process

Capital Projects & Community Enhancements:

- Started construction of ADA compliant beach access path and two handicap parking spaces at 34A beach access path. Project expected to be completed in early 2023.
- Completion of the replacement of the marina docks along Morgan Creek.
- Began construction of outfall improvements at 30th Avenue and 36th Avenue to improve storm water and tidal drainage across the island.
- Began construction of new enclosure for garbage compactor used by Front Beach commercial district
- Began working on a comprehensive drainage masterplan to identify storm water management needs and priorities into the future.
- Pursued permit from OCRM to extent accessibility mat at 42nd beach access path to enhance access to the water for folks w disabilities
- Installed accessibility mat to new handicap parking spaces adjacent to the new public dock at the marina
- City integrated the new public dock at the marina as a new amenity for island residents and general public. City offered free weekly meditation classes and in partnership with local operator, Coastal Expeditions, developed a series of free itineraries exclusively for Isle of Palms residents.
- City launched the Beach Wheelchair Program which offers daily use of beach wheelchairs at no charge. [Include total number of users]
- City joined the Interlocal Agreement for Automatic Aid and Response between City of Charleston, City of North Charleston, St. Andrews PSD, James Island PSD, St. Johns Fire District and the Town of Mount Pleasant, to increase efficient use of Fire Department resources and improve public service to residents.
- Emergency Management
 - Responded to two (2) weather events that impacted IOP
 - Conducted tabletop exercises w Charleston County Emergency Management

- Entered into multiple Memorandum of Understandings OUs with various stakeholders and partners to enhance our community's response and recovery capabilities.

Grants:

- Efforts between the City, the City's lobbying firm and Representative Bustos – the City secured an allocation of \$1.5M towards a future dredging project at the IOP Marina.
- The City received a grant award of \$2.13M through the SC Infrastructure Investment Program for the construction of the drainage outfall project at 41st Avenue including piping the ditch along 41st and Waterway Boulevard.
- City received \$120K in grant funding from the Charleston County Greenbelt Program for the construction of an ADA compliant board walk at 34 A beach access path.

City submitted a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant for design, engineering and construction of the Waterway Boulevard Path Elevation Project to increase the level of protection from tidal inundation - \$1.2M

Work completed in conjunction with the SCDOT to better traffic flow on the IOP Connector and ongoing study of traffic flow up to Highway 17.

C. Announcement of Appointments to new standing committees for 2023

Mayor Pounds announced the appointment of Council members Bogosian, Pierce, and Streetman to the Administration Committee. He announced the appointment of Council members Anderson, Hahn, and Ward to the Public Safety Committee, and he announced the appointment of Council members Miars, Streetman, and Popson to the Public Services and Facilities Committee.

D. Announcement of appointment to CARTA Board of Directors – Jimmy Ward

E. Announcement of appointment to Charleston Visitors Bureau Board of Directors – Rusty Streetman

F. Announcement of appointment to the Charleston, Berkeley, Dorchester Council of Governments – Jan Anderson

G. Announcement of appointment to the Environmental Advisory Committee – John Bogosian

H. Announcement of appointment to City Attorney – MacMcQuillan, Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd

I. Consideration of appointments to Boards and Commissions

Mayor Pounds announced the appointment of David Cohen, Steven Corney, and Sandy Stone to the Planning Commission with terms expiring 12/31/2024;

-Chrissy Lorenz, Chas Akers, Barb Bergwerf, and Gloria Clarke to the ATAX Committee with terms expiring 12/31/2025;

-and Ted McKnight and Elizabeth Campsen to the Board of Zoning Appeals with terms expiring 12/31/2025.

J. Consideration of Second Reading of Ordinance 2022-15 to amend standing committees

MOTION: Council Member Ward made a motion to approve and waive the reading, and Council Member Streetman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

K. Consideration and approval of hiring recruitment firm to assist in hiring of Finance Director

Administrator Fragoso said they have received proposals from two firms offering the identical fee structure. She would like time to vet and interview the firms before making a decision. She requested City Council approve the engagement and allow staff time to discern the choice of firm.

MOTION: Council Member Pierce made a motion to approve the expenditure, and Council Member Bogosian seconded the motion.

Administrator Fragoso added, "It is an unbudgeted item. However we do have the funds that will cover it. That is why it would require your approval so that I can engage."

VOTE: A vote was taken with all in favor.

L. Consideration of Karrie Ferrell as Director of the Recreation Department

MOTION: Council Member Ward made a motion to approve, and Council Member Streetman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Adjournment

Council Member Ward made a motion to adjourn, and Council Member Miars seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:41pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk