



SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING -- WORKSHOP
5:00pm, Monday, February 13, 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, Anderson, Ward, Streetman, Popson, Miars, Pierce, and Mayor Pounds

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

2. Citizens' Comments

Elizabeth Campsen's comments are attached to these minutes.

3. Special Presentations – none

4. Dashboard of City Operations

Administrator Fragoso offers have been made recently for several of the staff vacancies including the PR position, Assistant Director of the Recreation Department, and a Recreation Department Specialist. Upcoming events include the Front Beach Fest and the Community Yard Sale.

As of February 10, 1,768 short-term rental licenses have been issued.

5. Department Reports – in the meeting packet

6. Strategic Plan Policy Initiatives and Priorities

A. Livability

Discussion of changing short-term rental compliance managing software

Director Kerr said he would like to run Granicus and RentalScape simultaneously until May and then make a final decision on which platform to use to track short-term rentals. He will use the base program before considering the add-ons that have been offered. He said he does not think RentalScape will find that many more rentals, but the program appears to be more sophisticated and better at tracking. It crawls more sites than Granicus does on a daily basis, and it is better at tracking bookings which could provide better estimates of rental activity.

There is money in the budget for this purchase. The City will be paying for both programs for a few months.

B. Environmental – none

C. Public Services

i. Discussion of paramedic program

Chief Oliverius gave a presentation on the Isle of Palms' emergency response model. The City is an "all hazards response" meaning it responds to fire, medical, and water calls. He gave a breakdown of the department's organization and the level of Emergency Medical Responders in the department. Currently, Chief Oliverius is the sole paramedic.

He explained the difference between offering Basic Life Support (currently what the department can do) versus Advanced Life Support. He would like to offer emergency medical services without transport. The department would have two medical doctors develop protocols on what the paramedics could do for a patient.

Of the emergency medical calls received last year, 261 of 477 required advanced life support. Providing this advanced life support would increase the department's capabilities.

The next step is to conduct a cost/benefit analysis for various emergency medical service delivery models. He said implementing a new model would take 8-12 months because it takes 12-16 months to go through paramedic school. He has three staff members interested in becoming paramedics. He added that part of the cost of adding such a program is the need to fill the shifts of the personnel attending paramedic school.

Administrator Fragoso said the Chief's analysis will be brought to the Public Safety Committee in March.

ii. Discussion of recommendation from Public Safety Committee to prohibit electric bikes on the beach

Administrator Fragoso pointed to the redline draft of the ordinance in the meeting packet noting the definition of motorized vehicles has been expanded to include e-bikes due to safety concerns. Lt. Forsyth stated that they do get complaints about them on the beach, but there have been no recorded incidents involving an e-bike.

Council Member Anderson said she believes Wild Dunes will be restricting where e-bikes can be on the beach. Council Member Pierce said they don't seem hazardous when the beach is empty, but he has seen close calls. Council Member Hahn said he has seen people riding them in the dunes. He would like to see e-skateboard included in the expanded definition. Council Member Miars suggested a broader definition to include any motorized vehicle.

The draft ordinance will come to the City Council meeting for changes on February 28.

iii. Discussion of proposals from engineering firms to design an emergency beach access path through the Charleston County Park

Director Kerr said Assistant Director Asero is having trouble keeping a beach access path clear on the Breach Inlet end of the island. Staff has been looking for a beach entrance that is closer to

the Public Safety Building. They believe the County Park may be an ideal location. He said, “We have been engaged with the County Park. We have had meetings with them over this concept, and in short, what it would be is really a driveway right there at the curve of Ocean Boulevard and 14th, a break in the fence, and then a new path that would lead them all the way through.”

Four proposals, ranging in price from \$8,000-\$50,000, have been received. Staff feels that Davis & Floyd understood the request and their price reflected that. He explained, “They will develop plans and then hold a series of meetings between our staff and the County staff to get everybody comfortable with the plan. Once everybody likes those plans, we would then use those plans and go out for pricing with the hopes of doing this next winter.” Engineering and construction costs will be budgeted for FY24. Cost sharing will be discussed with the County at a later date. Staff will also investigate grant funding opportunities.

iv. Discussion of proposed temporary parking agreement with Islander 71 for the “shared parking lot at the IOP Marina

Director Kerr explained that Staff and Islander 71 agree there is a need to see how the shared lot is used this summer before making a final agreement. He briefly explained the shared concept that will be executed this summer with the assistance of a parking lot attendant, the cost of which will be shared by the City and the restaurant. The parking lot attendant will work Thursday through Sunday from Memorial Day to Labor Day and will be tasked with directing traffic and keeping track of how the spaces are being used and when. Administrator Fragoso said there is a camera available to track usage Mondays through Wednesdays.

Administrator Fragoso said an agreement for this concept will be drawn up and brought to City Council on February 28.

D. Personnel

i. Discussion of recommendations from Administration Committee

Council Member Bogosian said the hourly rate the City offers for BSOs needs to be increased to fill the positions. Assuming all positions are filled with the same number of hours worked as last season, raising the rate ends the year \$60,000 over budget. The proposed rate of \$18/hour and \$18.50/hour for returning BSOs is slightly higher than surrounding communities. The program is funded by State ATAX monies.

Council Member Streetman said he fully supports the pay increase as the program pays for itself. He also suggested seeing if offering college credit could be an incentive.

Council Member Bogosian also stated that the second code enforcement position needs to be made full-time in order to fill it. Administrator Fragoso said this person would be enforcing business licenses, addressing livability complaints such as noise and parking, and short-term rental management. She said the Administration Committee’s request for someone with more experience will require more money.

E. Other items for discussion

A. Update on RFP for design and engineering of elevator in marina restaurant

Administrator Fragoso reported that only one response was received for this RFP. The City has begun direct negotiations with that vendor for cost estimates for the design and engineering of the elevator at the marina restaurant. More information will be available at the February 28 meeting.

7. Financial Review

Financial Statements and Project Worksheets

Director Suggs said revenues are “in good shape” and expenditures in the general fund are “right on budget.” All other funds are a bit below budget, likely due to some budgeted projects.

Year-to-date, the City has heard \$620,000 in interest, compared to a budget of \$28,000.

She noted that the municipal accommodations tax schedule is a bit off due to personnel issues in that office. She believes it will catch up with the February payment. The City received a quarterly State ATAX payment that is 9% ahead of last year. Hospitality tax is 21% ahead of last year. The healthy increases from the prior year “indicates the strong economic activity on the island from all sources.”

Only some engineering expenses appear on the Phase 3 Drainage project worksheet. A new worksheet for the improvement at the marina for the T-dock and greenspace has been added. The only recorded activity is for design, engineering, permitting, and bidding fees.

8. Procurement

Request for approval of an amount not to exceed \$18,000 for the purchase of AED Defibrillators [FY24 Muni ATAX, Fire Department, Non-Capital Tools & Equipment]

Mayor Pounds said this is a non-budgeted item. Administrator Fragoso said the cost is fully supported by Municipal ATAX funds.

9. Capital Projects Update

A. Phase 3 Drainage – Outfalls at 30th, 36th, and 41st Avenues

Administrator Fragoso reported that the scheduled road work has started and will take 8-10 weeks to complete.

She shared, “We have been contacted and we have been meeting with some of the neighbors that are directly adjacent to the project area, concerns with the integrity of their foundation and just potential results of a lot of the shaking, a lot of the digging, a lot of the movement there. So we have been proactively working with them.”

The permit from the Army Corps of Engineers for the 41st Avenue project has still not arrived. They, too, are experiencing staffing issues.

B. Comprehensive Drainage Masterplan

Administrator Fragoso said the two contractors working on this project have transitioned to a new company. Staff has met with the new project managers who are committed to finishing the project. Work will be done on the development standards and the review of the current maintenance plans. She hopes to have a presentation before Council in March.

Davis & Floyd has been asked for a proposal “for what it would take to fold in Thomas & Hutton’s work [analysis of the Phase 3 drainage area between 41st and 30th avenues] work so that when we build a list of projects and priorities they would all be built with the same modeling so that we could be really comparing apples to apples when we are prioritizing what the next projects are.”

Council Member Anderson asked for the draft report “including existing assessment hydraulic modeling and recommended improvements.”

C. Overhead to Underground Conversion at 21st Avenue

This project is set to begin on February 21 and will take about three weeks.

D. Pickle Ball Court Construction and Basketball Courts Rehab

These projects should be completed by mid-March.

E. Public Dock Rehabilitation and “T” dock improvements

Administrator Fragoso said work on the boardwalk along the intercoastal side of the marina has begun. She reported that the modification to the existing permit for the work on the public dock was submitted in December. Kirby Marshall of ATM said “the permitting agencies have been engaging in a lot of conversation about it, which is a good sign.” They are hopeful to have that permit in place and be ready for construction during the next winter season.

F. 34A Beach Access ADA-Compliant Boardwalk

Administrator Fragoso said this project is complete, and staff is considering additional locations for similar boardwalks.

G. New Garbage Compactor in the small municipal parking lot

Administrator Fragoso said this project is also nearly complete with the exception of the installation of the security camera and odor control system. Council Member Ward asked about having art students paint a mural in this area. Council Member Anderson suggested having the Chamber of Commerce handle that, and Administrator Fragoso noted the Chamber is already handling the mural to be painted on the Public Works building.

10. Legislative Report

Mayor Pounds said the City’s lobbyist will attend their March meeting. Administrator Fragoso added, “Last year with the newly added lobbyist to the team, we secured a grant of \$1.5 million for future dredging of the marina. We have been working with them in the past several weeks on

new projects for funding. The two that we have already submitted...is \$2.5 million for additional boardwalks...and a \$7 million grant for three different drainage projects, and those three drainage projects were those that were identified as priorities by the Comprehensive Master Plan.” They are also preparing to submit funding requests for undergrounding utility lines and improvements around the municipal parking lot at the Front Beach.

Mayor Pounds reported that recent legislation introduced by Representative Bustos was not what they had hoped for. The City had requested reducing or capping the 30% of ATAX funds required for tourism-related expenditures, and this legislation is proposing additional uses of the 65% portion.

Council Member Bogosian recommends asking for a proviso to use some of the 30% funds for a one-time project. He thinks a request for approximately one-third of the 30% would be appropriate. Mayor Pounds said staff will generate a list of potential projects in that price range.

11. Miscellaneous

12. Adjournment

Council Member Streetman made a motion to adjourn, and Council Member Popson seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:49pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk

I appreciate administration putting forward the rentalscape proposal and I hope steps are taken to approve the purchase.

While no program is perfect the numbers referenced in the proposal seem more in keeping with the activity we should expect from the licenses issued to date. 1600 rentals for 1768 licenses seems like a more accurate number than the 1200 from our current system. I spoke with Jane at the town of Mt. Pleasant this morning regarding the pros and cons of the programs and asked her about the difference in the numbers the two programs have produced as she has used both. I learned that our current system only considers something a listing if a review is left and that rentalscape is a much better analysis tool. It is an investment worth making.

I encourage you to add some of the optional products offered. Our manual license entry process requires hiring temps every year just to get the information added to the accounting system that we use to log rental licenses. Adding the STR Registration and Renewal Portal would be well worth the money and actually would probably be paid for by not having to hire temp workers - letting the applicants do the work in the portal. I also see that it can be customized to get all types of data points upon application allowing the City to quickly analyze trends and impacts by housing type or area.

Since enforcement is one thing everyone seems to agree on - please add the 24/7 Complaint Line and Online Form option. Three years ago council passed an ordinance providing for the revocation of a business license after 5 or more founded complaints of unlawful activity. During the hotel noise violation discussions I believe it was stated that we don't have a way to log or track those complaints. This option seems like a great fit for that need and a great help to code enforcement and livability bridging the gap between planning/licensing and public safety.

Finally I'd ask that you add the Public Facing Portal. The public should have a way to access information regarding rentals on the island that doesn't involve multiple email requests to our overloaded administration and planning employees.