



SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING -- WORKSHOP
5:00pm, Tuesday, March 14, 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
(via Zoom), Miars, Pierce, and Mayor Pounds

Staff Present: Director Kerr, various department heads

2. Citizens' Comments – none

3. Special Presentations – none

4. Dashboard of City Operations

Director Kerr noted there is one vacancy in each department in addition to the need for BSOs. He highlighted some upcoming events including the Yard Sale (3/25), Easter Egg Hunt (4/7), Coffee with the Mayor (4/1), and Music in the Park (5/6).

Chief Cornett explained the differences in the way livability calls for service are recorded in the monthly reports. He stated that the Code Enforcement Officer gets a lot of direct calls and emails that are not recorded as part of these reports.

5. Department Reports – in the meeting packet

6. Strategic Plan Policy Initiatives and Priorities

A. Livability

Discussion of short-term rental related policies and regulations to address livability

Director Kerr reviewed a list of policies and regulations developed by staff for City Council to consider with regards to short-term rentals. These offerings are divided among administrative actions, fee-related options, and policy changes. He noted that some of these options have been evaluated by the Planning Commission in the past and shared the reasoning behind why they were implemented previously.

Chief Cornett spoke to the limited resources he has to enforcing a limit on parking at rentals as well as the enforcement of a minimum nights' stay.

Discussion ensued about the fire safety checklist that recently went to short-term rental owners and property managers. Director Kerr said it was a joint decision of the Building Department and the Fire Department to add it to this year's renewal application. Chief Oliverius stated that the larger rental companies will need more time to implement these recommendations. He said the recommendations are based on best practices and the City wants to help business owners protect their investments, but he also does not have the personnel to enforce it at this time. The checklist effort has been paused for now, awaiting more input from rental agencies and owners.

Mayor Pounds would like the list of recommendations to be remanded to the Planning Commission for review and recommendation, adding that he does not like the suggestion to involve the Board of Zoning Appeals in the short-term rental process. Council Member Bogosian said he did not think the Planning Commission should be concerned with the financial recommendations on the list.

B. Environmental – none

C. Public Services

i. Discussion of paramedic program

Chief Oliverius gave a presentation to the City Council about three options and their respective costs for implementing a paramedic program within the City. The first two options require the addition of personnel (7 or 6 people, respectively) and the third option is to hire a third party ambulance service. He said the Fire Department will be putting out a community survey in conjunction with the College of Charleston "as we develop our strategic plan in getting the feedback from our stakeholders so we do it in a measured way."

Chief Oliverius shared that all paramedics would also be firefighters, and he is currently the only paramedic in the department. He also stated that paramedic services are not part of the aid agreements and that the options suggesting additional personnel do not include the capability of transporting patients off the island to a hospital.

He explained the need for 12 personnel per shift, noting that number significantly reduces the amount of unbudgeted overtime.

Council Member Ward thanked Chief Oliverius for his work on this idea and believes it merits consideration by the Council. He said the Public Safety Committee will continue to work on it. Council Member Streetman pointed out the challenges of using a third party ambulance service including the island being uncovered when they are off island and the lack of a chain of command with those employees.

Mayor Pounds said that the FY24 budget cannot absorb any of the costs without a tax increase or a shift in funding. It will be discussed more at next week's budget workshop.

ii. Discussion of requiring law commercial services to remove yard debris from residential/rental properties

Council Member Popson said he brought this up to the Public Services & Facilities Committee after noticing large and numerous piles of yard debris around the island. He does not want to enact an ordinance that cannot be enforced, but he said the additional work in removing this debris is taxing on Public Works' staff, equipment, and fuel costs.

Chief Cornett said that he has spoken with the Code Enforcement Officer who feels confident he can enforce this ordinance and or any changes made to it. He has stopped and encouraged contractors to remove their debris when they are done working. He is working with Director Pitts on enforcing all parts of the ordinance already in place.

Council Member Streetman said he would be concerned that stronger enforcement of debris removal would limit the contractors wanting to work on the island. Chief Cornett said that such an ordinance was implemented at his previous department and he did not see a difference in the number of contractors working there, but he believes additional costs were passed onto customers.

Director Kerr said a draft ordinance will be ready for First Reading at the March 28 meeting.

iii. Discussion of increasing from two (2) to four (4) the number of resident parking decals that may be issued to non-resident property owners

Council Member Ward said the Public Safety Committee recommends increasing the number of resident parking decals issued to non-resident property owners from two to four. Director Kerr said a draft ordinance will be ready for First Reading at the March 28 meeting.

iv. Discussion of hiring a parking vendor for the island and reconfiguring paid parking

Director Kerr said that staff still needs to complete a cost-benefit analysis on the hiring of a parking vendor for the island to determine if there is a cost savings. Mayor Pounds said that using a third party vendor for parking will allow the BSOs to focus more on beach-related ordinances.

Chief Cornett said he is very much in favor of outsourcing parking, knowing that it works well in other municipalities since parking enforcement is the only function of the vendor. Staff is working on the scope of work for such an option now.

Council Member Ward would like the matter referred back to the Public Safety Committee for more work and analysis.

Council Member Hahn would like to see paid parking along Palm Boulevard and free parking at the municipal lot to encourage more people to park in the commercial district and more turnover on Palm Boulevard. Council Member Anderson believes the idea needs further study but would like to postpone any study or action until the adjudication of the lawsuit with beach access parking group.

Mayor Pounds said SCDOT and the traffic consultants will be at the March 28 meeting to discuss Palm Boulevard and the citizen feedback about the IOP Connector reconfigurations.

D. Personnel

Discussion of approval of Short-Term Rental Coordinator position

Director Kerr said this job description has come through the Administration Committee. The job will be part of the building department. Staff is asking for approval of the position and to begin the hiring process ahead of FY24. They do not anticipate a large impact on the FY23 budget if hired before the fiscal year ends.

E. Other items for discussion

i. Discussion of proposal from Coast Architects in an amount ranging between \$60,000-\$90,000 for the design and development of construction documents to install elevator at the marina restaurant

Director Kerr said this proposal is for two phases: one, a due diligence assessment to determine the best elevator option and best location for the elevator, and two, the design of the project. The wide range of cost is as a result of the elevator selected for installation. Based on the design fees, he believes the final cost could exceed \$600,000.

Council Member Bogosian expressed concern about the excessive cost for the design of installing something “that seems out of reason in terms of cost.”

Director Kerr reminded Council that addressing the feasibility of the elevator was a commitment made by the previous Council who also voted to use tourism funds to pay for its installation.

Council Member Streetman related a story from the recent Beach Advocates Meeting where two attendees could not get to the top level of Islander 71 for a cocktail hour. Director Kerr pointed out that the top floor of the restaurant does not have to be ADA compliant.

Council Member Popson supports the due diligence part of the process but believes the cost of the construction drawing to be excessive.

Council continued to discuss whether or not previous research into an elevator confirmed its feasibility.

ii. Discussion regarding an appreciation plaque at the Recreation Center honoring Norma Jean Page, former Recreation Director

Council Member Streetman said a group of residents brought this idea to the Public Services & Facilities Committee, who supports the idea as well. It will come before City Council for a vote at the March 28 meeting.

iii. Discussion of having residents speak first during Citizen’s Comments

Council Member Pierce said he would like to see a clear demarcation of speakers, prioritizing residents over non-residents.

City Clerk DeNeane said that current City code states that people must provide their name, address, and topic when signing up to speak, but it does not require that residents be put ahead non-residents. Speaking at Citizen's Comments is handled on a first come, first served basis.

Council Member Streetman wants all who sign up to speak. Council Member Hahn believes there is an advantage to speaking last. Mayor Pounds believes it works fine the way it is done now.

City Clerk DeNeane said she will look into how other municipalities handle the matter of ordering their citizen speakers.

iv. **Discussion of adopting resolution to support adoption of H.3620 Clementa C. Pinckney Hate Crime Act**

Council Member Ward said the Public Safety Committee recommends this to the full Council for approval. Mayor Pounds noted it is headed for full approval at the State level.

7. **Financial Review**

Financial Statements and Project Worksheets

Director Suggs said all expenditures and revenues are right where they need to be at this time of year (~67%). The City has \$37 million in cash deposits, \$20.6 million of which is restricted.

The tourism schedules continue to show strong performance and do not look that different from last month's report.

The Phase 3 Drainage Project worksheet showed a few payouts and a \$1 million balance. The first payout has been made from the Marina Improvement worksheet for construction at the bulkhead.

8. **Procurement**

Discussion of approval of notice of intent to purchase Caterpillar front loader for Public Works in FY24 [8-month lead time]

Staff is asking for approval of the FY24 expense now so that a notice of intent to purchase can be issued.

9. **Capital Projects Update**

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

Director Kerr said the work at 30th Avenue is nearly complete. The box culvert needed at 36th Avenue is part of a supply chain issue, which could result in road closure in June. Should that become the case, work will be delayed until the end of August.

The City is still waiting for the permit from the Army Corps of Engineers for the 41st Avenue project.

B. Comprehensive Drainage Masterplan

Director Kerr reported that staff has met with the new Davis & Floyd team members working on the Drainage Master Plan. They are refining the draft of the final report, but still need to review the development standards. The final report is expected to be in front of City Council in a few months.

C. Overhead to Underground Conversion at 21st Avenue

Dominion Energy should be done with their part of the project this week. Director Kerr is unsure how long it will take Comcast to come out and complete their portion of the project.

D. Pickle Ball Court Construction and Basketball Courts Rehab

The fencing around the courts is being done now. One court will be striped exclusively for tennis.

E. Public Dock Rehabilitation and “T” dock improvements

Director Kerr said a meeting is being set between the City and the marina tenants to discuss ideas for the improvements at the T-dock. He also reported that work being done by the marina operator is going well and he expects the parking lot configuration to happen soon.

The public dock rehabilitation project is in the permitting phase.

F. Marina Bulkhead and Boardwalk

Director Kerr said this project will be done when work on the electrical components is complete.

10. Legislative Report

11. Miscellaneous

The City Council will hold a Budget Workshop on the FY24 budget in Council Chambers on Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at 3pm.

12. Adjournment

Council Member Ward made a motion to adjourn, and Council Member Streetman seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:39pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk