



**Public Safety Committee Meeting
3:00pm, Monday, March 6, 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, Ward, and Anderson

Staff Present: Administrator Fragoso, Director Kerr, Chief Cornett, Chief Oliverius

2. Approval of Previous Meetings Minutes – February 14, 2023

Council Member Hahn made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2023 meeting, and Council Member Anderson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Anderson asked that information added to the minutes that is provided by outside sources be appropriately marked.

3. Citizen's Comments

Geoffrey Forquarean said he uses his one-wheel on the beach to assist in the delivery of meals to island residents. He said it is hard to be reckless on them and the top speed is 12mph. He would like to see those who behave recklessly on motorized vehicles on the beach be ticketed.

MOTION: Council Member Ward made a motion to suspend the rules of order to allow for the discussion about E-bikes to be moved to the beginning of Old Business. Council Member Hahn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Old Business

A. Discussion of proposed ordinance to prohibit e-bikes on the beach

Council Member Ward said he would like more time to study this issue. He does not intend to propose anything to City Council about this topic. He shared some of the research he has done to this point and reviewed some of the local and state rules about motorized vehicles. Council Member Anderson stated that Wild Dunes has some restrictions related to motorized vehicles.

Council Member Hahn expressed concern about “slicing the tomato very thin” meaning that all motorized vehicles should be banned or none. Chief Cornett pointed out that electric bikes and one-wheelers are not in the State law.

B. Discussion of changes to the noise ordinance

Administrator Fragoso said the current draft of the noise ordinance has a 60-decibel level limit for residential areas and 70 decibels for commercial establishments during the day. There is a provision to request a special exemption for a maximum of 85 decibels in GC2 during the day.

Council Member Ward invited Al Clouse, Wild Dunes resident, and Terri Haack of Lowes/Dart to see if a compromise on noise could be reached.

Mr. Clouse submitted his comments, and they are attached to these minutes.

Ms. Haack reported that the first part of a sound study was completed at the resort in February to understand how sound resonates from the Sweetgrass Inn out into the neighborhood. A preliminary report will be available next week, and the results will be shared with the City. The sound engineers will return at Easter and in the summer to measure the noise again. She pointed out that the Sweetgrass Inn area has always been zoned commercial. She said the resort is committed to finding ways to mitigate the noise. They have attempted to monitor all situations Mr. Clouse has brought to their attention. She asked for 75 decibels for commercial establishments to be put back in the draft noise ordinance. She also asked that the special exemption parameters allow for a number of days or events rather than a number of hours per year. She said meeting planners are aware of the City's noise ordinance. Ms. Haack indicated the resort will continue to work with the Clouses on the noise concerns.

Ms. Haack noted that changes to the noise ordinance will affect the whole island. She said, "It is not about us. Although I will say to Al and Roxie one more time, I will do whatever is necessary within the confines of allowing a Sweetgrass Inn to operate as a hotel. It is a hotel with a large resort pool that separates the hotel from the Clouse's house."

Council Member Ward acknowledged what has been done by the resort to date and appreciated their efforts.

Director Kerr confirmed that the area on which the Sweetgrass Inn stands has always been identified as commercial and the inn is listed as one of the allowable uses. Areas classified as GC1 include the Marina, Breach Inlet, and the commercial district up to the Front Beach. GC2 is the Front Beach area, and GC3 is a mixed-use block by Acme.

Administrator Fragoso expressed concern about lowering the daytime decibel level to lower than 60 due to the requests the Police Department would receive about enforcing it. The 70/75 decibel level was suggested by the City Attorney who has previously worked cases regarding noise.

MOTION: Council Member Hahn made a motion to postpone further discussion about the noise ordinance until the Committee can review the initial sound study results. Council Member Ward seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued about adjusting the decibel level in commercial areas to 75 decibels. Council Member Hahn would like 75 decibels in the commercial district to be noted in the draft ordinance.

Administrator Fragoso further clarified, “So 70 [decibels] was, do you all recall at the last meeting we saw a different version that only included one maximum decibel reading for the entire island, no distinction between residential and commercial, that is where the 70 came from. So we were going to combine them, but I think we heard from you all that you like the distinction between the two. So I think we could go back to 60 and 75 and revise that.”

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

C. Update on request to reduce the speed limit at Oak Harbor Boulevard

Chief Cornett said, “I reached out to our contacts over at the Department of Transportation to see what they would be looking for. And the responses we got from them that because Oak Harbor is only a .02 mile long road, it does not meet the minimum threshold to post signs, and that they had just reduced the speed limit for the entire city for 25, which is the lowest that they would move the speed limit to. Basically, they said they would not entertain that if we requested it.”

D. Update on request to install a 4-way stop at Waterway Boulevard and 29th Avenue

Chief Cornett said it will need a study first and SCDOT would conduct the study. However, “they did ask us that before we ask them to do a study that the number one thing that they are looking at is the number of vehicles utilizing both roadways are equal or fairly equal in number. And if that is not the case, keep that in mind before we formally request them to do a study.”

Administrator Fragoso said there is no status update about the stop sign at 25th Avenue. “We do know that it was included as part of the recommendations in the Connector study that they finalized a couple weeks ago. I have a meeting with DOT staff next week, I believe, to go over the report, and I will get an update on when the installation of that four-way stop at that location should be expected.”

She also reported “the current road closure and the road work at 30th Avenue and Waterway is expected to be completed by the end of this week, so weather permitting, everything goes according to plan, the contractor will be putting some asphalt down on the road on Thursday and the road should be opened by Friday.”

E. Discussion of paramedic proposal

Chief Oliverius presented three options for the addition of paramedic services to the Isle of Palms, including contracting with an outside ambulance service or the direct hire of firefighters/paramedics, either 10 additional or 7 additional personnel. He detailed the costs for each option. Any option will provide faster delivery of medication and advance life support services, but hospital transport will still need to be done via an ambulance.

At this time, only three current personnel have expressed interest in becoming paramedics. There needs to be 2 paramedics per shift for the program to be sustainable.

Administrator Fragoso said she has questions about the long-term sustainability of such a program and would like more time for study before moving forward with this discussion.

5. **New Business**

A. **Discussion of resident parking decals for part-time resident owners**

Administrator Fragoso said they have received several requests from property owners who are not full-time residents but eligible to receive a resident parking decal to increase the number of parking decals they can be allocated. Staff is recommending increasing the permitted decals from 2 to 4. She noted “a concern that people who just have property here will get decals for everybody and their family.”

MOTION: Council Member Ward made a motion to recommend to full Council that the number of decals given to non-resident property owners be increased from 2 to 4. Council Member Hahn seconded the motion.

Administrator Fragoso said, “For the record and for some context, each resident has the ability to get a visitor parking pass, a booklet with 15 passes. Those passes can be reused. It used to be that you could only use a pass per day. Those passes can be reused, so I think we have facilitated the usage of that visitor parking pass to facilitate again those folks that live off island.”

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

B. **Discussion of parking regulations related to short-term rentals**

Council Member Anderson asked that this discussion topic be postponed until the April meeting.

C. **Discussion and consideration of hiring a parking vendor for the island and reconfiguring paid parking**

Council Member Hahn would like to see stronger enforcement of parking violations. He would like to charge for parking on Palm Boulevard and allow for free parking in the City parking lot to move more people to the commercial district.

Administrator Fragoso said they have received a parking proposal from one vendor. She believes the technology exists to implement such a plan without having to add kiosks. She also believes there are benefits to increased efficiency by outsourcing the parking to a third party vendor. A cost/benefit analysis needs to be completed to evaluate if there are any savings to implementing such a program within the city.

D. **Consideration of resolution to support adoption of H.3620 Clementa C. Pinckney Hate Crime Act**

MOTION: Council Member Ward made a motion to support the adoption of the Clementa C. Pinckney Hate Crime Bill and to recommend it to full Council. Council Member Anderson seconded the motion.

Council Member Hahn said he would like to read a copy of the bill before it goes to City Council. Chief Cornett said he has spoken to other police chiefs about this bill. He said, “We are one of only two states in the United States that do not have a hate crime bill. We are in favor and we support it from the law enforcement association side.”

E. Discussion of draft operational budget for Police and Fire

Administrator Fragoso reviewed the changes from the prior year's police budget including the addition of a second code enforcement office, 2.5% merit increase pool, reduction of fuel costs, firearms replacement, installation of a medicine dropbox, increased employee training, the addition of two pooper scooper stations on Waterway Boulevard, processing fees for credit card transactions related to Text-to-Park, two misting fans for personnel and special events, and a second speed radar sign.

Changes and additions to the Fire Department budget include additional desktop computers, laptops and tablets for increased efficiency in training, chairs for the watch rooms, additional uniforms, increased employee training, replacement of a truck, a provision for bunker gear, and mobile radios.

Council Member Ward encouraged committee members to study the budget so they can be knowledgeable about it at the budget workshop.

6. Miscellaneous Business

Council Member Ward asked for an update on the mutual and auto-aid agreements. Chief Oliverius said they responded to 25 calls in Mt. Pleasant in January and that Mt. Pleasant also responded to calls on IOP. The number of calls IOP responded to in Mt. Pleasant during February increased to 38 because that department is down one ladder truck. Of the 38 calls, 28 were cancelled en route.

Council Member Hahn asked if the auto aid agreement could be changed "so that we always have coverage on the island."

Chief Oliverius responded, "This is what we are going to do here in the next two weeks, as soon as we get some stuff worked out with dispatch. It just takes a little bit of time. So we always have coverage with that unit that is at Station 2, other than that one instance that I mentioned. So what we want to do is build in some resiliency and redundancy, and we are going to move to a different response model later this month. And what we are going to do is put an EMT basic or 2 EMT basics, one EMT basic and one EMR, but we will typically have 2 EMT basics on squad. So we will run that as a medical response vehicle to get our numbers to help support the need for paramedic...But what it will do is if the ladder truck here at Station 1 is dispatched to Mt. Pleasant, to Mr. Hahn's point, we will have always a unit here that will not get pulled automatic aid to Station 1. Station 2 is so far out they have not been dispatched over at the same time as Station 1 to where we had nobody left. So that will build in some resiliency and redundancy. The second thing it will do is I think it will give us the data and show how it will help with response times and efficiency because it is a much smaller apparatus, much smaller vehicle, and we can get to those medical calls and keep our other units available for the fire calls, the water rescue calls."

The next meeting of the Public Safety Committee will be Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at 10:00am.

7. Adjournment

Council Member Hahn made a motion to adjourn, and Council Member Anderson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk