



## **SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING -- WORKSHOP**

**3:00pm, Tuesday, July 11, 2023**

**24 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Isle of Palms, SC and**

**broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>**

### **MINUTES**

#### **1. Call to order**

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

Absent: Council Member Miars

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

#### **2. Citizens' Comments -- none**

#### **3. Special Presentations**

##### **Presentation from Applied Technology Management and discussion of design for the public dock at the IOP Marina**

Kirby Marshall from Applied Technology Management reviewed the proposed design for the public dock, which will be 16' wide and 150' out from the existing bulkhead and will include an ADA-accessible gangway leading to an ADA-accessible kayak launch and a 75' x 10' floating dock. Permits for the project have been submitted and the public comment period has closed with only one comment regarding manatees.

Council Member Hahn suggested looking at Tanzite stone decking as a material for the dock.

Mr. Marshall asked City Council for their feedback regarding the design of the handrails, seating options, and the type of ADA-accessible kayak launch. Council suggested vertical railings to prevent climbing, a combination of swings and bench seating, and the "most robust" option for the ADA-accessible kayak launch.

Council Member Popson asked about the installation of a gate and whether or not that would affect the permit application. Mr. Marshall said he would submit the request for a gate via letter and did not believe it would hinder the application process in any way. Council Member Popson also suggested the addition of a safety ladder. Mr. Marshall said he could have one installed on one side of the floating dock and suggested adding a "No Swimming" sign to discourage people from using the ladder to swim in the area.

**4. Dashboard of City Operations**

Administrator Fragoso said the City anticipates a \$1.2 million positive net result for FY23. She noted that charges issued by the police department show increases in traffic, speeding, and livability which is a result of dedicated resources. The increased activity is also apparent in court dockets, which are twice the size they were this time last year.

Fire Department calls show 231 calls for automatic aid, 208 of which were cancelled en route. The City has been the recipient of automatic aid 82 times in the same time period.

The Recreation Department has shown a significant increase in registrations. As of the end of June the Building Department had issued 1,702 short-term rental licenses.

Tourism revenues look down at the moment because several quarterly payments have not been received yet.

The Police Department has filled an officer and code enforcement position but is still looking for approximately six BSOs.

Upcoming community events include the Farmer's Market, Beach Run, College Application Boot Camps, and the Half Rubber Tournament.

**5. Departmental Reports – in the meeting packet**

**6. Strategic Plan Policy Initiatives and Priorities**

**A. Livability -- none**

**B. Environmental**

**Update on minor dune repair project between 114 and 304 Ocean Boulevard**

Administrator Fragoso reported that they have received two bids from contractors for this project, both submitting bids much higher than expected. They have been asked to submit revised bids.

She has also spoken with SCPRT, the agency likely to fund 50% of the project cost. They anticipate approving the grant quickly, but work cannot begin until it is approved.

Referring to the draft of the construction easement included in the meeting packet, Council Member Hahn asked if the Public Trust Doctrine is a part of the agreement. Administrator Fragoso said, "There is some language in the current draft of that easement document that essentially says that the City makes no claims on any property rights that currently don't exist. So I think it is not necessarily staying silent on it, but not taking a position on whether or not any accretion is to be interpreted as becoming accreted land that is no long part of the real property. There is a section of State law that deals with that. I think we have heard different interpretations of what that section means, and ultimately, the decision from the attorneys working on this was to include, not stay silent, but just include some statement that there is no solving that private issue for this agreement. We can certainly have them, I cannot speak legal opinion and I can't

speak for our City Attorney. I certainly don't want to put words in their mouths, but I can resend you that agreement."

Council Member Hahn believes this is something that Council needs to discuss and vote on since residents that are "accepting public money that could be bound by the Public Trust Doctrine." Council Member Bogosian said that has not been required in the past. Administrator Fragoso responded, "We have had easements. This is what this document for this particular project at Breach Inlet would also include a permanent easement along the entire area that is receiving sand. There will be a public interest associated with this project that is secured through this agreement. The easement that we had secured for the 2018 project, it was a very similar document to the one that we are looking at now. At that point, there was public money also, State, Federal, and local money that was used to fund the project, and that position was not taken by the City at that time."

She added that a recent high tide did not touch the dune, so while there may be some accretion, the area did not look worse.

#### **C. Public Services**

##### **Update on RFP process to hire a parking vendor for the island for the 2024 beach season**

Administrator Fragoso said six bids were received for this RFP. The Public Safety Committee will narrow down the choices and select 2-3 companies to make a presentation.

#### **D. Personnel**

##### **Update on implementation of paramedic program**

Administrator Fragoso said employment offers have been extended to two paramedics. In addition to the remaining paramedics that need to be hired, the City also needs proper licensing from DHEC, a physician to oversee the program, and properly equipped trucks. Staff will provide monthly updates to Council on the programs progress. Full implementation of the program is anticipated by June 1, 2024.

#### **E. Other items for discussion**

##### **i. Discussion of Safety Resolution**

Administrator Fragoso explained this annual resolution: "This is something that we do every year. The City has a Safety Committee that meets regularly to make sure that the City is enacting and pursuing policies that ensure the safety of our staff. We have prepared for you a draft of the resolution we will be presenting for your vote next month. There has been the suggestion made by a resident that City includes some language associated with folks that serve our community that are not necessarily City employees, but they serve on a contract basis, and we can certainly make some changes to the resolution to include some of that. We are certainly committed to their safety as well and want to make sure they are included in whatever language we present to you all for approval for the safety resolution."

ii. **Presentation of BCDCOG report of South Carolina demographic changes**

Council Member Anderson reviewed the highlights of a BCDCOG report of demographic changes in the state. She said the state population is growing and getting older. Employment levels are higher than prior to the pandemic and there are now more jobs than there are workers in South Carolina.

7. **Financial Review**

A. **Financial Statements and Project Worksheets**

Director Suggs introduced the new Finance Director, Debra Hamilton.

She said that many of the tourism funds are awaiting their final quarterly or monthly payments which is why many of them look lower than normal. The General Fund is forecasted to beat the budget in revenues and be over budget in expenditures, resulting in an approximately \$1.2 million positive net result to the City.

The City has approximately \$40 million in cash, \$16.9 million of which is restricted for tourism and beach-related expenses. Director Suggs reminded Council that the last payment on the Recreation Center was made in June. The City received \$120,000 from the Greenbelt Fund for expenses towards the cost of the beach walkover at 34A beach access.

The City earned interest at approximately 5.3% last month.

8. **Procurement**

A. **Approval of replacement SUV for Recreation Department in the amount of \$47,573 [FY24 Budget, Recreation Department, Muni ATAX, \$36,000, Overbudget amount to be offset by sale of the vehicle]**

Administrator Fragoso said they will sell the current vehicle for approximately \$11-13,000 to cover the overage on the cost of this new vehicle. She said the \$47,573 cost is State contract pricing.

9. **Capital Projects Update**

Administrator Fragoso said the remaining materials needed to finish the project at 30<sup>th</sup> will be here when the contractors return in September to work on the project at 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The City has been waiting to hear from the Office of Resiliency to be able to utilize grant funds for the purchase of the mitigation credits needed for the project at 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue. She added, "One of the conditions of the permit was to purchase mitigation credits associated with the critical area that is going to be disturbed. So that has been done." Funds have been opened up and the project is close to being put out for bid.

The Drainage Master Plan is moving slower than anticipated, but they expect the final deliverable this week. Mayor Pounds would like the plan presented at the July 25 meeting.

The RFP for the engineering of the Waterway Boulevard project will be ready soon.

She reported that the T-dock conversation that had been delayed until the new operator had been up and running will be picked back up soon. She said, “What I am planning on doing is tying that with the bidding process for the public dock and potentially bidding that as an alternate so that we can get the same contractor to do it at the same time and save on some demo costs for the off season.”

Regarding the greenspace area at the marina, Administrator Fragoso said, “You all recall that we had discussed and conceptualized a 20’ park along the intercoastal side of the marina next to the dock. And you will recall a few months ago we had lengthy conversations about a redesign and redevelopment for that entire north area of the parking lot to include new parking areas separating the City’s parking and City resident parking from the restaurant and kind of creating a little City marina adjacent to the public dock, and with that, negotiating a change to that entire side with the restaurant so that we can also effectuate the entire park and greenspace along the entire length of that boardwalk. We entered into a temporary parking agreement with the restaurant for this season with the goal of collecting a lot of data to understand demand, understand use so it would be helpful for all of us to evaluate and ultimately for Council to decide on a final plan. Our goal would be to start that conversation very soon with Islander 71 so that ideally any work and redesign and redevelopment of the parking lot happens concurrently with the public dock construction.” The goal would be to have that done before next season. Those conversations will start in the Public Services and Facilities Committee.

The contract with ATM for the dredging project has been executed and the kickoff meeting is scheduled next week.

The scope of the beach access project at the County Park has been finalized. City and County staff have met multiple times with the engineers, and they anticipate receiving the final design of that project within the next 30 days. The Public Safety Committee and PRT will review the design.

The City is seeking feedback on the next beach access paths to be improved using the \$500,000 secured from the State budget.

The City has requested a proposal from Coastal Science & Engineering to start the permitting process for the larger beach nourishment projects, including “the large offshore project at the north end of the island, also a short-term shoal management project also on the north end of the island, also the coordination associated with the potential Army Corps project on the south end of the island, and also identifying a sand borrow source offshore for the south end of the island.”

Staff is working on the RFP and RFQ for the fire station exhaust system and the City Hall renovation.

Staff will present a request for approval for the City “to be able to engage the National Fitness Campaign who have provided a \$30,000 grant towards” the outdoor fitness course at the Recreation Center. They hope to have it installed before the end of the year.

Staff is securing quotes for the fencing and playground equipment for the work at the dog park.

Dominion Energy has assigned an engineering firm to design the underground project at 14<sup>th</sup> and Palm Boulevard. Staff is still working with Dominion on scheduling the work at 41st Avenue “to see whether or not it is feasible” to complete that project concurrent with the drainage work in the area.

SCDOT is working on the conceptual designs for enhancements along Palm Boulevard. She hopes to have those designs in the early fall.

**10. Legislative Report**

**11. Adjournment**

Council Member Ward made a motion to adjourn, and Council Member Streetman seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 4:29pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane  
City Clerk