

**Special Joint Meeting of
City Council and the Planning Commission
Marina Redevelopment Workshop**

5:30 p.m., Thursday, April 28, 2016

A Special Joint Meeting of City Council and the Planning Commission was called to order at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, April 28, 2016 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bergwerf, Bettelli, Carroll, Ferencz, Harrington, Kinghorn, Rice and Ward, Planning Commission members Denton, DiGangi, Ferencz, Gregory, Mills, Safford and Scott, Mayor Cronin, Administrator Tucker, Attorney Halversen, Director Kerr, Assistant Administrator Fragoso and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business. Kirby Marshall of Applied Technology and Management and Scott Parker of DesignWorks were also present.

1. Mayor Cronin called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. Marina Redevelopment Workshop

Mayor Cronin stated that this meeting was an opportunity for the City Council and the Planning Commission to discuss various aspects of the marina redevelopment plan that have garnered a good deal of discussion from the residents of the island. After Kirby Marshall reviews the changes incorporated in the newly created Scenario C, Council and the Planning Commission will discuss the following topics:

- A. Dry stack boat storage,
- B. Boat ramp,
- C. Launch fees,
- D. Dock replacement/reconfiguration,
- E. BIG grant,
- F. Fuel dispensing,
- G. Parking options,
- H. Amenities, and
- I. Utilities.

The goal of this meeting is to establish a direction for moving forward with the marina redevelopment; if there is action to be taken on a substantive matter, it will go before City Council or through the appropriate committee. A conceptual drawing of Scenario C is attached to the historical record of the meeting.

Mr. Marshall reported that Scenario C is based on feedback from the Planning Commission members and what they have heard from residents. The idea of a drystack boat storage was a contentious issue for both residents and elected officials, so the Planning Commission asked ATM develop a plan that did not include a dry-stack, but would improve traffic flow on the site. Discussions revolved around the marina boat ramp in the middle of the site and what that does to traffic and the chopped-up nature of the marina; the discussions took on an entirely different attitude when the suggestion was made to re-locate the boat ramp to the area of the Dewees Marina. By relocating the boat ramp to that side of the marina, the balance of the property was

freed up for better traffic flow, better parking arrangements and better pedestrian flow, and this is what is offered in Scenario C.

A park space has been put where the boat ramp is today; this park space could become a focal point and a gathering point for residents at the marina. The major uses at the marina have been retained but have re-located to Morgan Creek; there are several staging docks for use for boat rentals, Tidal Wave Watersports, Coastal Expeditions Barrier Isle Ecotours and both offshore and inshore charters. They have also created side-tie dockage on Morgan Creek. On the Intracoastal Waterway, a space for residents who might not be boaters has been created where citizens could take their children fishing or crabbing; the existing Tidal Wave dock would become a City dock where residents could simply get close to the water. The marina side-tie dockage would remain on the Intracoastal and a public kayak/ paddleboard launch has been added. The restaurant dock remains as it is in Morgan Creek Grill's lease.

The entrance remains the same as in other scenarios coming in straight off 41st Avenue towards the water to give the sense of arrival, circling around into the site. The land-side fuel has been re-located somewhat near where it is now at the marina store and affording trailer boaters the ability to go by the pumps on the way to the ramp. A secondary ingress to the site has been created that creates a view corridor down to the old boat ramp area, the newly created park. This plan has forty-three (43) boat parking spaces with three (3) widened for ADA compliance, thirty (30) boat storage spaces, one hundred forty-two (142) vehicle parking spaces and forty-four (44) golf cart parking spaces.

Mr. Ferencz, Chair of the Planning Commission, stated that Scenario C meets all of the criteria they established.

Mayor Cronin stated that, if he had a concern, it would be the reduction in the number of parking spaces, but he has not compared it to Scenario B. In the cost estimates provided, the cost of relocating the boat ramp is going to be approximately nine hundred thousand dollars (\$900,000).

Mr. Kirby stated that moving the ramp was a substantial change, so ATM assumed that a new bulkhead would be created along the shoreline at the old ramp to make that wall continuous along Morgan Creek. They also discussed decking over the existing ramp and driving piles in lieu of the bulkhead, but ATM decided on the bulkhead for these preliminary purposes. In creating the new boat ramp, the demolition, the pouring of the new ramps, the new bulkhead and tying the bulkhead in there to the existing one were considered. ATM also assumed a larger landscaping budget in this scenario relative to the new public park; all of these contributed to the cost.

Administrator Tucker asked about the difference of decking over the existing ramp and not putting in a continuous bulkhead.

Mr. Marshall replied that it could be a permitting issue and that decking over would likely be more labor intensive, therefore, more expensive.

The Mayor asked for confirmation that there would be as many boat spaces in this configuration as there are today, and Mr. Kirby answered that there might be a slight decrease overall. The

Mayor commented that he hated to give up boat spaces. Mr. Marshall added that they had not worked to maximize dock space, but concentrated on relocating the other commercial businesses.

Councilmember Kinghorn asked about the life expectancy of the existing dock, and Mr. Marshall said it could last another twenty to twenty-five (20-25) more years.

Councilmember Carroll asked what kind of surface would be used for the parking areas; Mr. Marshall stated that the parking would be on compacted gravel and the main drive areas and the areas nearest to the store and the restaurant would be asphalt. The green spaces would be used as bio-swails to facilitate other stormwater drainage that might be necessary.

A. Dry-stack Boat Storage

On the topic of the dry-stack boat storage, the Mayor asked if this was an amenity that the City needed and whether space should be available for future development of a dry-stack storage. He indicated that he wants to have a premiere marina for the residents.

Mr. Ferencz reported that many people had said no to a dry-stack, but people did not come to the Planning Commission fighting to have a dry-stack. Members of the Planning Commission talked to people at Shem Creek about the noise and whether it could be controlled; the Commission concluded that there would never be a time when they could keep it safe and quiet for the residents. They also thought the majority of the users would not be island residents.

The Mayor reiterated that the City did not purchase the marina to make money, but to provide a premium experience for its users.

In explaining the Planning Commission's process, Director Kerr reported that they had looked at Scenarios A and B and acknowledged that dry-stack was not desirable in the near future, but that it might be prudent to leave the space for future construction. In the end, the Commission decided that reserving space for a dry-stack sabotaged the present use of the marina site.

The Mayor noted that the consensus of the group was to eliminate the plan for a dry-stack now or in the future.

B. Boat Ramp

The next subject was the boat ramp and whether it should be two or three (2-3) lanes; both Scenarios B and C proposed two (2) lanes, but the existing ramp has three (3) lanes. The Mayor asked Mr. Marshall to explain why two (2) was better than three (3).

Mr. Marshall stated that the marina only has parking for two (2) lanes, which explains the overflow parking outside the footprint of the marina; he added that engineering and design standards call for twenty (20) trailer parking spaces per ramp lane. Given the site's constraints, achieving sixty (60) trailer parking spaces would be difficult, but it was done on Scenario B. The decision to go with two (2) lanes was strongly influenced by the staging, the access from the boat to your vehicle or the walk from the parking area to your boat, which are very difficult at the existing marina with three (3) ramp lanes.

In all of the scenarios with two (2) lanes are shown new, ground-out, floating staging docks that are fully dedicated to the boat ramps and fully ADA accessible to provide smooth, easy and efficient access with a much quicker cycle time.

In the past, the kayaks used one (1) of the boat ramps for part of the day to launch, and they blocked the lane for a reasonable amount of time. When asked about the time used by the kayaks, Marina Manager Berrigan said that they blocked the ramp in-season by as much as twenty percent (20%) of the time. With the kayaks moved elsewhere, the ramps are freed up for boat traffic only.

Responding to Director Kerr, Mr. Marshall indicated that, in the limited space where the new boat ramp would be, there is not enough space for a third lane.

The Director said that he was not convinced that fewer boats would come to the marina if it had only two (2) lanes and that he would be inclined to go with whatever was most efficient and able to be permitted.

The Mayor asked whether Dewees and the Isle of Palms' Marina could share a ramp; Mr. Marshall commented that it was an interesting idea.

Mr. Berrigan reported that the Dewees Island Ferry was very concerned about the degree of activity being introduced to Morgan Creek.

Since a commercial activity operates immediately adjacent to the proposed new ramp, the Corps of Engineers will look at the site to ensure safe navigation.

Councilmember Carroll commented that Council was trying to limit parking on the island; he asked what would happen when seventy (70) trailered boats showed up and there were only forty-three (43) trailer parking spaces.

Mr. Marshall said that one (1) of their thoughts to controlling the parking on site was to meter it with kiosks; that could be done at the boat ramp as well. Then it would fall to the Police Department to control the parking on Waterway and 41st Avenue; people would not be allowed to park there anymore.

Councilmember Rice asked whether relocating the ramp would make dredging more difficult; Mr. Marshall said that issue had not been studied and he did not know.

The kayak launch on the Intracoastal would be for the general public while kayakers with Coastal Expeditions would start out from their dock on Morgan Creek.

Councilmember Rice also asked whether the new docks would be concrete or wood, and Mr. Marshall stated that ATM had assumed that they would be timber frame, floating docks like now, but newer and engineered for the site.

Councilmember Kinghorn questioned the implication of moving the fuel dock further from the boat ramp and asked whether the relocation of the fuel dock was part of the estimate.

The cost of moving the fuel dock was figured in the estimate, and he remarked that most trailered boaters would fill up on land because it is cheaper and more efficient. In addition, the location of the fuel dock should make maneuvering easier than now.

Councilmember Carroll asked whether the middle dock at the boat ramp was necessary; Mr. Marshall replied that it was added as a convenience.

Despite personally preferring three (3) lanes, the Mayor stated that the consensus of the group was to go with two (2) lanes as presented.

When the Administrator asked for a consensus on relocating the boat ramp, Councilmember Bettelli stated that Scenario C was “the ultimate deal” and would be great for the residents; it appears to be easily maneuverable and represents a wonderful improvement.

Ms. Safford noted how much safer this design was in how it separated pedestrians from the busiest parts of the marina.

Mr. Scott stated that, when the idea of relocating the ramp was first mentioned, it was called “a game changer” in that it created a good, functioning marina.

No one in the group opposed relocating the boat ramp as presented.

C. Launch Fees

Mayor Cronin reiterated his statement that he wants to have a premiere location for residents and a very premium marina for those from afar; he told the marina manager that he would like to see a revised non-resident fee schedule. Mr. Berrigan responded that on May 15th, the launch fee goes to fifteen dollars (\$15) for non-residents.

Councilmember Ward recalled that, when the marina was originally purchased, residents expected that they would not pay any fees since they were paying for the marina purchase.

Mayor Cronin noted that the marina debt was being paid through Hospitality Taxes and the rent paid by tenants, not by island residents.

Mr. Berrigan stated that the fee had been set by Council and has never been changed; residents pay five dollars (\$5) to park and to launch and the season pass is one hundred dollars (\$100).

Mr. Ferencz stated that the marina will need a monitoring system for the parking so there was a need to increase the fees to afford that monitoring system.

D. Dock Replacement/Reconfiguration

From the original purchase, the City has known that the docks are in bad condition and need to be replaced; Mr. Berrigan has done everything possible to keep them afloat and functioning.

Mr. Marshall stated that the cost to replace the docks without electrical is approximately six hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$650,000).

The Mayor was clear that they need to be replaced and the Council needs to figure out how.

Mr. Marshall said that timber frame, floating docks are very economical, aluminum frame docks cost more and have a longer life, and concrete docks cost twice as much as timber with a long life expectancy. To decide the right material, ATM looks at the environmental conditions; the IOP marina is a relatively protected location with little wave or wind activity, giving the City more flexibility. Another thing ATM looks at are market factors, i.e. a higher lease rate with aluminum or concrete docks, which is not a factor in this area. Mr. Marshall would recommend that the City stay with wood.

Administrator Tucker asked whether ATM would also recommend wood pilings. Mr. Marshall suggested having alternates in the bid and noted that dock installers typically decide on the product they will use.

When Councilmember Rice asked if the plan was to replace all of the docks, Mr. Marshall said that all of the docks on Morgan Creek must be replaced, but the docks on the Intracoastal can be revamped and reused.

E. Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG)

Mayor Cronin explained that the City would apply through the state and the grant ultimately comes from the US Fish and Wildlife Department for grant monies for any boating infrastructure that improves the boating experience for transient vessels twenty-six (26) feet and larger.

Mr. Marshall added that it is especially intended to accommodate transient recreational vessels twenty-six (26) feet and larger that stay up to sixteen (16) days at a time, and the grant program has two (2) tiers. The first tier grants up to two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) per state if they apply which could be divided between multiple projects; in South Carolina, only one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) is distributed because SCDNR takes the first fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to administer the program. It is a good program for smaller scale improvements. The second tier is a nationally competitive grant program which can provide up to one and a half million dollars (\$1,500,000) per project to improve transient boating infrastructure.

The grant does not have to be dedicated one hundred percent (100%) to transient boats all the time; the grant request can be prorated, for example, the fuel dock was to be used fifty percent (50%) by transients and fifty percent (50%) by locals, the expense can be prorated and still apply for grant funding through that program. Other improvements that can be funded are floating docks, marina utilities, marina fuel and some upland improvements, such as bathrooms to the extent that they are utilized and intended for use by transient boaters. In Mr. Marshall's opinion, the IOP Marina was a great fit for a BIG grant because it is located on the Intracoastal Waterway.

Administrator Tucker informed the group that this is a reimbursable grant so the City must have the funds up front to fund the project. The grant is a twenty-five percent (25%) minimum match,

but, in the evaluation process by Fish and Wildlife, the more match the applicant puts in the more points it receives.

When Councilmember Ferencz asked whether getting a BIG grant would mean losing dock space for residents, Mr. Marshall stated that the grant could be written in such a way that space does not have to be reserved for transient boats, and, if there is no transient boat there, the space could be leased to a resident. On the other hand, if a transient boater was to come and want access to that dock, he must be given priority.

Mayor Cronin asked if there was any reason not to pursue a BIG grant and the unanimous response was no.

The mayor asked how long the City would have between the time the grant was awarded and the execution; Mr. Marshall answered that the grant applications were due to the state in July, they go to the federal government in early September, are evaluated over the winter months and awarded in March. From the time of award the grant recipient has three (3) years to obligate the grant, i.e. sign the contract with the federal government, that there is federal interest in this property to reserve the space for transients. From the time the contract is signed the recipient has five (5) years to build the infrastructure.

Other grants for which the City could apply are:

- The Marine Pump-out Grant – As a result of redoing the docks along Morgan Creek , all of the utilities would have to be redone, the marina pump-outs and essential utilities of the marina; there is a federal program through the Clean Vessel Act to reimburse up to seventy-five percent (75%) of those costs.
- The state of South Carolina has a Water Access Grant through SCDNR that could help offset some of the costs of the boat ramp reconstruction; when last checked, six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) was in an account for Charleston County projects.

Mr. Marshall confirmed that, if the City generates income from the awarded infrastructure before the grant is closed out, it must be deducted from the money from the grant. Since it is a full redevelopment, the City could rip out the old docks, replace them and close out the grant before transients would be brought in.

F. Fuel dispensing

The Scenario C design takes the land-side fueling station off 41st Avenue, which was everyone's desire, to a location that is close to the existing. The Mayor confirmed with Mr. Berrigan that the underground tanks would be replaced where they are now and would not conflict with the relocation of the fueling station.

Administrator Tucker confirmed that no one was interested in eliminating the land-side fuel station from the marina.

G. Parking options

Councilmember Carroll asked how many cars were drawn to the marina on any given day to the businesses or the restaurant.

Councilmember Rice remarked that the eco-tours only go out on the weekends in season; they cater primarily to school children who arrive in buses on weekdays.

Mayor Cronin said that one (1) consideration has been to pipe the ditch on 41st Avenue from Waterway along the edge of the marina property in the earlier scenarios, and Mr. Parker said that it could be done; he added that it would be expensive and complicated, but it picks up fifteen or sixteen (15-16) parking spaces. In Scenario C the ditch was not addressed, meaning that as one enters the marina, one is not encountering cars or trailers parked there and the look is much cleaner.

Councilmember Kinghorn said that he has thought of that space as a pedestrian, golf cart, bicycle access; this concept has created a very island-friendly facility trying to accommodate the businesses there and to bring more opportunity for the citizens. He suggested decking over the ditch to allow pedestrian access along that area. On the question of managing the parking, he reported that there are automated systems that will tell you how many spaces are available, but related to that, this concept creates a real destination and as such there should be a message that one has arrived at the marina.

Mayor Cronin said that a bulkhead could be installed on one (1) side of the ditch.

Mr. Parker explained that the issue of pedestrian access there could be achieved by moving the travel lanes over without altering the ditch in any way.

Mayor Cronin acknowledged that there has been discussion about using the Water and Sewer Commission property off Waterway for marina employee marking, but the City has not been formally approached.

Councilmember Ferencz thought one (1) goal of the redevelopment was for marina parking to be confined to the footprint.

Administrator Tucker asked for more discussion on the topic of controlled access because she did not feel that any consensus had been reached.

Mr. Parker referred to the conceptual drawing and pointed to the one-way out and noted that it brought everyone to a fixed point. He explained that part of the idea of control is that it is well-defined so people know what to do; from one (1) point, there is clear direction to the store, the restaurant the park and the fuel station. The kiosk in the newly added park can be directional for the businesses at the marina, parking and the boat ramp; the park becomes not only a place of information about everything at the marina, but it is done in the public space. The parking and the flow are designed so that people instinctively know where to go.

H. Amenities – Pedestrian, golf cart, bicycle access, greenspace, kayak launch

Mr. Parker noted that the relocation of the boat ramp means that one can walk all of the way around the marina with the greenspace along the Intracoastal Waterway offering the best views and with golf cart parking directly across from it. They envisioned seating and picnicking along the water's edge; fishermen could sell their day's catch at the kiosk; lots of bike parking in all key locations.

Mayor Cronin asked about restrooms, and Mr. Parker said that was something the Planning Commission had mentioned to them. They could be provided, but they are very expensive, so they thought it better to use the restrooms in the restaurant and the store. Mr. Scott said that the Planning Commission had thought there could be safety issues with freestanding restrooms.

I. Utilities

Mayor Cronin acknowledged the need for efficient lighting for the safety of visitors and employees, but it had to be low-level lighting that would not infringe on the neighbors.

Mr. Parker said that, at Kiawah, they had run electricity up palmetto trees with LED lighting; they provide enough lighting at night without looking on light poles, and they are also inexpensive. Mr. Parker stated that the bio-swails could be used for plantings of palmettos and trees and use those plants to provide lighting.

The Mayor asked if the lighting would qualify under the City's Non-standard Service Clause with SCE&G, and the Administrator responded that those funds are typically for beautification projects. Frequently that beautification is moving poles away and putting the lines underground. Mr. Parker indicated that they could work with SCE&G and do something that would work with their program.

Councilmember Rice asked about lighting at the docks, and Mr. Marshall explained that it was usually handled by the power pedestals that would be low level lighting directed downward or even shielded.

Recalling that parking kiosks had been discussed earlier in relation to boat parking, Councilmember Kinghorn asked about parking kiosks throughout the property.

Mr. Kirby indicated that they had planned for kiosks for all parking, and they included six (6) control stations in their plan, with some type of reimbursement program for the restaurant and the store for their dedicated parking.

Administrator Tucker reported that staff had contacted the IOP Water and Sewer Commission about the cost to relocate the lift station that is right in the center of the property, and they quoted half a million dollars (\$500,000).

Councilmember Ward asked what would be the next step and who would decide on the final plan.

The Mayor responded that the first step would be to decide on a plan and figure out how to pay for it; he stated that he thought Council would decide on the plan and then it would, likely, go to a referendum.

Councilmember Ferencz stated that residents have expressed concerns that too many businesses are operating at the marina. She asked if there was a way to scale back the number or if the businesses had contractual agreements with the City.

Ms. Safford said that the City has four (4) leases at the marina, i.e. the marina operations, the marina store, Morgan Creek Grill and Tidal Wave Watersports.

On the flip side, Councilmember Kinghorn said that he most often hears that residents like the compliment of activities at the marina, but they recognize that improvements need to be made.

Administrator Tucker asked Mr. Berrigan how many more businesses were at the marina today than were there when the City bought it in 1999, and he indicated that he could not remember.

Mayor Cronin noted that the City has a lease with Mr. Berrigan to manage the marina and, as such, he does so to the best of his abilities.

Responding to Councilmember Kinghorn, the Mayor said that the City might be in a position to put a referendum before the citizens on this issue next year.

In the meantime, the Mayor commented that the parking needs to be addressed now, well before the City is able to begin the redevelopment project.

Councilmember Ward questioned that the boat ramp should be relocated before any parking changes were implemented.

Considering the time involved in starting the redevelopment project, the Administrator agreed with the Mayor that the parking must be addressed with a temporary solution to give the residents on Waterway relief, and the IOP Water and Sewer space along with a temporary parking "fix" would accomplish that. This temporary solution would be done with the full knowledge that it would be torn up when the redevelopment work actually begins.

Councilmember Ferencz opined that, over the next few months, Council should study this Scenario C and prioritize the various aspects of it to plan how the project would be phased; she also wanted this option shown to the residents so they could see what they will be paying for.

C. Adjournment

Mayor Cronin closed the workshop at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk