

**CITY OF ISLE OF PALMS
PUBLIC HEARING**

6:45 p.m., Tuesday, May 19, 2009

The City of Isle of Palms held a Public Hearing at 6:45 p.m. on Tuesday, May 19, 2009 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the hearing were Council members Bergwerf, Bettelli, Buckhannon, Duffy, Loftus, Piening and Taylor, Mayor Cronin, City Administrator Tucker, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban, Director Kerr and City Clerk Copeland.

1. Mayor Cronin called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and the public had been duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.
2. **Ordinance 2009-02 – An Ordinance Amending Section 5-4-58 of the City of Isle of Palms Code of Ordinances Relating to the Granting of Zoning Variances.**

Mayor Cronin called upon Director Kerr to come forward to comment on this ordinance.

Director Kerr stated that this amendment adds two (2) sentences of text to the variance provisions; the two (2) sentences are

“A claim of unnecessary hardship cannot be based on conditions created by the applicant. A claim of unnecessary hardship cannot be based on financial hardship of the applicant.”

Director Kerr noted that these sentences are in the state statutes, and the City's attorneys were of the opinion that they should also appear in the City's Code of Ordinances. He commented that the Board of Zoning Appeals is bound by the state statutes; therefore, the ordinance would not affect their actions. He reported that the Planning commission has reviewed the amendment and recommends approval with the addition of another sentence specifying that each case be heard on its own merits; this, too, is already in the state code.

Jim Raih, 3906 Cameron Boulevard, stated that he thought there should be guidelines under the Planned Development part of the ordinance where it would make sense to grant a zoning variance under certain circumstances. He offered as an example the corner of Hartnett Boulevard and 41st Avenue where two (2) lots were converted to three (3) lots and three nice homes were built on the corner. On the contrary, on the corner of 41st Avenue and Palm Boulevard there is one (1) large lot and one (1) large house; he noted that this lot was within two to three percent (2-3%) of the area required to construct two (2) houses. He said one could argue that the second circumstance would increase density, but one could also argue that two (2) houses on the corner would look better than one large structure. He expressed his opinion that to give the Planning Department flexibility, under the Planned Development ordinance, sometimes may make common sense, and the Board of Zoning Appeals should have the leeway to grant variances under certain circumstances.

3. **Ordinance 2009-07 – An Ordinance to Raise Revenue and Adopt a Budget for the City of Isle of Palms, South Carolina, for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2009 and Ending June 30, 2010.**

Administrator Tucker remarked that there were two (2) handouts that accompany the budget document; one shows the changes from the previous budget to the current one and the second shows the effect of the millage increase reflected in the budget.

She explained that she would go over the highlights of the budget for FY 2009-2010; the Administrator initiated her comments stating that actual expenses were four thousand dollars (\$4,000) less than the operating budget under which the City is currently operating. For this budget, revenues are depicted as either flat or decreasing; certain key revenue sources seen to be decreasing based on present trends are business licenses and building permits. Property taxes are expected to be flat with the exception of the small millage increase allowable by the Consumer Price Index. In the effort to balance the General Fund, certain expenses were moved out of the General Fund to be paid by Hospitality taxes; those expenses are the part-time Animal Control Officer and the Livability Officer. State and Municipal Accommodations revenues have been projected fifteen percent (15%) lower than actual revenue for 2009. To keep the status quo, fund balances have been used to accommodate normal expenses; there will be fund balances remaining in those funds and some will be determined by how FY 2009 ends.

The second handout illustrates how the millage increase will affect individuals on the island. For an owner-occupied residence, the increase is \$3.20 per one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) of appraised value; for a non-owner-occupied residence, the increase is \$4.80 per one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) of appraised value.

On the expense side, there will be a one percent (1%) cost of living increase for employees and an average merit increase of (2%); there will also be a one-time adjustment distributed to firefighters totaling \$11,250. When the adjustments were made last year to many job classifications, the firefighters did not get an adjustment, and Council agreed to address the adjustment at a later date.

Four (4) line items in the Public Works budget reflect the projected expense attributed to the potential closing of the incinerator.

There are savings in the budget, as well. There are savings in fuel expense, because the price seems to have stabilized. The health insurance is also lower because the carrier has changed the plan that is offered to the City and the premium is lower.

Major expenses included in the budget are funds to complete the Public Safety Building, some expenses related to ending the beach restoration project, the design and permitting of the dredging of the Isle of Palms Marina, and the design, permitting and some construction for the 54th to 57th Avenue Drainage Project. The City is also purchasing a new pumper truck through a municipal lease agreement; the budget includes the payment on the lease.

Administrator Tucker commented that there are activities not included in the budget that have been included in prior years' budgets; they are a contribution to the savings for the re-orientation of the ball fields and placement of the lights at the Recreation Center, a contribution to the reserve for future beach restoration and contribution to the reserve for underground utility lines.

The Administrator stated that there was a new item to be found in the FY10 budget, an initiative by the City Council to go paperless and to provide the Council with information electronically.

Jim Raih, 3904 Cameron Boulevard, stated his agreement with Councilman Buckhannon's comments about asking the County for addition re-cycling pickups; he added that he thought the City should take the lead by taking the two (2) lots across the street to incorporate some type of re-cycling, sorting, compacting, or some other concept to minimize the number of trips Public Works' vehicles make to the landfill at Bees Ferry. He commented that the City's "going green" with paperless meetings with laptops was commendable, but he understood the budget to indicate a cost savings of seven hundred dollars (\$700), and the cost of the laptops had to be considered as well.

4. Adjourn

Mayor Cronin declared the hearing closed at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk