



## **ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**4:00pm, Thursday, November 14, 2024**

**1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC**

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

### **MINUTES**

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

Present: Sandra Brotherton, Mary Pringle, Laura Lovins, Belvin Olasov, Doug Hatler

Absent: Dane Buckout, Lucia Spiotta, Todd Murphy

Staff Present: Council Member Miars, Director Kerr, Zoning Administrator Simms, Asst. Director Asero

#### **2. Citizen's Comments**

Tucker Redford, 511 Carolina Boulevard, said the current City code does not address removal of tree limbs that are dangerous to people as opposed to dangerous to a structure. Mr. Redford said he has a pecan tree that sheds pecans that fall on people coming into his home. He believes he should be able to trim a tree that is hazardous to him and his guests.

James Coates who lives in the "pink house" spoke with concern about Dominion Energy removing palm trees. He said these trees grow very slowly and believes that Dominion Energy is overstating the growth rates and their proximity to the power lines.

#### **3. Approval of previous meeting's minutes**

**MOTION: Ms. Lovins made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2024 meeting, and Ms. Pringle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **4. Presentation**

Susan Hill Smith shared with the Committee a plan for the City to develop a student-driven seasonal litter program. Details of her plan were sent to Committee members prior to the meeting and are attached to these minutes.

Dr. Brotherton said that she was told funding from Palmetto Pride cannot fund salaries. She would like to see a more definitive plan before further discussion. Ms. Smith said she was not told no by Palmetto Pride and will follow up. She suggested other grants could pay for such an initiative and believes the City should be doing more to remove litter from the beach.

Director Kerr shared his concern that the staff is already consumed with the demands of the summer season and does not have anyone who could manage such an effort. If the goal is additional trash removal, then that could be outsourced.

Ms. Smith said having interns would be less costly, would involve students in civic efforts, and allow for data collection. Director Kerr suggested this might be something the parking management company could add to their scope of work.

Mr. Hatler said data already exists and if there is a need for more cleanup efforts, then a service should be hired. Mr. Olasov will ask if AmeriCorps could supervise such an effort.

## **5. Old Business**

### **A. Wildlife**

Ms. Pringle said that Sharlene Johnson will be at the Native Plant garden tomorrow to winterize the space. They will work on developing other City-owned garden beds in the spring.

She also reported that what was reported as a dead sea turtle to her by USACE was a marsh terrapin. She sent a genetic sample as part of a study.

### **B. Litter**

Dr. Brotherton, referencing her email regarding possible beach trash receptacles (attached to these minutes), the considerations she and Asst. Director Asero kept in mind as they discussed replacement trash receptacles. She noted that signage on the corrals would be an additional expense.

Conversation ensued as to what part, if any, the City's future beach litter removal vendor could play in cleaning the beach within Wild Dunes.

Director Kerr said now would be the time for the Committee to make a recommendation about this plan so that it could be addressed in the FY26 budget planning, which begins in January.

**MOTION: Ms. Lovins made a motion to recommend the proposal as presented to City Council "with different management options for on-beach and off-beach litter corrals and cans." Mr. Olasov seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

### **C. Water Quality**

Mr. Hatler said water samples have been collected, and he hopes to share the results at the December meeting.

### **D. Climate Action**

Mr. Olasov would like to move the discussion about leaf blowers to the December agenda.

**6. New Business**

**A. Discussion of Dominion Energy Palm Tree Removal**

**B. Discussion of Dominion Energy program to underground power lines**

Committee members discussed their concerns about Dominion Energy's plans to remove palm trees from the island. Ms. Lovins hopes to find an independent arborist who can advise residents about the palm trees on their properties.

Ms. Lovins asked about the City's position on pushing Dominion Energy to increase the pace at which they underground the power lines. Director Kerr explained the Non-Standard Service Fee Fund and the City's intent to ask Dominion Energy if it can be used to develop an undergrounding master plan to prioritize undergrounding projects. He said in the past the City has prioritized aesthetics when selecting such projects, but may need to change that focus to areas where service is lost most frequently after a storm.

Council Member Miars stated that the City has little power with Dominion Energy and staff is working hard to get the projects completed. She noted that all communities are upset about these tree trimming/removal projects and there is no legal recourse.

The Committee discussed the costs and feasibility of potential replanting efforts.

Director Kerr said the trees marked as Category 2 or 3 will be reassessed in five years. The City can disseminate information to residents regarding arborists to help them assess the trees on their private property. Ms. Lovins suggested prioritizing undergrounding projects in relation to the location of trees marked as Category 2 or 3.

**7. Miscellaneous Business**

**8. Adjournment**

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Committee is scheduled for Thursday, December 12, 2024 at 4pm.

Mr. Hatler made a motion to adjourn, and Ms. Lovins seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane  
City Clerk

Hi Sandy,

I would like to speak to the EAC about creating a student-driven, seasonal litter program at the Thursday meeting but would need to do it early in the meeting as I have something to get to by 4:45 pm.

I'm in a conversation with Palmetto Pride about the City applying for one of their [grants](#) to help make it happen - Desiree previously asked me to reach out to them last time I talked about this before. It's a longshot that it will fit their requirements and their deadline technically passed on Nov. 1 and, but we might be able to squeak in there before the December awards.

As I've mentioned to Desiree, and probably you and the EAC before, I hope to help set things in motion to create a 10-week City program that provides four paid, part-time student workers, possibly interns, through the busy summer season to collect and document litter daily on Isle of Palms. I envision the students focusing on the beach and commercial areas at Front Beach - providing a daily beach clean before litter gets into the ocean & dunes. But they could help with other stretches of the beach and public parking areas as well as the City Marina.

If Wild Dunes is open to it and can help cover the costs, we could consider adding additional positions for them as well. Or maybe we wait on that until year 2.

Otherwise, this could be a collaboration with the City, Isle of Palms Cleanup Crew, the South Carolina Aquarium conservation team (definitely on board) and possibly a local college professor. The target group would be college students interested in conservation and/or civic careers.

The data could be valuable in several ways. If we start in Summer 2025, we would have a robust data set to compare to the following year after the changes with our beach trash cans - helpful for us & many other beach communities.

If a Palmetto Pride grant doesn't work out, I would try to reach out to LENS to see if they might help. However, the costs would not be prohibitive to the City if we offered a \$3,000 stipend for four interns over the summer - a total of \$12,000.

Let me know what's possible.

Thanks!

Susan

## **Beach Litter Management Suggestions**

The following suggestions for beach litter management were developed with consideration for improved efficiency, environmental protection, cost, and appearance. For beach access paths and the parking lot, roll carts housed inside a corral are recommended. These corrals would hide the carts with IOP signage and thus serve a dual purpose. In the commercial area on the street, the roll carts would be inside an enclosure with the lid open and trash would be deposited into the can through a flap or other covered opening. Use of the roll carts is efficient with regards to emptying and would thus reduce cost to service them.



## Location of Trash Cans

Access Path Number	# of cans at street	# of cans off beach but behind dune	Additional notes
2	1	0	Serves 1A, 1B and 2A access paths
3	1 or 2	0	
3A	0	0	
4	1	0	
4A	0	0	One can there currently; looked as if items dumped there
5	2	1	
6	2	0	
6A	1	0	
7	2	1	
7A	0	0	
8	2	0	
8A	0	0	
9	2	1	ADA access
Front beach; restroom area	3	3 walkway beginning 3 walkway ending 2 restrooms	at restrooms
Commercial area			Recommend cans with an enclosure from 10 <sup>th</sup> to parking lot entrance
Sea Cabins	2	2 midways to beach	
Parking Lot	Multiple corrals (5-6) at 2 entrances, mobile unit, exit, and midway between front and back of lot		
14th	2	0	Will be an emergency, pedestrian access
22	2	2 boardwalk	
23	2	0	
25	3	3	
26	1	0	The “disappearing” access path
26A	1	0	boardwalk
27	2	0	
28	2	0	
29	1	0	
30	1	0	

30A	1	0	
31	2	1	
32A	1	0	
33A	1	0	
34A	2	2	ADA access
35A	1	0	
36A	1	1	
37A	2	0	
38A	1	0	
40	0	0	
41	2	0	
42	2	2	ADA access
43	1	0	
44	0	0	
45	1	0	
46	1	1	ADA access
49	2	0	
50	1	0	
51	1	0	
52	1	1	
53	1	0	Emergency access
57	2	0	

Additional notes and thoughts for consideration:

1. An "A" beside the street number indicates that the beach access does not line up with a corresponding intersecting street.
2. The "disappearing path" appears to have been mostly taken over by a homeowner who paved it and uses it for a driveway.
3. Bigbelly cans may be considered in the future but currently they can have up to a 2-week time for service and are expensive.
4. What should be the role of the city with beach litter management in a private resort?