

MINUTES OF THE ISLE OF PALMS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
February 8, 2012

The Isle of Palms Planning Commission met in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard on February 8, 2012, 2012 at 4:30 p.m. Members attending included Bev Ballow, David Cohen, Ron Denton, Pete Doherty, Patrick Harrington and Noel Scott; the Director of Planning Douglas Kerr was present, as well. Don Smith was absent. The press had been notified of the meeting, and the agenda for the meeting was posted in City Hall and the Building Department to comply with the Freedom of Information Act.

Vice Chairman Noel Scott called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The next item on the agenda was the review of the minutes of the January 11, 2012 meeting. Mr. Scott noted that the word "parking" was misspelled on the second page. Mr. Harrington noted that his name was misspelled several times. Mr. Doherty made a motion to approve the minutes with the noted corrections and Ms. Ballow seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Scott explained that the next item on the agenda was an executive session for the Commission's annual legal briefing. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to go into executive session and the audience was excused from the room.

DISCUSSION OF PARKING MANAGEMENT

Mr. Cohen explained that the Commission had received legal advice during executive session and no decisions had been made. Mr. Cohen explained that the next item on the agenda was the discussion of parking and he asked Mr. Kerr to review the material in the packet.

Mr. Kerr explained that he had compiled the list of short and long term goals identified at the previous meeting and distributed that list. He explained that he had also created an outline of a program to implement a seasonal pass program based on the prior month's discussion. He stated that to assist in creating this program, he had met with all of the City's department managers and the City Administrator. He explained that one of the primary points that was made during this meeting was it would be a major undertaking from an administrative and enforcement standpoint to implement an island-wide parking program. He stated that the program would involve enforcing parking regulations on every road on the island outside of Wild Dunes.

Mr. Denton questioned the need to step up enforcement. He explained that he saw this program more as guidance for visitors, which may necessitate occasional enforcement as time permits. Mr. Kerr explained that if a program such as this went into effect, he would expect the Police Department to enforce the program with the same level of diligence as they currently enforce the parking at the front beach, which takes several full time Beach Services Officers.

Mr. Harrington explained that he felt that the Commission should expect that the City will enforce whatever is ultimately adopted.

Ms. Ballow asked if there needed to be the same level of enforcement if beach visitors are confined to certain roads. Mr. Kerr explained that he believed that the same issue would exist, because if there is an area where the program is not enforced, the public will find that area and begin to use it to park. Additionally, he stated that it would require a lot of signage and he passed out a graphic that had been prepared by the Police Department that showed what a typical street might look like with additional signs. Ms. Ballow stated that she did not like the idea of peppering the island with signs.

Mr. Harrington explained that he did not like the idea of sign pollution, but he thought that it would be better than the issues that residents are currently experiencing with no control over parking.

Mr. Scott explained that he felt that the program would generate enough revenue to offset the cost of administration, enforcement and signage. He stated that the City may also look into using the Charleston County Deputies during busy times.

Mr. Kerr explained that the next point of the program would be that residents and property owners could be issued a limited number of guest passes each year for special events. He explained that this would be a new inconvenience to residents and spontaneous and emergency guests may not be able to obtain passes.

Ms. Ballow explained that residents in the City of Charleston deal with this and it becomes second nature after time.

Mr. Kerr explained that the next topic for discussion was the number of annual passes. He stated that he questioned the need to restrict the number of passes in the first year as charging an annual fee to park may have the desired effect of reducing parking congestion. He stated that if the fee did not have the desired effect he stated that it would be beneficial to have a year of data to analyze the ratio of how many permits should be issued.

Mr. Denton explained that he felt that the number of passes should be 600. Mr. Scott explained that he felt the number of passes should be limited to a set number and not just left open. Ms. Ballow explained that she questioned the need to set the number for the first year. She added that she felt that there should be some mechanism to sell day passes to the people who do not want a seasonal pass. Mr. Harrington stated that he did not think the Commission had the knowledge to establish a limit at this point, so he supported leaving it open for a year and then establish a limit in the future, if necessary. Mr. Doherty explained that he felt that there should be some limit to how many passes are issued. Mr. Doherty asked the City Administrator if she envisioned a hanging placard or a windshield sticker. Administrator Tucker answered that she had envisioned a windshield sticker, but she warned that the existing hurricane re-entry sticker program would have to be overhauled, if the two were to be tied together.

Mr. Scott made a motion to include a limit to the number of passes and Mr. Denton seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of four to two with Mr. Harrington and Ms. Ballow voting against the motion.

Mr. Cohen stated that the next order of business was to establish what the limit would be. Mr. Doherty stated that he liked the idea of establishing a total limit and then also establishing a limit for a number of day passes. He made the example of setting the limit at 1,000 total passes and setting limits of 800 seasonal passes and 200 day passes.

The Commission began discussing the issue of daily passes as it may affect the number of seasonal passes issued. Mr. Denton made a motion to consider allowing daily passes as a long term goal. The motion died without a second. Ms. Ballow made a motion to add a mechanism to sell daily passes and Mr. Doherty seconded the motion. The vote was five to one in favor of the motion, with Mr. Denton voting against the motion.

Mr. Kerr stated that the next item for discussion was restricting the area where beach visitors could park. He questioned whether this was necessary and if the owners on visitor-parking-allowed streets would feel alienated.

Mr. Cohen explained that he did not think there was a need to limit where visitors could park, if the number of passes is limited to 1,000, which he stated he would make in two motions. His first motion was to recommend a limit of seasonal passes at 1,000. Mr. Denton seconded the motion. Mr. Cohen stated that the number of 1,000 is roughly the number of spaces available, based on the parking counts over the summer. The vote was five to one in favor of the motion, with Ms. Ballow voting against the motion.

Mr. Cohen made a motion to not restrict the area where pass holders could park, beyond the current limitations. Ms. Ballow seconded the motion for discussion. Ms. Ballow explained that she was sympathetic to the owners on Carolina Boulevard.

Mr. Scott agreed that he was sympathetic to Carolina Boulevard but limit parking would involve SCDOT, it would become contentious, and he really wanted to have something done by 2013; so he would support the motion for expedience. Mr. Cohen called for a vote and the vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

The next item discussed was the cost of an annual pass. Mr. Harrington made a motion to establish the price of an annual pass at \$55 and Ms. Ballow seconded the motion. Mr. Denton explained that the County pass is \$60 or \$65 and he would not support going lower than their pass. He added that he believes a higher cost would encourage casual beach visitors to go to the commercial area. Mr. Scott said he thought \$55 is too low. Mr. Harrington asked Administrator Tucker if she had an opinion on what the cost should be. Ms. Tucker answered that she did not want to influence the Commission's work product, so she would keep her opinion to herself. Mr. Harrington stated that he would like to amend his motion to make the cost \$65 per season. Mr. Doherty seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

The next item was to discuss the hours of enforcement. Ms. Ballow made a motion to recommend that this program be enforced during the same days that the parking meters are currently enforced, March through September, but make the times slightly more accommodating by being set at 10am to 5pm. Mr. Denton seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Mr. Kerr explained that he thought it would be appropriate to have a joint meeting with City Council to update them on the direction of the Planning Commission. The Commission agreed and Mr. Kerr and Administrator Tucker stated that they would work on setting a date for this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, David Cohen, Chairman.