

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

2:00 p.m., Monday, June 5, 2017

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 2:00 p.m., Monday, June 5, 2017 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmember Bergwerf and Carroll, Chair Bettelli, Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham, Police Chief Buckhannon, Assistant Administrator Fragoso and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Chair Bettelli 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. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of May 8, 2017 as submitted; Councilmember Carroll seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments

Merritt E. (Ted) McKnight of 2 Shad Row reported going to the beach over the weekend from his home and seeing a large SUV parked on Palm Boulevard next to the beach access path numbered 54/55; on his return trip, he realized that he could not see on-coming traffic without getting to the edge of the roadway. He took several pictures with his phone showing the location and position of the vehicle. Noting that the vehicle created an unsafe condition, he thought about signs he had seen elsewhere on the island reminding people to park four feet (4 ft.) from the roadway. His photos clearly showed that the vehicle was parked as far from the road as it could with a hedge parallel to the road and the tires of the vehicle were barely off the roadway. He asked that the Committee make a site visit and find a way to prevent the situation from repeating.

Ken Lopatka, a resident of 22 Back Court and a member of the Wild Dunes Community Association's Safety Committee, accompanied Mr. McKnight to the meeting.

Chair Bettelli assured Mr. McKnight that the Committee would visit the site and would engage in further discussion.

4. Old Business

A. Update on efforts to remove encroachments on rights-of-way

Chief Buckhannon stated that no change has taken place with the residents with whom they were working; with the start of the tourist season, he has not had the available staff to engage in further follow-up.

Speaking to Mr. McKnight's concerns on the north end of the island, Chief Buckhannon noted that the encroachments in that area are in the SCDOT right-of-way, and the state would be responsible for removing the vegetative growth.

Chair Bettelli added that the four feet (4 ft.) from pavement only applies to parking areas between 21st and 41st Avenues, and, according to the Administrator, it was never intended to prevent parking but to move people further off the right-of-way in areas with sufficient width to do so.

Administrator Tucker reported that the purpose of the right-of-way is to allow a vehicle to safely pull out of the lane of travel when it experiences a difficulty or to pull over to let an emergency vehicle pass in the lane of travel.

The City's efforts have been focused on removing hard encroachments, like railroad timbers or metallic protrusions from the ground, not vegetation.

B. Status of overgrown lots

Chief Buckhannon reported the following:

- 4 Sand Dollar – cleared
- 4 Wills Way – cleared
- 18 Wills Way –making efforts to get company to clear
- 3903 Palm – cleared, pending construction
- 3701 Palm – partially cleared, owner notified to complete work
- 3706 Palm – certified letter signed May 13th, still within 30-day notification window
- 3804 Cameron – certified letter sent, remain in 30-day notification period

Councilmember Carroll commented that he often walks on Palm Boulevard and sees many trees overhanging the sidewalks that need to be cut back; therefore, he asked that SCDOT be notified.

C. Update on CodeRED service

Chief Graham indicated that she still thinks the CodeRED service is the same as the Everbridge program offered by Charleston County, and that some island residents have enrolled since it is a simple process of opting in or opting out. Assistant Administrator Fragoso walked through the steps of locating the link to Everbridge on the City's website.

After Chief Graham asked that the link appear on the website's splash page, Assistant Fragoso said that she would update the City's Emergency Preparedness screen. The link is under "The Island" section of the City's website since it is the most-visited area of the City's website.

Councilmember Carroll asked if the link could also go out to residents via the City's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

D. Consideration of banning balloons from the beach

Chief Graham stated that information gathering continues; they are looking at other local government's codes, federal codes and researching other materials regarding the dangers balloons pose, including the Living Marine Resource.

The discussion morphed into one (1) about trash on the beach, and the "Take 3" program was mentioned; it is a program that encourages every beach-goer to remove three (3) items of trash from the beach every time they visit.

Chief Graham stated that she knew someone with Palmetto Pride who could possibly provide a free, reusable bag that could be distributed to visitors along with the t-shirts to promote removing trash from the beach.

5. New Business

A. Consideration of Beach Wrestling Tournament in the fall of 2017

No one was in attendance to discuss the request.

Recalling an email she received, Administrator Tucker stated that these events have been held at Folly Beach and the sponsor wants to expand to the Isle of Palms for one or two (1 – 2) events. A ring would be set up on the beach for sand wrestling; apparently there is a following for beach wrestling. The Administrator thought that the event would involve all ages.

The question from the Chair was whether the sponsor was a for-profit or non-profit organization; to which the Administrator replied that she did not think that was made clear in the email.

B. Consideration of a contract award to Marina One Corporation for 1 Rescue One Connector boat, motor and trailer in the amount of \$32,478.86 less the trade-in of City's rescue boat (FY18 budget, page 29., State ATAX, Fire Department Capital Outlay - \$30,000)

According to Chief Graham, the trade-in value of the City's 1995 boat will be approximately twenty-five hundred dollars (\$2,500). She also told the Committee that this would be a sole source award; the Department has been very satisfied with the existing boat and would prefer to replace it with a like boat. This brand of boat seems to be more stable and a little wider; it can accommodate a faster motor, and the water pump can be attached and unattached as needed.

MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to recommend to the Ways and Means Committee the award of a sole source contract to Marine One Corporation for 1 Rescue One Connector boat, motor and trailer in the amount of \$32,478.86 less the trade-in of the City's rescue boat; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Review of golf cart regulations

Chair Bettelli stated that he had asked that this item be added to the Agenda because again it is the time of year when golf carts are seen more and more, especially in the interior of the island, and he too often sees drivers with small children sitting on their laps.

Chief Buckhannon responded that, unfortunately, no regulations to prohibit such behavior exist; he commented that too many people view golf carts as an innocent mode of transportation, but, when involved in an accident, the results can be very serious.

Councilmember Bergwerf stated that a low speed vehicle (LSV) has seatbelts.

Chief Buckhannon noted that LSVs and golf carts do not operate under the same laws relative to child safety seats.

Administrator Tucker stated, for the record, that the City's only golf cart regulations specify where they can park.

Replying to Councilmember Carroll's comment about golf carts on Palm Boulevard, the Chief said that golf carts are allowed only to cross Palm from Breach Inlet to 41st Avenue; between 41st and 57th Avenues, golf carts can be driven on Palm because it is no longer considered a primary road.

Chair Bettelli added that golf carts are not allowed to be driven after dusk.

D. Request by citizen for change in off-leash hours for dogs on the beach

According to the Chair, Lee Strickland, a resident, requested that dogs be allowed off-leash on the beach from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m. year round not just between September 15th and March 31st. Chair Bettelli opined that police officers were busy enough on the beach in the tourist season without adding more tasks; he, therefore, did not see a need to change. Other members of the Committee agreed.

6. Highlights of Departmental Reports

Fire Department – Chief Graham

From the May report, Chief Graham stated that personnel responded to a call for a swimmer in distress in Breach Inlet on May 3rd; after the swimmer made it safely to the IOP side of the inlet, he was taken to speak with IOP police officers regarding swimming dangers there. On May 8th, personnel also responded to a call of an attempted suicide; since the bleeding had stopped, the patient was transferred to Charleston County EMS for transport. Personnel also responded to a call about someone in cardiac arrest at the County Park; once the crew got a pulse, the person was transported by Charleston County EMS. On May 22nd, IOP personnel assisted the Sullivan's Island Fire Department with a structure fire; the crew assisted with an interior fire attack, salvage and overhaul, as well as clean-up operations. Personnel responded to a total of one hundred fourteen (114) calls; of that number, forty-three (43) were EMS calls. The Fire Inspector performed twenty-two (22) inspections where he located eighty-four (84) violations. Personnel averaged approximately thirty-one (31) hours of training in the month; the Department is in a transition period as Battalion Chief Maibach has been training Battalion Chief Hathaway to assume the duties of Training Officer upon his retirement on June 11th. Personnel provided twenty-five (25) station tours for many visitors over the course of the month. The Chief also announced that J.T. Hall, who was recently promoted to Captain, was named to the Dean's List as he pursues his college degree.

Councilmember Carroll asked if Charleston County EMS had stationed one (1) of their quick response vehicles (QRVs) on the island for the summer; Chief Graham responded that the vehicle is available at sometimes and unavailable at others.

Police Department – Chief Buckhannon

In reviewing happenings on the island in May, Chief Buckhannon reported that officers reported to a home on Ocean Boulevard on May 1st related to the theft of valuables with an approximate value of one hundred three thousand five hundred dollars (\$103,500); the victim suspects workers who were making repairs to her home. On May 12th, the theft of a golf cart was reported; the person who took the golf cart went to the beach and picked up two (2) other males; to-date the golf cart has not been located. The victim was a ninety-five (95) year old resident who had gone to Front Beach for dinner. On May 16th, officers served a warrant on a suspect accused of stealing checks from a local business; when the suspect became belligerent, officers deployed their Tasers to subdue him. A search of the suspect found him to be in possession of marijuana and crack cocaine with an intent to distribute; he was transported to the Al Cannon detention Center. The Chief opined that Memorial Day had gone “exceptionally well” overall. One (1) incident toward the end of the day was when boys stole thirteen (13) bikes; a bicycle rental business did not have their bicycles locked down; they were all recovered on the beach. Sgt. Matt Storen and Pfc. Dylan Reynolds received the Bronze DUI Enforcement Hero award lapel pins from the South Carolina Law Enforcement Network for making between ten and twenty-four (10-24) DUI arrests in a year. FTO Robert Forsythe attended Cub Scout Pack 50 meeting and discussed the responsibilities of the police officer as well as the assigned equipment and his vehicle. During the month of May, Communication Specialists answered five thousand eighty-four (5,084) calls, of which thirty-seven hundred eighty-four (3,784) were for the IOP Police Department. Officers wrote eighty-three (83) tickets in the course of making three hundred (300) traffic stops. In the Animal Control Report, the Chief stated that ten (10) citations and four (4) warnings were issued. Two (2) recruits completed their training at the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy and will begin twelve (12) weeks of field training. The Livability Report shows that the City received thirty-nine (39) noise complaints; eight (8) received citations and fifteen (15) received warnings; there were also two (2) coyote sightings.

7. Miscellaneous Business

The Committee agreed not to hold a meeting in July, but acknowledged that, if a situation was to arise, a meeting could be called with twenty-four hours’ (24 hrs.) notice.

Next Meeting Date: 2:00 p.m. on Monday, August 7, 2017 in the Conference Room

8. Executive Session – Not necessary

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:09 p.m.;
Councilmember Bergwerf seconded, and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted: Marie Copeland, City Clerk