

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
2:00 p.m., Monday, August 7, 2017

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was called to order at 2:00 p.m., Monday, August 7, 2017 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Present for the meeting were Councilmembers Bergwerf and Carroll, Chair Bettelli, Administrator Tucker, Police Chief Buckhannon, Fire Chief Graham, 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.

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to reorder the Agenda to hold the conference call and discussion of Item A under New Business at this time; Councilmember Carroll seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. **New Business**

A. Consideration of filming the solar eclipse from the beach as a City-sponsored event

Assistant Fragoso established the links with Marie Allard and Taran Davies of Cosmic Pictures for the discussion, and Administrator Tucker introduced the members of the Committee and the City's Public Safety staff. Also present were members of the press from *The Post and Courier* and ABC Channel 4 News. The Administrator read the language of the Agenda and explained that the request for filming must be as City-sponsored event because the City does not allow for any type of commercial activity on the beach; therefore, the only mechanism for allowing any type of commercial is for the City to grant City-sponsored event status to the activity, and the making of an IMAX movie of the solar eclipse qualifies for such status.

Mr. Davies commented that his company Cosmic Pictures makes documentary-type films shown exclusively in museums and science centers that are primarily for school children; he told the Committee that his last IMAX film was "Jerusalem" distributed by National Geographic, and it won awards for best film and best cinematography. Eighty percent (80%) of the box office of these films go to the museums and science centers, and, typically, the majority of the money raised by his films go to non-profit organizations. The movie he is currently working on is entitled "Einstein's Incredible Universe" and "is about a little boy who could not stop thinking and whose imagination changed the world." The goal is "to encourage [among children] curiosity, creativity and imagination to help solve problems and to unlock the mysteries of the universe." Mr. Davies explained that August 21st is close to the 100th anniversary of experiment that was the first to prove Einstein's theory of relativity. He said that cameras would be set up all across the United States for the eclipse, and he would like to station a camera on the beach between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. in a twelve square foot (12 sq. ft.) area to do time lapse photography of the eclipse as it exits the United States. The idea is to film the event "in a way never done before and to show it to kids for many years to come."

Ms. Allard commented that the cameraman has scouted the beach and decided that the optimum location for his setup is near the Sea Cabins' pier, and he will be shooting the change of light caused by the eclipse.

Administrator Tucker clarified with Ms. Allard that they only need a space large enough for the cameraman and the tripod for the camera to secure his equipment. The Administrator stated that her only concern with the location they have selected is that there will be a lot of people in that area, making lots of noise, because the City is having an event on the beach in that general area as well. The City staff thought that a better location would be on the beach near the 42nd Avenue beach access where there would be less activity.

Mr. Davies commented that they what they want to capture is not just the event but also to view the people coming together for it; therefore, "from a creative perspective," the location they have selected is optimum.

Chair Bettelli asked exactly how many people they would have on the beach, and Ms. Allard confirmed that it would only be the photographer.

When Councilmember Carroll noted that the film was more educational than commercial, Mr. Davies stated that he is in the process of completing "an application to the National Science Foundation for three million dollars (\$3,000,000) grant that would go to the production of the film and one million dollars (\$1,000,000) that would go toward educational outreach to schools across the country.

Administrator explained that the next step, should the Committee choose to approve it, will be to put the activity before City Council for approval. Assuming Council approval, the City would need to be named an additional insured on a liability insurance policy in the amount of one million dollars (\$1,000,000), to provide the City with a certificate of insurance and to acquire a business license; additionally the City would ask for coordination between the film company and the Isle of Palms' Police Department.

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to approve the filming the solar eclipse from the beach as a City-sponsored event; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Administrator Tucker told Ms. Allard and Mr. Davies that the City would inform them when the item would appear on a Council agenda and notify of the results; based on this Committee's decision, she anticipates City Council will agree as well.

2. Approval of Previous Meetings' Minutes

Motion: Chair Bettelli moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 5 and the Special Meeting of June 26, 2017 as submitted; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comment

Jim Raih of 3904 Cameron said that efforts by the City to control/eliminate encroachments in the rights-of-way must begin Day 1 on construction with the placement of the fencing; he added that when the fencing is placed in the right-of-way, it creates a safety hazard. He also thought that regulating the placement of the construction fence would make future enforcement easier.

4. Old Business

A. Update on efforts to remove encroachments from right-of-way

Chief Buckhannon reported that little has done over the summer, but efforts will resume in the fall.

B. Status of overgrown lots

Chief Buckhannon informed the Committee that the lots on which he has previously reported have been cleared. New lots have been identified on Cameron Boulevard and Wills Way, and letters have been sent to the owners.

C. Update on banning balloons from the beach

Chief Graham stated that, based on her research, the easiest thing for the City to do would be to include banning balloons in the plastic bag ban ordinance, but she added that the City must be careful with the language. If the City were to ban the release of balloons from the beach, a definition of beach must be included in the ordinance. She said she would like to write a draft ordinance for the Administrator and City Attorney to consider.

The Chief acknowledged that such a ban would be difficult to enforce and that the key to the solution might lay in public education.

5. New Business

B. Parking at the Rec Center

Chief Buckhannon reported that notifications have been sent to the equipment owners who have items parked at the Recreation Center, but the Committee should not expect them to be gone immediately because they have been allowed to park there in a public parking area that does not have the restrictions other areas have. If the owners adhere to state guidelines to move the vehicles every other day or so, the City has little recourse.

Councilmember Carroll noted that he has been contacted by residents in the area who have said that they knew they were buying/building across from the Recreation Center, but that they did not agree to live across from a parking lot.

Chair Bettelli indicated that this subject should be included in the after-action parking discussion at the end of the season.

Administrator Tucker stated that she believes that many of the complaints are the result of temporarily allowing marina employees to park there, which was approved by the Recreation Committee. The Administrator reported that she has put the participating tenants on notice that the City is receiving complaints from the adjacent residents, that the City has viewed this arrangement as a temporary solution and that they need to be considering a long-range solution for next season and going forward.

Councilmember Bergwerf suggested that one (1) solution would be to eliminate overnight parking.

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to add a discussion of the logistics of the eclipse event to the Agenda; Councilmember Carroll seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Administrator Tucker commended Andy Sinwald, Events Supervisor for the Recreation Department, and the other members of the Department for their hard work in outing the eclipse event together. With assistance from Amy Lee, Assistant Frago and Director Kerr, a map of Front Beach identifying the activity locations has been put together.

Before reviewing the map, the Administrator reiterated that the eclipse is the event, and the goal of the City was to manage it in the best way possible. The City will manage this event as it does busy Memorial Days and July 4th when the City knows it is going to have a large influx of people; the same is going to happen with the eclipse because IOP will be the last place in the United States to view it. In addition to handling the event from a public safety position, but the City is also trying to provide safe and healthy family activities for people who are here for the eclipse. The Administrator explained that, anytime the City plans for any major event, it develops an Incident Action Plan enveloping all departments that includes the City plan for how to handle the crowds, the placement of public safety personnel, etc. The Building Department, General Government and the Recreation Department will be temporarily closed from just before the event to about 3:00 p.m.; the Administrator also reported that The City is sending out messages requesting that residents watch the eclipse from their own homes or the beach nearest to their homes.

Mr. Sinwald stated that the event is scheduled from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; a DJ will be playing music from the stage on the beach between the *Windjammer* and *Coconut Joe's* beginning at 11:30 a.m. He reported that 95SX is working with the Rec Department promoting the event and educating people to the safety factors to observe during the eclipse; they will have a tent on the beach where they will be broadcasting live. The Exchange Club will be setup to sell water for the event; a sand sculpting demonstration is planned; East Cooper Medical Center will have a first aid tent on the beach and Rec Staff will be selling t-shirts and distributing the special eclipse glasses. In addition, CNN will be broadcasting from the end of the beach access at the public restrooms; kids' activities will be located in the County Park; a vendor selling Italian ice and other frozen delights on the beach; Martian Rock, a company from Pennsylvania, will be setup with a display. Overflow parking for news media and vendors has been coordinated with the Police Department and will be located in the small parking lot behind the Public Safety Building. Channel 2 will also be live from the island with news casts at 11:00 a.m., 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. in addition, they will broadcast the eclipse live from the beach between 2:30 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. The live music from *Plain Jane* will be from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Councilmember Bergwerf said that she has been contacted by two (2) Front Beach businesses that are concerned their employees will be displaced from the small lot in favor of media parking; she suggested that media parking be moved to City Hall to allow space for employee parking in the small lot.

Administrator Tucker reported that media that shows up unexpectedly will have to park in the large lot City or anywhere they can find; media outlets that have notified the City that they will be reporting from the island will be allowed to park in the small lot. Employee parking for Front Beach businesses has been accounted for in the plans. The Administrator also stated that Ocean Boulevard will not be closed and will be available for parking since the City has no activities on Front Beach planned for the event. Staff will be meeting with Front Beach business owners to go over the City's plans for the day and will be available to answer address their concerns.

Councilmember Carroll commented that the City will have traffic problems and express his opinion the law enforcement should focus on keeping traffic flowing.

Voicing confidence that the Police Department knows what it should do, Chair Bettelli said that he did not anticipate a mass exodus like the City has after the July 4th fireworks. The eclipse will continue for several hours after the blackout.

Administrator Tucker acknowledged that people have asked about reversing the lanes on the Connector, but she explained that to reverse the lanes would require coordination with SCDOT and would be problematic at either end where carefully planned coordination for changes in traffic flow would be required. City staff is hoping for a gradual ingress and egress as the Chair stated.

The Administrator reported that the City has coordinated with SCE&G so that the streetlights will not automatically come on in the middle of the eclipse. But, in doing so, citizens in the areas affected may also have a dark night as SCE&G cannot get them back on as easily as flipping a switch.

Answering the Chair, Chief Graham said that one (1) QRV will be stationed on the island for the day, additional fire personnel will be working and the City can call for additional help if needed.

Chief Buckhannon added that the Mount Pleasant Police Department will assist with traffic flow on the other side of the Connector.

6. Highlights of Departmental Reports

Fire Department – Chief Graham

On July 1st, personnel responded to a call assist with Sullivan's Island Fire Department for the water rescue of an individual stuck on a sandbar in Breach Inlet; they also responded to an auto accident on the Connector where one (1) person involved was transported by Charleston County EMS due to complaints of back and neck pain. Over the course of July, personnel responded to two hundred (200) calls, the highest call volume on record; non-residents accounted for one hundred fifty-nine (159) calls; sixty-five (65) calls were EMS calls. Sixteen (16) fire inspections were made in July that detected one hundred twenty-four (124) violations. Career personnel averaged thirty-three (33) hours of training in the month. The costliest expenditures for vehicle maintenance were for the tower truck for replacing the air conditioning condenser, various hoses and fittings and the VOX module for the pump shift. A total of sixty-one (61) station tours were conducted for visitors to the island in July. Personnel picked up the Department's new aluminum

flat bottom boat; since the City took such good care of the boat traded in that the dealer plans to refurbish it for a volunteer fire department. The Chief noted that the new boat very similar to the old boat, but it is wider and longer, making it more stable. At this time, the Fire Department is fully staffed.

Police Department – Chief Buckhannon

On July 2nd, the Department responded to a call about someone firing a handgun toward a crowd of people; the subject was apprehended by the Mount Pleasant Police Department and released him to IOP officers. The subject was charged with disorderly conduct, discharging a firearm in City limits, pointing and discharging a firearm at or into occupied structures after conferring with the Charleston County Solicitor's Office. Over the month, officers issued seventy-three (73) "Property Security Check Notices" and seventeen (17) "You Could Have Been a Victim of a Crime" notices. On July 5th, Officers Molino and Hardy attended Local Heroes Week as part of the Rec Department's summer camp; the spoke to the children, let them see the police vehicle, answered questions and distributed safety information. Communications Specialists answered six thousand five hundred thirty-three (6,522) calls; five thousand seventy-nine (5,079) were for the IOP Police Department. Officers made three hundred ninety-eight (398) traffic stops, an increase over the same period in 2016 of forty-four percent (44%), and they issued eighty-two (82) tickets. The balance of the traffic stops, those who were not issued monetary tickets, were given warning citations which put the drivers in the system; if they are stopped again for the same offense, the officer is made aware that this is a second violation. Officers wrote one hundred seventy-two (172) incident reports in July. Forty-eight (48) arrests were made in the month, sixteen (16) for liquor law violations and thirteen (13) for traffic offenses. Two (2) officers completed their training at the Criminal Justice Academy, and one (1) will finish in August. Fifteen (15) noise complaints were made in July; three (3) received citations, four (4) received warnings and eight (8) were determined to be unfounded.

Chair Bettelli commended both Chiefs for the success of the Family Night Out event; he noted that he saw employees from every department in the City and that everyone had a good time.

Councilmember Carroll reported that, when he walks, he sees many vehicles parked on the sidewalks, and he suggested that the Police Department reach out to the rental agencies and other vacation rental groups asking that they remind their tenants to keep the sidewalks open.

Chief Buckhannon stated that the Department works closely with the rental agencies and would remind them of the problem; he also noted that officers do respond to those complaints.

7. Miscellaneous Business

Next Meeting Date: 2:00 p.m., Monday, September 11, 2017 in the Conference Room

8. Executive Session – not needed

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:15 p.m.; Councilmember Carroll seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk