

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Isle of Palms, South Carolina

February 13, 2007

A regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 13, 2007 in Council Chambers, City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Present were Committee Member Mayor Sottile and Councilman Taylor, City Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham and Police Chief Buckhannon.

1. Call to Order and Welcome Councilman Taylor called the meeting to order and stated that members of the press and the public had been duly notified in accordance with State Law. He noted Chairman Marino was absent due to a family emergency; however, the Committee had a quorum.

2. Approval of Minutes: January 8, 2007 meeting

MOTION: Mayor Sottile made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 8, 2007 Public Safety meeting, as presented; seconded by Councilman Taylor; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

3. Citizen Comments

Jeff Jacobs, 606 Ocean Boulevard - Mr. Jacobs reviewed comments he expressed at a previous City meeting regarding percentages of tickets and enforcement of ordinances. He noted that at the Public Safety Committee meetings he has attended, Chief Buckhannon has reported on traffic stops, noting that the City averaged approximately 300 stops/month and 100 tickets/month. Mr. Jacobs commented that Chief Buckhannon indicated to him that approximately eighty to eighty-five (80-85%) of these tickets are drug and alcohol related incidents, where there is no discretion for ticketing. Consequently, Mr. Jacobs asserted that the City issues citations for approximately fifteen (15) out of three hundred (300) or one (1) out of twenty (20%) or five percent (5%) of the traffic stops. He noted that in order to be stopped, a police officer has to have seen a violation or infraction.

Mr. Jacobs articulated the point that when someone is hired for a job, whether a police officer, City Administrator or any other position, there is a level of expectation provided to the employee, either from an employee manual or a supervisor. He expressed a desire to see direction given to employees to "ratchet up" the enforcement effort. Mr. Jacobs noted there are various opinion groups on the issue of short term rentals, but observed that all sides call for increased enforcement of current laws. He expressed his strong support for increasing enforcement of current ordinances.

Mayor Sottile suggested consideration of the ALS Race request at this time, as representatives from the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) were waiting to speak on the matter.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile made a motion to suspend the rules and consider New Business, Item A (i), (ii) and (iii) at this time; seconded by Councilman Taylor; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

6. New Business

A. Consideration of three (3) upcoming events:

i. National Kite Flying Month Event, Air Company (Saturday, April 28, 2007)

Administrator Tucker noted that there is not anyone at the meeting representing this event; however, she observed that this event has been held on the island for the past two years. She noted the event does not tax City resources and was essentially a group of people flying kites in the Breach Inlet area.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile made a motion to approve the National Kite Flying Month Event, Air Company (Saturday, April 28, 2007); seconded by Councilman Taylor; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

ii. ALS Beach Race (Saturday, June 2, 2007)

Emily Devine identified herself as a second year physical therapy student at MUSC, serving as volunteer co-chair for the ALS charity 5K Beach Race. She indicated she was seeking approval for the event date for this seventh annual race on Isle of Palms. Thereafter, she briefly explained ALS, a progressive neuro-degenerative disease for which there is no cure. As far as resources requested, she explained that last year's race included fire support where fire personnel were able to carry race honorees to the beach to participate in the race. She noted this was the first time the race honorees were able to participate in the race, bringing the biggest response from participants and spectators. She expressed hope for similar fire personnel assistance this year. She noted that additional needs would include stand-by fire/EMS assistance and police assistance in directing traffic. She clarified that the race registration would begin at 5:00 p.m. with a race start at 6:00 p.m. She then reviewed the race route and parking requirements and clarified that the tide charts have been consulted. Ms. Devine noted she continues to seek local race honorees.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile made a motion to approve the ALS Beach Race (Saturday, June 2, 2007); seconded by Councilman Taylor; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

Administrator Tucker clarified that the Piccolo Spoleto Goes to the Beach Event would be held the same day at the Recreation Center, but should be drawing to a close by the time of the ALS race. Chief Graham commented that this event was the most uplifting she has attended and supported.

iii. Alhambra Event at Windjammer (Saturday, April 14, 2007)

Administrator Tucker commented that she has not had any communication with the MUSC representative seeking support of this event, Mr. Kevin Smuniewski; however, she submitted that this event appeared to be pretty significant. She noted that, according to correspondence she has received, the event committee has been contemplating three (3) bands at the Windjammer, with event spillover onto the beach. She reported that she and Chief Buckhannon have discussed this event and expressed concern with existing noise complaints for this area and what impact this large event would have on the neighbors. She further submitted that the City needs to contemplate putting a cap on events at some point.

Thereafter the Committee reviewed the proposed activities for this request:

Three (3) bands playing on an outdoor Windjammer stage; party games and activities, to include volleyball on the beach and Windjammer site; pick-up beach games (bocce, half-rubber, football, Frisbee, etc); inflatables; and tents.

Administrator Tucker and Chief Buckhannon clarified that Mr. Smuniewski has contacted The Windjammer but has not spoken with either of them. Mayor Sottile asked whom this event would benefit and Administrator Tucker responded she was not clear whether this would be a charity event or not. Mayor Sottile noted that the City has turned away special events in 2006 and submitted that the proposed event would not be suitable for Isle of Palms.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile made a motion to disapprove the request for the Alhambra Event at the Windjammer (April 14, 2007); seconded by Councilman Taylor.

Discussion:

Councilman Taylor noted that the City already planned a Front Beach celebration for May 5, 2007, only two (2) weeks after this requested event. Administrator Tucker noted that there was nothing to preclude this group from having an event inside The Windjammer; however, the current request calls for significant event spillover onto the beach.

Call for the question: MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

Thereafter the Committee returned to the published agenda.

4. Highlights of Department Reports

A. Fire Department Monthly Report. Fire Chief Graham gave a brief summary of the January 2007 report (**Exhibit A**) and noted she was available to answer questions. Chief Graham noted the department has already responded to its first water related call of 2007.

B. Police Department Monthly Report. Police Chief Buckhannon gave a brief summary of the January 2007 report (**Exhibit B**) and noted he was available to answer questions.

5. Old Business.

A. Island-wide parking study – RFP

Administrator Tucker reported that Chief Buckhannon and she have developed a draft RFP, which has been shared with the Committee previously. Since the last Public Safety Committee meeting, consideration of a possible future parking garage has been added to the RFP, including the evaluation of off-setting revenue requirements. Administrator Tucker expressed concern with mixing an on-street parking study with a parking study including a parking garage, noting the primary purpose for the endeavor was to address on-street parking issues. She expressed concern that consultant candidates might focus more on the parking garage element rather than on-street parking. She suggested the City separate the issues into two studies.

Chief Buckhannon echoed Administrator Tucker’s sentiments on the parking garage component and submitted that the expense for the parking garage study component would significantly increase the parking study, noting the need to include the economic component for the garage.

Councilman Taylor submitted that the findings from an on-street parking study, if completed as a separate work product, would still serve as a valuable frame of reference for a future parking garage study.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile made a motion to confine the scope of the parking study to only an evaluation of off-street parking, removing the consideration for a parking garage from the RFP scope of work; seconded by Councilman Taylor; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

B. Public Safety Complex - Review

The Committee discussed the Public Safety Complex and site selections. Administrator Tucker reported that she continues to work to receive a response from the U.S. Postal Service regarding the availability of the residual post office property on Palm Boulevard, for which the post office has a long-term lease. She reported that the Post Office has issued an RFP for an appraisal of the site, which is a positive sign. She indicated that Post Office representatives anticipate making a decision on the site appraiser in the near future. The Committee expressed the need to continue working toward an eventual resolution to this site selection, expressing hope that the City would have an answer in the near future.

C. Fire Stations:

i. Station 2 Construction Update

The Committee discussed the construction schedule for Fire Station 2. Administrator Tucker noted that weather has caused the construction crew to become slightly behind

schedule but was assured by contractors that the project would be back on schedule by spring.

ii. Fire Station modular glass window film

The Committee continued discussion regarding the installation of glass window film on the Fire Station modular units, to provide added safety measure. The Committee discussed the cost for a vendor to perform the film installation work and the Committee deciding to have staff install the film to save expense.

D. Update wireless and emergency call boxes.

Chief Buckhannon reported that the emergency call boxes have been ordered and are expected to be in place on the Front Beach prior to the start of the City's tourist season. Chief Buckhannon and Administrator Tucker reported a Walterboro Company, WICarolina, has provided the City with information on their initiatives to implement wireless access to municipalities within the Charleston region. Chief Buckhannon noted that the options provided by WICarolina are being studied along with previous recommendations made by other companies.

E. Public Safety Outpost – Status

Administrator Tucker briefed the Committee on dialogue she had with the Office of Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) regarding the expansion of the City's Front Beach public restroom facility into a Public Safety Outpost. She detailed the requirements in altering in any dunes to accommodate the outpost. The Committee discussed the need to include budgetary estimates for the improvements, expressing hope that the Public Safety Outpost would be operational by summer 2008 season.

F. Summer Season 2007 Preparedness:

i. Additional emergency accesses to beach and temporary fencing.

(THIS IS WHERE THE TAPE PICKED UP).

The Committee discussed the need for additional signage identifying emergency access paths, to warn against parking and/or sunbathing in such a way that the emergency accesses were blocked.

Ninth Avenue Beach Access. Councilman Taylor noted that the Ninth Avenue beach access includes handicap parking and, although narrow, it is probably the best way to reach the Front Beach area for emergency crews. Chief Graham expressed the desire to improve and expand this access. Councilman Taylor noted that the intent with reviewing the beach accesses would be to standardize the paths at fifteen (15ft) feet wide.

Fifth Avenue Beach Access. Chief Graham noted that this access has been busy, with the Fire Department utilizing this access often last year.

Councilman Taylor asked about OCRM coordination on access paths. Administrator Tucker noted that where the City already had paths, OCRM would only need to be notified that the City was performing maintenance. She noted that OCRM would have issues with work on the active beach area. Administrator Tucker suggested that temp trail mats for emergency vehicle access should be colored red, to designate the area for emergency use only. The Committee discussed temp trails further, with Administrator Tucker submitting that she and Chief Graham need to evaluate where the temp trails would need to be placed and gather prices.

MOTION: Councilman Taylor made a motion to approve the following adjustments to City beach access paths:

(1) FORTY-SECOND AVENUE (60 foot right-of-way): approve an additional emergency beach access path with a minimum fifteen (15 ft) foot emergency vehicle drive space; consideration for walk path improvement to accommodate handicap visitors with incorporation of handicap parking spaces if a handicap ramp were realized;

(2) TWENTY-FIFTH AVENUE (44 foot right-of-way): widen beach access path to maintain a minimum fifteen (15 ft) foot emergency vehicle drive space; maintain a separate walk path; eliminate golf cart parking at the beach end of the access path and consider creating golf cart parking space at the landward end of the access path;

(3) NINTH AVENUE (60 foot right-of-way): widen beach access path to maintain a minimum fifteen (15 ft) foot emergency vehicle drive space and maintain or improve a handicap path;

(4) THIRTY-A (30A) AVENUE (10 foot right-of-way): explore feasibility of creating an additional vehicular emergency access path.

(5) Maintenance of the existing emergency access paths: Fifty-third Avenue (60 foot right-of-way), Charleston County Park (no City right-of-way), Property Owners' path (no known City right-of-way) in Wild Dunes and Fifth Avenue (40 foot right-of-way).

All beach access paths would incorporate upgraded temp trails identified for emergency use only and additional signage installed as needed, prior the summer 2007 tourist season.

MOTION SECONDED BY MAYOR SOTTILE; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

ii. Livability Call activity by districts

Administrator Tucker referenced an extract of 2006 Livability Calls received by the City Police Department (**Exhibit C**). She emphasized that the calls the City has extracted by district are only the calls that would be considered livability/nuisance issues: noise, parking, fireworks, etc. She noted that the calls are set out by district/tract/zone, used

interchangeably by police personnel. She further noted that the description of each district/tract/zone is included.

Chief Buckhannon noted that there are ten (10) zones throughout the island, but not included are zones nine (9), the Isle of Palms Connector, and zone ninety-nine (99), which is off-island activity. Chief Buckhannon noted that total calls for 2006 was approximately 40,000 with 4,088 of which were Livability calls. He further noted that Forest Trail is a tract or zone by itself (zone 6), the area from Waterway Boulevard to Forty-first Avenue. He also noted that in zone eight (8), Wild Dunes, the City might not receive all calls because the Wild Dunes security guards might handle some issues.

Administrator Tucker noted that zone six (6), Forest Trail, is geographically the smallest residential tract on the island. Chief Buckhannon reported that the department has identified noise, parking, fireworks and alcohol violations as the predominant calls listed on Exhibit C.

Parking: Chief Buckhannon noted fifty-five (55%) percent of the parking complaints received occurred between Fourteenth Avenue and Breach Inlet, not including meter violations. He noted eighty-one (81%) percent of the parking complaints were between Thirty-first Avenue and Breach Inlet

Noise: Chief Buckhannon reported the City received two hundred forty-five (245) noise complaints in 2006 of which one hundred sixty-eight (168) occurred between Breach Inlet and Thirty-first Avenue.

Fireworks: Chief Buckhannon noted there were a total of ninety-one (91) complaints for 2006, with forty-eight (48%) percent or forty-four (44) of the calls occurring between Fourteenth Avenue and Breach Inlet. Fifty nine (59) violations occurred from Thirty-first Avenue to Breach Inlet.

Alcohol violations. Chief Buckhannon noted that the City had two hundred twenty-seven (227) alcohol violations, of which sixty-six (66%) percent occurred between Fourteenth Avenue and Breach Inlet, most near the Front Beach area. He noted that there were one hundred seventy-three (173) violations from Twenty-first Avenue to Breach Inlet, with two-third the complaints occurring within the Twenty-first Avenue block area.

Councilman Taylor asked for the difference between a parking violation with ticket and parking violation designation. Chief Buckhannon noted that in zone 1 there were nine hundred fifty-three (953) violations, of which three hundred twenty (320) violations resulted in parking tickets being issued. He noted that some of the situations resulted in multiple tickets. He also noted that approximately one-third (1/3) of the traffic violation tickets are actually multiple tickets for one (1) stop. Councilman Taylor noted that parking violations represent a significant number of tickets on the island.

Mayor Sottile discussed the role of the Livability officer with regard to these calls. Chief Buckhannon submitted that front line officers would handle most of these calls and tickets and the Livability Officer's function would be to follow up on some of these and other issues.

Administrator Tucker noted that the document was titled Livability Calls in order to ensure a reader would understand these calls did not reflect all City violations. Councilman Taylor suggested the term Livability refers to activity that would affect the quality of life of residential citizens.

Councilman Taylor asked for an example of a City Ordinance violation and Chief Buckhannon clarified this could be instances of littering, business license or alarm violation and/or noise emitting from a motorized vehicle (such as loud car stereo music).

Councilman Taylor commented on the propensity of parking violations along Ocean Boulevard and the Breach Inlet area. He thanked City staff for its efforts in compiling this data. Administrator Tucker expressed her surprise at the impact from Breach Inlet to the Front Beach area, showing a stronger trend for a beach visitor to be in this part of the island than some might have anticipated. Councilman Taylor directed staff to distribute the call information to all members of City Council.

6. New Business.

B. Review of Capital Budget for FY2007-2008

Police Department

Police Chief Buckhannon reviewed the Police Department proposed capital budget (attached). Highlights include:

800 Mhz radio reserves as part of the Charleston County radio replacement program

Chief Buckhannon noted that the island would have compatible radios and walkie-talkies with Charleston County.

Replace four wheel drive vehicles

Chief Buckhannon noted that the proposed replacements are part of the regular replacement cycle. Mayor Sottile asked about the Dodge Durango vehicles and their performance. Chief Buckhannon noted that the Dodge Durango is listed on the state contract list, which is the reason for purchasing this name vehicle. In answer to Mayor Sottile's question regarding performance of the Durango vehicles, Chief Buckhannon noted he has been satisfied with the Durango vehicles over the past three (3) years.

New items:

Digital SLR camera for investigator (\$1,050)

Chief Buckhannon noted this device is more complex than a standard pocket camera.

Software interface between Police Department and Building Department (\$6,000)

Chief Buckhannon reported he has investigated the possibility of interfacing between the City's dispatch and records management program, which would allow the City to distinguish calls occurring at rental units and flag them for the Livability Officer. Administrator Tucker voiced support for such software to aid in record management and data collection. Councilman Taylor suggested that this item might be something Council might wish to accelerate. Administrator Tucker submitted that this data tracking device would help staff better respond to citizens' concerns and questions.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile made a motion to recommend to Ways & Means Committee the expenditure of \$6,000 from the Capital Projects Fund in FY06/07 for the purchase of software that could interface between the Police Department and Building Department; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

Crime call mapping software (\$11,500)

Chief Buckhannon noted there is an interface built into existing Police Department software to which the City does not take advantage. He noted that, with the Livability call research recently completed, staff could overlay calls onto a map system. He noted that the City would have to purchase the following to make this type of research possible: (1) interface with software and (2) Arc-view program.

Chief Buckhannon noted that the City would also be able to post maps, on a monthly basis, on the City website to geographically lay out where activities occur on the island. Councilman Taylor noted the City had all the hardware necessary to analyze data, but the City needed to maximize the functions the current computer could perform. Councilman Taylor asked if this item needed to be fast-tracked in FY06/07. Chief Buckhannon noted that he felt comfortable waiting until the next budget cycle, noting he could train his officers on the software in the fall/off-season.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Graham reviewed the Fire Department proposed capital budget (attached). Highlights include:

Lease payment on vehicles

Radio replacement schedule - \$97,473

Chief Graham noted that she and Chief Buckhannon have discussed the merits of beginning radio replacements now, in order to take advantage of promotional discounts offered by the Motorola vendor. Councilman Taylor acknowledged a desire for the City to develop a plan for radio replacement. The Committee discussed the radio replacement further, but no motion was made on this matter.

Firefighter I and II DVD for mandatory training - \$9,000

Chief Graham noted that the training DVD's would be current for five (5) to ten (10) years. Councilman Taylor clarified that the DVD could be a self-directed training manual whereas currently a training officer would train the employees.

Four (4) AED machines – three (3) replace existing outdated models - \$9,924

Chief Graham noted that these AED machines would replace three (3) models, which are on vehicles.

Stair Chair for moving non-ambulatory people up and down stairs - \$3,000

Chief Graham noted that the proposed model would be the same as the units used by EMS.

GPS Map 32 05C chart plotter and map for marine rescues - \$1,100

Chief Graham noted that this software would assist with marina training and for plotting during water rescue efforts.

Mayor Sottile clarified that the equipment for the Livability Court officer was not in the FY07/08 budget and surmised the expenses would come from the FY06/07 budget. Chief Buckhannon noted that some equipment, such as office furniture, would be recycled, but other expenses would come from the FY06/07 budget.

City Administrator Tucker noted that, between the Livability Officer in the Police Department, and trying to find some assistance in General Government, the City will have to secure off-site storage to make room to accommodate personnel.

C. Review of job description for Police Department.

Administrator Tucker reported that she, Chief Buckhannon and Lieutenant Wright drafted a job description for the new Livability Officer. She noted the Personnel Committee approved this job description last week. She noted this job description was fairly comprehensive, noting that the position would be sergeant level. Mayor Sottile clarified that the Livability sergeant would report directly to the Police Chief through the regular chain of command.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile made a motion to approve the job description for the Livability Sergeant; seconded by Councilman Taylor; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

D. Consideration of two (2) Accommodations Tax Funding Requests:

- i. Additional ATV for Fire Department (\$12,000)**
- ii. Inflatable boat with motor and trailer for Fire Department (\$11,500)**

Administrator Tucker noted that Chief Graham wanted to present these applications to the State Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee, which meets tomorrow morning. She noted that Chief Graham seeks to purchase the items in time for the beginning of the

tourist season this spring. Chief Graham reviewed the applications, noting that eighty-four (84%) percent of the beach and water related calls have been tourist related and sixteen (16%) percent of the emergency calls have been for residents.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile made a motion to approve the following State Accommodations Tax Funding requests, pending Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee's approval: Additional ATV for \$12,000 and Inflatable boat with motor and trailer for \$11,500, for the Fire Department; seconded by Councilman Taylor.

Discussion:

Councilman Taylor expressed support in the direction the public safety departments are going to prepare for increasing tourist activity.

Call for the question: MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

7. Miscellaneous.

Set Date for Next Meeting

The Committee decided to defer setting next month's meeting until Chairman Marino could be consulted.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dee Taylor, Chairman pro tem