

Public Safety Committee
5:30 p.m., Thursday, June 14, 2007
Council Chambers, City Hall
1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 14, 2007 in Council Chambers, City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Present were Committee Chairman Marino, Committee Members Mayor Sottile and Councilman Taylor, Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham, Police Chief Buckhannon and City Clerk Copeland.

1. Call to Order. Chairman Marino called the meeting to order and stated that members of the press and the public had been duly notified in accordance with State and Federal law.

2. Approval of Prior Meetings' Minutes – May 9, 2007 and May 11, 2007.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved for the approval of the minutes from the meetings of May 9, 2007 and May 11, 2007 as presented; Chairman Marino seconded; the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments:

A. Kyle Murrell of S&ME – Administrator Tucker informed the Committee that Mr. Murrell came before the Committee to explain an error in the calculations for their bid for inspections at Fire Station #2. The bid, which was submitted and accepted, was for \$14,512; when added correctly, the bid would have been for \$20,212, which is a difference of \$5,700. The second lowest bid for the same work was \$18,660; clearly, S&ME would not have been awarded the contract with the correct numbers. The Committee was asked (1) honor the bid as accepted, (2) pay the \$5,700 difference or (3) pay the difference up to the next lowest bid and the corrected S&ME bid, or \$1,552. Mayor Sottile stated that the contract should be honored as bid. Mr. Murrell stated that \$5,700 was a large sum “to eat;” he added that their services were only provided upon request and that there were no excess trips. There was full agreement among the Committee members that the City would not be held accountable for the contractor’s mistake. Since there was no change to the contract, there was no need for a motion.

B. Cole+Russell Architects –Chairman Marino informed the Committee that the Cole+Russell representatives had experienced problems with their flights and were detained. He asked that this presentation be moved to the end of the agenda.

4. Old Business:

A. Fire Station 2 Construction Update

Chief Graham offered a picture of the progress on Fire Station #2 construction, which was taken two (2) weeks ago as preparation was being made to pour the third floor. This week the workers

are completing the “peel and stick” and the trim, as well as the flashing for the exterior trim. The trusses are being built and should be complete in a week. In the next 2½ weeks they will build, set and treat the trusses. The plumber has completed the “rough-in” of the first and second floors; the electrician is 90% complete with the “rough-in” of the first and second floors. The masons are to have topped out the third floor by Friday; windows and drains are to be placed on Monday. The roof should be closed in within the next couple of weeks. Chief Graham reported that the project is on schedule.

Councilman Taylor stated that the Committee needs to be prepared to replace S&ME should they decide not to complete the contract. Mayor Sottile asked if the move-in date was still the end of September; Chief Graham said she had been told September or October, with September the target.

B. Livability Officer Update

Chief Buckhannon reported that the second round of interviews had been completed and the candidates had been narrowed to two. One candidate is available to start now while the other will not be available until the end of July.

Mayor Sottile remarked that the Livability Court is not handling the short-term rental issues that were anticipated, but instead is dealing with underage drinking, contractors without business licenses, and alcohol on the beach. On the subject of loud noise complaints, Chief Buckhannon said the officers may handle 3-4 per week from rental units. Administrator Tucker stated that often the officers are enforcing the noise ordinance and are mitigating issues before they reach the point of a ticket being issued.

Councilman Taylor asked if the primary candidate for Livability officer was a currently accredited police officer or would the person have to go to training. Since he is an out-of-state officer, Chief Buckhannon said he would have to go to training to become accredited in South Carolina. He will be able to go on the street immediately with training taking place here; he will only be away when he goes to Columbia for testing.

Councilman Taylor was also interested in how things were going on the hotline. Chief Buckhannon stated that currently the hotline rings through the dispatch since the Livability officer has not been hired. Once the officer is hired, the calls will go to him. The calls range from noise to garbage cans to too many cars at a house, etc. Before a ticket is written on “too many cars at a home,” the determination is made about when the rental contract was signed. If the date is before the ordinance was signed, no ticket is issued. Councilman Taylor complimented Chief Buckhannon on the positive attitude his officers are exhibiting.

Chairman Marino asked how hotline calls will be handled in the off-hours. Chief Buckhannon responded that the calls will go to dispatch.

C. Commercial Vehicle Parking Ordinance – Revised

Administrator Tucker reviewed the changes that have been made to Ordinance 2007-11 addressing commercial vehicles parked in residential neighborhoods since first reading May 22, 2007. The revisions address the issues which arose at first reading, such as buses at the Recreation Center, the Citadel Beach House or the Lutheran Retreat Center; they are as follows:

- The insertion of “on property containing at least one-half (½) acre of land; and
- The insertion of “which is owned and operated by a governmental agency or charitable organization.”

Administrator Tucker informed the Committee that the Planning Commission had debated the ordinance at some length the previous evening; their conclusion was that they would rather see a bus in a residential neighborhood than 15-20 cars. Therefore, there will be a recommendation reflecting that made at the Public Hearing next week. Administrator Tucker noted that she did not know if the Planning Commission had discussed the facts that often these buses sit running for a long period of time making a loud noise and emitting diesel fumes or that the limits set for the number of cars parked at short-term rental should handle the problem.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved for the Public Safety Committee to refer Ordinance 2007-11, as revised, to City Council for adoption; Chairman Marino seconded; the motion PASSED ON A VOTE OF 2-1 WITH COUNCILMAN TAYLOR CASTING THE NEGATIVE VOTE.

D. Results of Charleston Boulevard Speed Study

Chief Buckhannon stated that this study had come as result of a specific complaint; he had placed the speed device in front of this person’s house. He reported that, in a ten (10) day period, 2,500 cars had traveled down Charleston Boulevard; of that 2,500, some 70% were coming from the direction of Palm Boulevard. He also noted that less than 1% were traveling at a speed between 30 mph and 35 mph. One thing he discovered in the course of the study was that some speed limit signs were missing; he added that, in the absence of signage, the speed on a residential street is 30 mph. Chief Buckhannon informed the Committee that he had forwarded the study results to the complainant and told her that officers would be patrolling the area looking for speeders. Councilman Taylor complimented Chief Buckhannon on his professionalism in this matter.

E. 25th Avenue and Waterway Boulevard Parking

Administrator Tucker related that this is a difficult issue in that the residents there feel threatened and would prefer that this off-loading not occur at all, but, in the end, there is not a lot that the City can do for them. Chief Buckhannon distributed pictures showing the area from Mr. Johnson’s driveway toward the waterway, as well as the opposite direction, and what has

been done. The Chief's vehicle, in picture 15, is approximately where the "no parking" ends on the right side of the street; there is no prohibition on parking beyond that point to the end of the street. On the other side of the street, there is not enough road edge on which to park because there is a ditch. To place a "no parking" sign at Mr. Mitchell's home (next to Mr. Johnson) requires DOT approval, but Mr. Mitchell understands the issues. The lady who lives at the end of the street does not want parking prohibited because she has persons who visit her who do park along the street.

There have been additional "no parking" signs placed at the end of the street as depicted in picture #2. There was an attempt to place an additional barricade, but the Isle of Palms does not have the equipment to get through the roadbed, which is made up of oyster shells; a request has been made to the highway department to put in additional barricades.

None of this will solve the problem of the boats being anchored there. Chief Buckhannon did tell the owner of the bulkhead that, if he were to place a "no trespassing" sign there, it would stop people from tying up the bulkhead. If someone were to tie up to it and if he were to report it, the people could be charged. But the person who owns the bulkhead does not want anyone anchoring or coming and going from the end of 25th Avenue. DNR has said that nothing can be done in that respect. Chief Buckhannon said that DOT has been asked to look at the situation to see if they can come up with solution(s) that might satisfy the complaints being received from there. If the additional barricade is placed to the right of the existing one, it should prevent people from launching their boats. Chief Buckhannon added that, if the City were to take over the street, he does not believe that the City could stop boats from docking there; the City could only address the parking problems.

Chairman Marino asked if DNR or the Corps of Engineers could offer any way to prevent people from loading and unloading there; again Chief Buckhannon again responded in the negative. As for loading and unloading from the street, that is a situation for DOT; to some extent the enforcement of the "no parking" is stopping it.

Chairman Marino explained to Councilman Taylor that the crux of the issue is that some of the residents believe that there are residents of Goat Island who are using this as their access to their home on Goat Island rather than pay slip rent or boat ramp fees. There are also people who walk through their yards, strangers walking up and down the street late at night, even a barge has pulled up to load and unload furniture. These residents have small children, so they are alarmed by what is happening.

According to Administrator Tucker, these residents are calling the police when the incidents occur and the police are responding. Possibly the persons docking will get uncomfortable with the police appearing every time they are there and stop coming to that location. Mayor Sottile stated that the people from Goat Island have been doing this for years; if they feel harassed, they simply move down a few blocks to another spot.

5. New Business:

A. Beach Traffic Concern

Administrator Tucker added this to the agenda based on a letter from Charlie Way concerning a departure from the island on Memorial Day weekend during the time when there were multiple accidents on the Connector, as well as an accident on the Ben Sawyer Bridge. His complaint was that he did not see a police officer; Administrator Tucker reported that the officers were working the accidents or their assigned calls at the other end of the island. Chief Buckhannon has studied the situation and has some ways to better manage the traffic; his research did show that the volume of traffic was no different from prior years. The difference between Memorial Day last year and Memorial Day this year were the accidents on the Connector that impeded the traffic flow. Compounded by the accident on the Ben Sawyer, the Sullivan's Island traffic was flowing through the Isle of Palms.

Chief Buckhannon reported that he has met with the Town of Mount Pleasant to discuss the timing of the lights. It is their feeling that to change the timing of the lights will cause problems with backing up Highway 17, Hungry Neck Boulevard and Rifle Range Road.

Chief Buckhannon has also contacted the Highway Patrol who will contact the district engineers to see if they can come up with other solutions with lights.

Mayor Sottile feels that, on holiday weekends, the island needs cooperation from the other outside agencies, i.e. Charleston County or Highway Patrol, for manpower. Chairman Marino made an analogy between a Saturday or Sunday at the beach and the attendance at one of the professional golf tournaments held recently – both are an event attracting hundreds, if not thousands, of people. The difference is that these other events are well publicized and, therefore, seem to have no apparent problem getting the needed traffic control officers. The missing link is that there are very probably more people at the beach at the Isle of Palms on a Saturday or Sunday, not to mention holidays, in the summer than there were golfing enthusiasts watching the tournaments.

Chief Buckhannon responded that he had contacted both Charleston County and the state Highway Patrol, and he does get assistance from Charleston County on July 4th. He related that he usually gets a “lukewarm” response from these agencies when he asks for routine help. One reason he thinks this is the case is that each of these agencies is tied up with problems of its own; he also related that the Highway Department has always been under staffed in this area of the state primarily because the local departments do much of their work.

Chief Buckhannon informed the Committee members that Folly Beach, for instance, hires off duty officers to assist, and this is an option open to the Isle of Palms. Since July 4, 2007 falls on

a Wednesday, Chief Buckhannon was confident that the traffic could be controlled by his staff along with those assigned from Charleston County.

As for traffic monitoring on the other side of the Connector, Chief Buckhannon reminded the Committee that it would require agreement from Mount Pleasant. As for manpower, he believes that no less than five (5) officers would be needed to cover the intersection at Highway 17 and the two between it and the bridge.

Mayor Sottile reflected on the facts that the Charleston County Sheriff and the Mount Pleasant Police Chief live here and suggested that there be a meeting with them to see how things could be worked out to resolve these traffic issues.

B. Roll Out Cart Ordinance

Councilwoman Hanbury had offered written comments to both the Public Works and Public Safety Committees to look at the enforcement issues surrounding the section of the ordinance which states that the roll out carts are not to be visible from the street. Mayor Sottile commented that, although the Public Works Committee had chosen to take no action on the subject, he had spoken with the Committee chairman about their discussions. Mayor Sottile reported that he had been told that the Public Works Committee had decided that they wanted to wait until the Livability Officer was hired since this matter would come under his purview; they were also interested in his input on the issue. Mayor Sottile was firm in his position that any action on roll out carts should be initiated in the Public Works Committee.

Since the short-term rental provisions were enacted, the police have been enforcing the portions of the ordinance that speak to carts being put on the street too far in advance of pickup, carts being left out long after pickup and not having enough carts according to Administrator Tucker. She understood that a concern was that there are homes where it is impossible to keep the carts from being visible from the street.

Councilman Taylor stated that he has such a home and that he has never been in agreement with that section of the ordinance. He also commented on the contradiction that exists when someone can be ticketed for putting the cart out too early or leaving it too long, but a ticket is not issued when the cart is visible from the street.

6. Highlights of Department Reports

A. Fire Department May 2007 Report – Chief Graham

Chief Graham reviewed the highlights of the monthly report (**Exhibit E**) and was available for questions from the Committee. Mayor Sottile questioned that eight (8) rear tires had been replaced at Tower 1 since it is not used a great deal and it is only a couple

of years old; Chief Graham responded that the tires must be replaced about every eighteen (18) months. Mayor Sottile thanked Chief Graham for the manner in which her crew had reacted when he needed assistance recently in getting his mother-in-law to the hospital.

Councilman Taylor thanked Chief Graham for the hard work she and her team have done on the 42nd Avenue Emergency Access Path; he reported that he has heard many good comments from his neighbors as well as visitors to the island.

He related that he had encountered Mr. and Mrs. Williams (she is confined to a wheelchair) as they returned from the beach and both were smiling; they again expressed their thanks the City for making this a handicapped accessible path.

B. Police Department May 2007 Report – Chief Buckhannon

Chief Buckhannon reviewed the highlights of the monthly report (**Exhibit F**) and was available for questions from the Committee. The Chief pointed out that, of the 112 arrests made during the month of May, approximately two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) were for alcohol violations, including a DUI in a golf cart. As of the end of last week, Chief Buckhannon reported that all of the City's officers have re-qualified in firearms as part of the bi-annual qualification cycle.

Chairman Marino thanked the Chief for the new kite boarding/surfing signs and for getting them placed right away.

Mayor Sottile stated that the striping on the bridge has been removed in the middle of the road as one approaches the island. The Mayor also stated his concerns over the golf cart violations he is seeing, primarily regarding underage drivers; he asked that the police begin to take particular notice of these vehicles. Chief Buckhannon assured the Mayor that the carts are being stopped and tickets are being written.

3.B. Cole+Russell Architects – Public Safety Complex

Mark Shoemaker and David Ross arrived about 7 p.m. after an arduous day of travel to update the Committee on the requested revisions to the design of the Public Safety Complex. Mr. Shoemaker stated that, based on the directions they had been given, they had taken the L-shaped building from the February study and moved it as far as possible to the north creating a zero lot line. Pursuant to Mr. Shoemaker's recommendation to Administrator Tucker, the Fire and Police Departments were switched creating back-in fire apparatus bays off J.C. Long Boulevard as opposed to drive-thru bays going onto Pavilion. Based on these scenarios, the determination was made to look at the building concept at this time as well. Mr. Shoemaker reported that they had met with

Administrator Tucker, Chiefs Buckhannon and Graham and Building Director Kerr a couple of weeks ago to go over initial concept plans and to confirm program. From that meeting, they refined the concept plan, had a follow-up conference with the same people and have now developed a floor plan, as well as site plan of the complex, which they are presenting this evening. He also has a schedule for moving forward with the project to review later in the meeting.

Mr. Ross gave an overview of the building plan. The Police Department side of the first floor is for secured parking for the police vehicles, an evidence garage, kennel and storage; for the Fire Department there is an apparatus garage, which now faces J.C. Long Boulevard and is a back-in situation for the trucks, as well as support space for the apparatus – very much like Station 2. The main public entrance or central lobby of the building is on the first floor, which will have entry from the street side and the parking lot to the rear. In the middle of the building are common areas to be shared by both departments.

The second floor of the Police Department, on the left side, is aimed at efficiency and correcting the functionality issues that exist with the present configuration. The access to the temporary holding and processing areas are secure and away from the public. From the center, or public, area of the second floor, the space flows first into the administrative offices then into the more secure areas for the Police Department. The shared space on the second floor has a movable partition and can function as a training room or backup EOC or conference room.

The same concept is true of the Fire Department side where the flow is from the public area to the administrative offices. The upper part of the apparatus bay consumes a portion of the Fire Department second floor since it is a two-story space. At the end of the hallway and attaching to the front of the apparatus bay on the first floor is a stairway that doubles as a second exit and training stair with a fire pole.

On the third floor of the Fire Department side of the building are the private living quarters for the firefighters. They include the dorms, showers, kitchen area and night room, plus a weight room with showers in the middle, or shared, space so as to be accessible to both police and fire personnel.

Mr. Shoemaker began the presentation on the site plans; both the 25-foot setback option and the zero lot line option were available for comparison. The parking spaces allowed for uses associated with the Public Safety Complex totaled eighty-one (81); with the 25-foot setback option, the public parking lot is virtually lost. With the zero lot line option, there is an apron long enough (55 feet off the edge of the street) in front of the apparatus bays to pull a ladder truck completely out for routine morning inspections, for instance.

Under the zero lot line option, there are a total of 155 parking spaces. Of that total, 29 spaces are for the Fire Department, 25 for the Police Department and 15 for visitors; the public parking lot is reduced to 86 spaces. Administrator Tucker stated that, when she and Building Director Kerr had measured and drawn off the public parking area, they had determined that there are 160 spaces in the public parking lot now.

The loss of any spaces is a concern for the members of Committee; therefore, there was considerable discussion on exactly how many spaces were going to be needed for departmental uses in the course of the day, as well as how few spaces would be needed for the public. Several suggestions were offered to carve out additional spaces to dedicate to the City's public lots; Mr. Shoemaker and Mr. Ross agreed to fine tune the plan to gain as many spaces as possible for the public lot. Efforts will continue with SCDOT to obtain authorization for street side parking at the front of the building along J.C. Long and Pavilion.

Councilwoman Rice was pleased to be told that the surface of the parking areas for the Complex will be pervious.

With general agreement in the Committee that the zero lot line option was the one that was the most suitable to meet the needs of all involved, Mayor Sottile directed the discussion to the zoning change that is required to make it happen. Building Director Kerr pointed out to the Committee that the zoning restrictions that are in place currently for the commercial districts are preventing it from being developed reasonably. He related that the Planning Commission had hired a consultant – Seamon, Whiteside & Associates - a couple of years ago to study the issue of economic land use and other factors to devise a plan to have a prosperous commercial core on the island. Their conclusion was that the zoning code is too restrictive, and they made a few key recommendations, one of which was to reduce the setbacks. Their position on this issue was that vibrant commercial areas have little in the way of setbacks. Planning theory has come full circle in advocating walking cities where the buildings are close to the street, people park their cars and walk about as is seen in downtown Charleston.

Since the GC-1 District is limited to specific areas on the island, Director Kerr stated his opinion that the best move for the City is to amend the GC-1 zoning district to have a zero lot line.

Director Kerr suggested that the City Council tackle the setback issue due to the need to expedite the change so that the civil engineers can site the Public Safety Complex. It was agreed that the amendment could have a first reading in June then in July the question could go before the Planning Commission, and a Public Hearing could be held with a second reading to take place at the regular City Council meeting.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved that the Public Safety Committee recommend to City Council that the GC-1 Zoning District is amended to establish a zero lot line setback; Councilman Taylor seconded; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved that Cole+Russell is named the sole source on the Public Safety Complex; Councilman Taylor seconded.

Councilman Taylor remarked that the members of the Committee and the Cole+Russell personnel are stewards of the residents of the City; therefore, it is important that Cole+Russell's fee structure is consistent with what the City has seen in the past. Chairman Marino added that the needs assessment they have done has given them a unique insight into the City and that they are being allowed to put a mark on the future of this island.

Mr. Shoemaker responded that the relationship between Cole+Russell and the City of Isle of Palms is one they have nurtured over the past eighteen (18) months and one that they value highly.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved that the Public Safety Committee recommend to City Council the zero lot line design and the design/bid/build process for the Public Safety Complex; Councilman Taylor seconded.

Councilman Taylor asked that the term "design/bid/build" be defined. Chairman Marino answered that the term means that Cole+Russell will design the facility, they will develop the bid package, and, once the bids are received and a contractor selected, that contractor will work with the City Council and Cole+Russell in the construction process.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Marino asked if there were a way that the complex could be designed so that a third floor could be added to the police side at some time in the future. The response from Mr. Shoemaker was that the building could be designed to accommodate that; the only hesitation he had was related to height restrictions. He stated that it had been a struggle at Fire Station 2 to compact three (3) floors into that height. He added that, over the police side, there is much more infrastructure, like ductwork, since there are more offices; he also expects to use the roof for emergency generators and mechanical equipment due to site restrictions and the parking considerations. If the generators and equipment were forced on top of a third floor, the building would be beyond the height limit. They will look at the design and determine the cost impact.

7. Miscellaneous

4th of July Golf Cart Parade.

A request (Exhibit G) has been received from Tom Murph to hold the 4th of July Golf Cart Parade. Administrator Tucker stated that this is an event that has taken place for several years, and arrangements are being made for both chiefs to be involved. The only concern Administrator Tucker voiced was that last year she had observed general citizens stopping traffic when the parade crossed Palm Boulevard. Chief Buckhannon has promised to have police support at that location this year.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved that the Public Safety Committee approve Mr. Murph's request to hold the July 4th Golf Cart Parade; Councilman Taylor seconded; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Administrator Tucker reminded the Committee that in 2006 a disaster preparedness event had been held with Sullivan's Island, and she has received a call that it falls to the City of Isle of Palms to host in 2007. The event is scheduled for 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on July 26, 2007 at the Recreation Center.

The final item was to review the sketch (Exhibit H) Chief Graham had prepared for parking possibilities at 42nd Avenue. She had photographs showing both sides of the access; she stated that the problem is the area along the fence line. Often when people park they hit the fence, so the residents of Sea Oats, who put up the fence, placed the short posts to prevent that. These posts are actually in the right-of-way and must be removed. The residents of Sea Oats are now claiming to be getting permission to place bushes along the fence to protect it, which means they are getting an encroachment permit from DOT, according to Administrator Tucker. Chief Graham stated that the Sea Oats' residents want absolutely no parking on that side of the road by automobiles at an angle and golf carts or automobiles parked parallel, in that order.

Administrator Tucker stated that the issue is coming before this Committee because, as the City is trying to make this area more useful for emergency access and are looking at doing things there, the members will receive calls and complaints. Chief Graham expressed her goal to do whatever is necessary to get handicapped parking closer to the ramp approved by DOT. Chairman Marino stated that he does not believe the parking needs to be restricted any more than it already is on the island which parallel parking along that fence will do.

It was agreed that no action should be taken at this time.

The issue of the parking study was raised by Mayor Sottile; he thought that this area should be one to be targeted. Chief Buckhannon was not optimistic that he was going to hear from anyone who might be interested in performing this study for the island.

The Committee agreed not to meet in the month of July and no meeting date was set for August at this time. If there is a need, a meeting will be called in July.

Public Safety Committee
June 14, 2007
Page 12 of 12

The meeting was duly adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Marino, Chairman