

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**  
5:30 p.m., Monday, September 8, 2008

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, September 8, 2008 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Chairman Buckhannon, Councilman Bettelli, Mayor Sottile, City Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham, Police Chief Buckhannon, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland.

1. Chairman Buckhannon called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and the public had been duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. **Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes**

**Motion: Mayor Sottile moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 7, 2008 as submitted; Councilman Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. **Citizens' Comments**

Jimmy Ward, 2207 Hartnett, again spoke to the Committee in opposition to the smoke-free workplace ordinance; he stated he anticipated that citizens would not be allowed to speak at the Council Workshop. He remarked that the ordinance that passed first reading was very strict and "filled with contradictory language," for instance, what is a partial wall? He commented that, if the Council must pass a smoke-free workplace ordinance, it must be considerate of the business community.

Mayor Sottile reported that he did not think the Council would have a work session to address this ordinance until some time in mid- to late October. He agreed with Mr. Ward that there were items in the ordinance that needed to be clarified. The Mayor asked the Administrator to send an email to Council about the work session and possible changes Council members would like to make.

4. **Old Business**

**A. Status of Public Safety Building**

Administrator Tucker reported that the meetings and work progress were going along fine despite the fact that the physical work was not visible. The original completion date was May 26, but Mashburn has moved the completion to June 4.

Chief Graham added the following information:

- Foundation and block work should be 50% complete by the middle of next week;
- Underground plumbing work should start this week; and
- Off-site storm drainage work is to begin next week.

Chief Buckhannon announced that the reserved parking for Front Beach employees has been moved from the small lot to the large one.

**B. Update on Golf Cart Parking**

Chairman Buckhannon reported that the changes that have been made to allow for additional golf cart parking appear to be working well. He stated that he thought there were a couple of other locations on the island where golf cart parking could be established and/or improved; he noted that, from 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue up, carts end up being parked in the road way. He was confident that a location could be developed at a beach access between the Commercial District and Breach Inlet.

Councilman Bettelli reported that there has been a collapse at the 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue beach access as a result of the storm; it has been reported to Public Works for an emergency repair.

Another discussion followed about the City's signs at the beach accesses; Mayor Sottile expressed his preference for the European type sign that would show a golf cart with a line through it indicating the carts are prohibited. The Committee agreed to look into them for next season.

**C. Status of SC DOT Demonstration Project at 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Palm**

Administrator Tucker explained that the City had postponed the project last week in anticipation of the storm, but the signs were now up that notify the public of the changes that will go into effect on Friday, September 19. She also noted that there had been a short article in the Wild Dunes Community Association explaining the project.

**D. Abandoned Vehicles**

The Administrator explained to the Committee that this subject was on the Agenda again because the Committee had requested she ask the City Attorney to review the situation once. Attorney Sottile continues to believe that the City does not need any legislation beyond state law; he has offered to meet with Chief Buckhannon, Administrator Tucker and the Livability Officer to discuss how the City can take action under the state code.

**E. Update on Kite Boarding Issues**

Chairman Buckhannon stated that he had asked for this to be on the Agenda to know if Chief Buckhannon had had any additional complaints or if he had noticed any changes at the beach. Chief Buckhannon remarked that the Police Department does not receive many complaints about kite boarders. He remarked that, from 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Breach Inlet, there are signs indicating that kite boarding is prohibited within one hundred (100)

feet of swimmers. The primary issue remains enforcement; Councilman Bettelli recalled sighting dangerous activity by a kite boarder, calling the police – who responded quickly, only to find, upon police arrival, the kite boarder at the other end of the island.

Mayor Sottile noted that the kite boarders prefer Breach Inlet, so he offered as a possible future solution designating the area between First and Third Avenues for kite boarding. That area is already posted as a non-swimming area.

**5. New Business**

**A. Consideration of Award of Contracts in Excess of \$10,000 – None**

**B. Parking on Palm and Ocean Boulevards**

Administrator Tucker explained that the Mayor, some members of the Committee, Chief Buckhannon and she have received e-mails related to parking on both Ocean and Palm Boulevards and different issues related to parking. One e-mail commented on the fact that there is very little room for emergency vehicles to get down Palm Boulevard on heavy beach days because there are vehicles parked on both sides of the street. There was also a suggestion to ban all right-of-way parking on both Ocean and Palm Boulevards, and another wanted parking opened up on Ocean Boulevard where it is not allowed.

Mayor Sottile suggested that the general public does not understand the parking issues along Ocean Boulevard; he stated that from 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue down to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue is state road. After Hurricane Hugo, SC DOT posted No PARKING on the ocean side because vehicles were getting stuck in the soft shoulders as a result of damage to the roadbed caused by the storm. Mayor Sottile iterated that he thought the area from Third Avenue through the cul-de-sac is a private road; the developer put up the signage in that area that prohibits parking on both sides of the road. Councilman Bettelli proposed that the developer put up signs indicating that it was a private road to make the public aware.

Moving to a new subject, Mayor Sottile commented on the fact that there has been a change in state law that gives a bicycle highway rights equal to those of a vehicle. He noted that the area between 21<sup>st</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenues has always been congested with vehicles; with the addition of bicycles, it is now more dangerous. He suggested that the City explore adding bicycle lanes to both sides of the roadbed thereby taking the bicycles out of the road.

**MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved for the City Administrator to send a letter to SC DOT asking them to explore the installation of bicycles lanes from 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue to 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue; Councilman Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **6. Highlights of Departmental Reports**

### **A. Fire Department – Chief Graham**

In reviewing the highlights of August in the Fire Department, Chief Graham reported that there had been an abundance of calls for water/medical assists; there had been one hundred fourteen (114) jellyfish stings reported. There were six (6) fire inspections performed during the month that resulted in forty-seven (47) violations. Chief Graham announced the promotion of Engineer Roger Eagle to Lieutenant pursuant to the successful completion of written, practical and oral testing. The Chief also stated that the IOP Fire Department participates with the Charleston County Training Officers Association; in that capacity, the IOP Fire Department hosted fire personnel from Sullivan's Island, Mount Pleasant, Awendaw and St. John's for water rescue training.

### **B. Police Department – Chief Buckhannon**

Chief Buckhannon recounted that there had been several unusual calls in August, and he described a couple of them for the Committee. He noted that again in August, the majority of arrests were for traffic and alcohol offenses. Sgt. Jimmy Ryan was asked to play the bagpipes at the memorial service for the Walterboro deputy who was killed in the line of duty. With the tourist season winding down, training for officers will ramping up again. There were fourteen (14) livability violations in August; eleven (11) were noise related and three (3) were garbage can violations. Chief Buckhannon explained that there was no traffic report because his computer had crashed; the data will be provided at a later date.

## **7. Miscellaneous**

Mayor Sottile informed the Committee of a memo he received from Terri Seckinger explaining that there are five (5) vehicles regularly parked at her home, but there is actually not enough space for the five (5) to park. She continued that one (1) vehicle was parked on the road in front of the home one evening with the wheels on the road; they awoke the next morning to find a ticket on the vehicle. The Mayor stated that he had explained the law to Mrs. Seckinger. He asked Chief Buckhannon what the procedures were in a situation like this and the vehicle is noticed in the wee hours of the night. Chief Buckhannon stated that discretion is preached to the police officers. He added that, when vehicles are seen with parked on the road in residential neighborhoods, the officers are taught to knock on the door to try to make contact at the home despite the time. Time is not an issue because the road must be clear for emergency vehicles because medical emergencies and fires do not go by the clock. If the officer does not get any response, he/she will write the ticket.

Administrator Tucker expressed her appreciation to both Chiefs for their work long hours during the threat from Tropical Storm Hanna; she assured the Committee that the City was in good hands when it comes to Disaster Preparedness. She also informed the Committee that the Fire Prevention Parade will be on Wednesday, October 8.

Mayor Sottile joined the Administrator in expressing his thanks to the Chiefs and to the Administrator. Councilman Bettelli added that the efforts do not end with the storm, but continue after, and Administrator Tucker, Chief Graham and Chief Buckhannon were on the job first thing the next morning determining what had occurred and what needed to be done. Chairman Buckhannon remarked that he had seen the City departments work very well together in a way that they have not in many years.

Next Meeting Date: 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 7, 2008

**MOTION: Chairman Buckhannon moved to go into Executive Session at 6:32 p.m. to discuss personnel matters; Councilman Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Safety Committee resumed regular session at 6:30 p.m.; Chairman Buckhannon announced that there had been no action or any votes taken in the Executive Session.

**MOTION: Councilman Bettelli moved to adjourn at 6:40 p.m.; Mayor Sottile seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland  
City Clerk