

**SPECIAL MEETING
OF
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**
5:30 p.m., Thursday, June 5, 2008

The Public Safety Committee held a Special Meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 5, 2008 in the Building Department's Conference Room, 1301 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Chairman Bettelli, Mayor Sottile, Councilman Buckhannon, Fire Chief Graham, Police Chief Buckhannon, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland.

1. Chairman Bettelli 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. Chairman Bettelli announced the purpose of the meeting to be consideration of a demonstration project proposed by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) for the intersection of Palm Boulevard and 41st Avenue; drawings of the proposed plan were provided to the Committee members. A meeting took place last week attended by Chief Buckhannon, Administrator Tucker, Assistant Dziuban, Councilman Bettelli, Councilman Loftus and two (2) engineers from DOT, Mark Nesbitt and Richard Turner, as well as Joey Harris, Engineering Associate; the plan was described in detail by the engineers.

As a demonstration project, it could be temporary; if the changes proposed did not provide relief to the traffic problems that have been experienced at this intersection, it could be quickly and easily removed returning the intersection to its original state. On the other hand, if the changes did result in a significant improvement to the traffic flow, they could become permanent. The changes offered include the following:

- The end of Cameron Boulevard would be closed via barricade;
- A STOP sign would be placed at the crosswalk on 41st Avenue as one headed toward Palm Boulevard from the marina;
- There is an existing STOP sign on Palm Boulevard, coming from Wild Dunes, at 41st Avenue; and
- A new STOP sign would be placed on 41st Avenue along with a painted island for drivers coming from 41st toward Wild Dunes making the 41st Avenue corner and proceeding straight to the marina; the right lane that continues onto Palm would be a flow through lane.

Chief Buckhannon informed the Committee that, in addition to the new STOP signs, there would be WARNING signs placed ahead of the STOP signs for the motoring public. The DOT would also be placing WARNING signs at least two (2) weeks prior to any change taking place noting the date that the change would occur and enforcement would begin.

Chairman Bettelli explained that DOT needed approval from the Isle of Palms by June 9th in order to have the changes in place by the July 4th weekend. Chief Buckhannon again stated that, two (2) weeks before implementation, signs were to be installed notifying the public of the impending change and the date it would effective and enforced. The Chief related that DOT thought that to have the project in place for the July 4th weekend, the last major weekend of the season, would be a clear indicator of the effectiveness of the project. If a decision were postponed beyond June 9th, the project would take place at another time.

Mayor Sottile agreed that something had to be done with the 41st Avenue and Palm Boulevard intersection, but he was concerned that the City's processes had not been followed. He recounted that the Public Safety Committee had decided last fall that nothing would be done at that intersection through 2008 and that the Police Department would provide assistance with traffic flow when it was needed. He expressed his opinion that the Committee Chairman, the City Administrator, the Assistant to the Administrator and another Council person had circumvented the decision made by the Public Safety Committee that was presented to City Council; he remarked that any meeting with DOT should have taken place at a Public Safety meeting. The Mayor also recounted that the City had looked at a similar plan several years ago and that the residents along 41st Avenue were "adamantly opposed to a STOP sign there." Mayor Sottile related that, when the Mayo inquired, Chief Buckhannon had told him that the Police Department has not had to put an officer at the intersection to assist with traffic flow thus far this year. He stated that he was not opposed to trying this demonstration project, but that he was opposed to putting the project on the fast track because none of the affected residents had been notified of the City's plans, and he felt strongly that the City should communicate with them. Mayor Sottile commented that the new Council members needed to understand that the Isle of Palms has committee form of government.

Chairman Bettelli explained that the reason the 41st Avenue and Palm Boulevard intersection was being discussed again was the proposal sent to the City by DOT. He stated that he thought the plan had merit, but he did not know if it was the answer the City was seeking. Chairman Bettelli did comment that he thought it would make the intersection safer and eliminate some of the congestion that occurred at times.

Chief Graham expressed that her concern was the traffic coming from Wild Dunes that tended to backup, but now the potential for a three (3) way backup that would force the fire equipment to go with opposing traffic in the event of an emergency. She commented that a backup of traffic leaving the marina could force a significant increase in traffic on Waterway Boulevard.

Councilman Buckhannon was pleased that DOT had approached the City with a new design and that it could be temporary on the possibility that it did not work. He suggested that, if the residents in the immediate vicinity of the intersection were to be asked for their input, the residents from Wild Dunes and farther up the street should also be polled. He stated that he really liked the provisional nature of the project and thought the project was definitely worth a try.

Chairman Bettelli voiced a concern that there would not be sufficient personnel on duty over the July 4th weekend if it turned out that the project was creating more problems than it was solving. Councilman Buckhannon agreed that the July 4th weekend was not the best time to implement a change. Chief Graham stated that she thought July 4th was the worst possible time to try this project.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile moved to proceed with the DOT demonstration project only after the adjacent property owners (41st Avenue, Cameron Boulevard, Sea Oats, 42nd Avenue, 43rd Avenue, Palm Boulevard) have been notified and the results come back to the Public Safety Committee to make a decision; Councilman Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- MOTION: Councilman Buckhannon moved to adjourn at 5:55 p.m.; Mayor Sottile seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk