

## **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE**

4:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 6, 2010

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee was held at 4 p.m., Wednesday, October 6, 2010 in the Public Works Building, 1303 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Stone and Thomas, Chair Duffy, Public Works Director Pitts, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland. There was a quorum present to conduct business.

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

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

**MOTION: Councilmember Thomas moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of September 1, 2010 as submitted; Councilmember Stone seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **3. Citizens' Comments**

Toby VanBuren, 1279 W. Vagabond Lane, Mount Pleasant, stated that he was in the clam and oyster business and had served on the East Cooper Clean Water Council in the 1990s. He reported that the water quality has been quite good until three (3) years ago, when a reversal occurred. He displayed maps of the island and surrounding waterways with areas in Breach Inlet, Hamlin Creek and the marina marked in red that have been closed to fishing by DHEC due to fecal coliform contamination; the maps were depictions of closings in 2008, 2009 and 2010. Mr. VanBuren explained that DHEC takes water samples monthly and employs a three-year (3-year) averaging process to determine the viability of the water; DHEC is looking for trends, rather than individual occurrences. The maps show increased areas of contamination and closings as the years pass.

Since his livelihood is threatened, Mr. VanBuren has established an *ad hoc* committee composed of Lindsay Fairchild of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Allan Clum of Mount Pleasant Water Works and Ross Nelson (involved with the 2002 and 2003 Isle of Palms Water quality study), who have been brainstorming and have come up with three (3) areas to study in hopes of determining the cause of the contamination, i.e. the head waters, Goat Island and Isle of Palms. The study of 2002 and 2003 identified several "hot spots" around the island; areas of concern are under the Connector Bridge, the ditch running behind the shopping center and the outfalls in the area of Forest Trail.

After discussing the issue with the City Administrator, Mr. VanBuren and his committee would like for City Council to appoint a citizens committee to look at these areas and do additional testing of the "hot spots" using grant funds. He suggested that this committee could review the 2002/2003 study to learn what recommendations have been implemented and what have not, establish public information programs, meet with IOP Water and Sewer to find out if there are issues relative to their lines, etc.

Responding to Councilmember Stones' question about what Mr. VanBuren wanted the committee to accomplish, Mr. VanBuren commented that seemingly small changes can bring

about significant results. DHEC has a branch that deals with septic tanks that could provide assistance.

Mr. VanBuren stated that DHEC's testing results for 2010 could be obtained for a better indicator of areas of concern today. He added that, when the island gets four inches (4 in.) of rain, the waterways are shut down for two weeks (2 wks.) as a precaution until testing can be done for the effect of runoff from the rains. On the other hand, high tides clean out the marshes quickly.

Mr. VanBuren thought that a committee composed of two (2) councilmembers, a member representing the Water and Sewer Commission and several interested citizens could be effective. He added that Ross Nelson could provide valuable information about the 2002/2003 study and give direction about funding possibilities for additional testing using more modern technology to more precisely define the pollutants.

**MOTION: Chair Duffy moved to bring the subject of water quality to Council for discussion on establishing a committee to address water quality issues of the island; Councilmember Stone seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **4. Departmental Reports – Director Pitts**

Director Pitts explained that he has updated the trash and garbage collections accounting for August and September; continuing the trend of the past several months, collections are down from the same period a year ago. Pumps were deployed on 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue on September 29 and on 46<sup>th</sup>, 51<sup>st</sup> and 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenues on September 30 to remove standing water.

Vehicle maintenance is on track with the budget.

Chair Duffy asked if the Public Works Department has considered lining the drainage ditches with a half pipe creating a better flow and ease of cleaning; the Director responded that nothing had been discussed in his tenure as Public Works Director. Considering Mr. VanBuren's concerns, the Chair asked whether the materials removed from the ditches and the soil in the ditches could be tested for contamination; Director Pitts answered that those items could be tested, but that the City had not order any testing. He added that he was certain that the soil in the ditches was contaminated.

The Director explained that, with permission from The Beach Company, the materials that Eadie's removed from the ditches is de-watered in the lot beside Pelican Cleaners, dried and hauled off the island. The process is monitored by Charleston County as part of the Clean Water Act.

## **5. Old Business**

### **A. Update on Drainage Projects**

Director Pitts reported that Eadie's has begun removing the vegetation from open ditches on the island as they initiated work on year one of the maintenance plan; having been off the island last week, their work will resume on Monday, October 11.

Assistant Dziuban reported that the City has not yet received the executed easement agreement from Lowe Wild Dune Investors, but Lowe has not indicated that a problem exists with the paperwork, and it is presumably held up in getting through their processes. A meeting was held earlier today with Dave Stevens, Dave Kynoski, City Attorney Stirling Halversen and Assistant Dziuban to review the path the project will follow to ensure that the City has acquired all of the easements needed to complete the project.

Responding to Chair Duffy's concerns, Assistant Dziuban stated that Dave Stevens had prepared the bid specs and the holdup to advertising the RFP was the receipt of the easement; plans continue for construction to begin in January 2011.

### **B. Update on Debris Removal**

Assistant Dziuban commented that, with the Administrator's illness, she had not discussed the subject of landscaper debris with her and was unclear about how the Administrator wanted to proceed. She did report that Director Pitts had researched the codes for Mount Pleasant, Sullivan's Island and Folly Beach to learn how they deal with landscaper debris; he found that these communities do not pickup from landscape contractor. Chair Duffy added that the City's business license application does not include language about landscape debris removal.

Director Pitts noted that, despite the code, he was told by each community that they may collect landscaper debris in response to a call of complaint.

Reinforcing Assistant Dziuban's statement that enforcement was difficult; the Director stated that enforcement could only occur when the contractor was caught in the act. Director Pitts related that if Public Works sees a habit forming, for instance, debris being left repeatedly at a vacant lot, NO DUMPING signs can be installed and can be an effective tool.

Responding to Councilmember Stone's question as to whether the removal of large quantities of landscaper debris was an issue on the island, Director Pitts said it was not, in general; some instances do occur in the spring or fall.

Assistant Dziuban reminded the Committee that this issue had come before them as the result of a meeting with Dave Kynoski of the Wild Dunes Community Association. He had commented on the fact that yard debris removal normally occurs on Wednesdays and that homeowners could generate a large pile of debris on a Thursday or Friday that stays on the street for several days.

Councilmember Stone voiced the opinion that this issue does not warrant any further action from the Committee; other members agreed.

Director Pitts commented that the drawings attached to the monthly reports were of the ditches and outfalls on the island and were companion pieces to Mr. VanBuren's comments.

**6. New Business – None**

**7. Miscellaneous Business**

In a follow up to concern expressed by Mr. Judson at the most recent Council meeting regarding recycling on the island, Chair Duffy reported that he has spoken with Dickie Schweers to find out what direction Charleston County's recycling program was taking in an effort to reach their forty percent (40%) target. One (1) approach being investigated is single-stream recycling, which means that recyclables do not have to be separated and can all be placed in a single bin. The Chair asked Committee members to consider how single-stream recycling could be implemented on Front Beach, as well as at the island's condominiums. Chair Duffy asked whether it would be possible to place recycle bins next to garbage bins and whether Mr. Schupp could remove the recycling at the same time he picks up garbage.

Presently, Mr. Schupp removes the trash in the summer months, and Public Works removes it in the off-season. If the green plastic barrels on Front Beach are approved for continued use, Mr. Schupp will empty them year-round at no additional charge.

Director Pitts reported that he had investigated the two (2) section recycle bins as requested by the Committee; they cost approximately three hundred dollars (\$300) each. For the City to service that particular drum; it would have to isolate a truck for that purpose; the Director questioned whether the County would service those containers.

Chair Duffy added that another facet to the single-stream recycling is that the trucks do not require human intervention.

The Director stated that the problem with recycling on the beach and at Front Beach will be the contamination of the recyclable material with other trash, such as diapers. Another area of concern would be a holding area for the recycled material until the County removed it from the island.

The Chair inquired whether the City could deliver recycle bins when it delivers garbage bins; Director Pitts answered that the City had done that at one time, but the County has required residents to pick up recycle bins for about six (6) years.

**Next Meeting Date: 4 p.m., Wednesday, November 3, 2010.**

(Time was changed to 3 p.m. when it was discovered that the time conflicted with the Recreation Committee meeting.)

**8. Adjourn**

**MOTION: Councilmember Stone moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:05 p.m.;  
Chair Duffy seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland  
City Clerk