

Public Works Committee
Isle of Palms, South Carolina
August 6, 2007

The regular meeting of the Isle of Palms Public Works Committee was held at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, August 6, 2007 at the Public Works Building, 1303 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Present were Chairman Bettelli, Councilwoman Hanbury, City Administrator Tucker, Public Works Director Pitts and City Clerk Copeland. The newly appointed Livability Officer Bill O'Donnell was an invited guest for today's meeting; Councilman Cronin's absence was excused.

1. Call to order. Councilman Bettelli called the meeting to order and stated that the press and the public had been duly notified in accordance with state and federal laws.

2. Approval of Previous Month's Minutes.

MOTION: Councilwoman Hanbury offered corrections and additions to the minutes of July 17, 2007, then moved for approval of the minutes as corrected; Councilman Bettelli seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved as corrected.

3. Citizens' Comments: Beach Furnishings Debris

Mary Pringle, Project Leader for the Turtle Team, introduced her fellow Turtle Team members Bev Ballow and Barbara Bergwerf. Mrs. Pringle reminded the Committee that members of the Turtle Team had spoken at the previous meeting and felt they should return to offer some possible solutions to the problems they presented. The team's suggestions were as follows:

- a. To change the wording of the ordinance regarding beach debris to include items such as umbrellas, tents, chairs, toys, or other personal items, which, when left on the beach after sunset, will be considered trash and removed from the beach;
- b. To involve the Beach Patrol in educating the visitors by tagging their tents and talking to them;
- c. To implement a procedure where visitors must get a permit and corresponding tag through the rental company to take their tents, chairs, etc., onto the beach which will display the tag indicating that the items will be removed nightly and that anything left will get the owner fined;
- d. To use the City's message boards to inform visitors of the rules and regulations, such as "Leave the Beach the way you found it!"; or
- e. To include the Rules and Regulations with the rental contract to be signed and returned to the rental company; the renter is much more likely to read them than he/she is when he/she gets to the beach after a long drive on Saturday evening.

Bev Ballow reported that she had been on other beaches that actually displayed large billboards that spell out what is and is not allowed on the beach. Mrs. Bergwerf said that she felt that it must be the rental companies' responsibility to educate the renter about what is and is not allowed here. It was noted that the Rules and Regulations are displayed in every rental on the island; again, there was the question of whether or not they are being read. (A copy of these regulations is attached.) Mrs. Bergwerf also related that she had been told that, at Litchfield Beach, there are signs at approximately fifty (50) to one hundred (100) yard intervals stating that items left on the beach will be confiscated and placed in a warehouse where they can be reclaimed once a fine is paid.

Councilwoman Hanbury read the following from the Island Realty magazine:

“Large holes, sculptures, castles, moats, beach furniture, tents, etc., should not be left on the beach over night. . . They present a danger to people, as well as to nesting and hatchling sea turtles. Any equipment left on the beach is officially considered debris and may be removed.”

Councilman Bettelli stated that the Committee could meet with the realtors.

4. Monthly Public Works Report – Director Donnie Pitts

Director Pitts started his report by indicating that the vehicle maintenance had run \$2,200 for the previous month. One of the primary issues he wanted to discuss with the Committee was his and the Administrator's concern over flooding at the front beach. He passed around photos he had taken a week ago, when the island had been deluged with rain, of the outfall behind the Red & White; what he saw concerned him about the drainage capacity from the front beach. With new construction coming, i.e. the Public Safety Building, Director Pitts indicated that there will be a need for system improvement or upgrades to meet the increased volume. He confirmed to Administrator Tucker that the outfall was large enough, but the transmission lines going from front beach - between 10th and 14th Avenue - to the outfall will not handle the increase that will come with the new facility. This particular rain was the first time that the City has been concerned about its own infrastructure; water was undermining the flower bed and the lighting electrical system; the Fire Department had thought the road should be closed to eliminate the water inundating the electrical system. The Administrator stated that this was a situation that will have to be assessed as the Public Safety Building progresses. As the City works with Cole+Russell on the new building, the City will likely get some additional civil engineering done to determine the capacity of these transmission lines now and the capacity requirement with the new facility.

The second item of import for Director Pitts was depicted on the Yard Debris graph provided for the Committee in their packets. The graph shows that 4B was extremely

high while Bees Ferry was low; this was the result of Saturday work and the number of trucks that were inoperable during the month. When yard debris is loaded into garbage packers, it must go to Bees Ferry with no tipping fee; when these trucks are not available and flatbeds must be used, the refuse must go to 4B where there is a cost. In answer to Administrator Tucker's question, Director Pitts indicated that Public Works had worked every Saturday in the month of July. The Administrator stated that the information is important as the City assesses whether continuing with these pickups will require additional equipment and personnel.

Councilwoman Hanbury asked why she had seen a blue truck in her neighborhood; Director Pitts responded that this truck was one that had been loaned to the City by Amick Equipment when three (3) of Public Works' trucks were disabled.

Councilman Bettelli returned to Citizens' Comments for G.M. Dilling, who arrived late, to address the Committee. Ms. Dilling identified herself as an architect who lives at 10-51st Avenue. She related that she has spoken to City officials over the past ten (10) years about getting some pilings (2 feet long with a 10" diameter) removed from the right-of-way on the property beside her own. She is very concerned about the danger and damages these pilings present in case of a hurricane and the storm surge that accompanies it.

Councilman Bettelli informed Ms. Dilling that the City currently is waiting for a callback from SC DOT about items placed in the rights-of-way. Administrator Tucker agreed that this has been an on-going effort both on her part and the City's to get the pilings removed. Administrator Tucker continued that the only ones the City has purview over are the ones in the right-of-way.

Ms. Dilling also reminded those present that, at a City Council meeting in August 2005, she had been told that the pilings could be removed at any time since the City had the authority to remove them. She added that, in her opinion, that it would be negligence on the part of the City of Isle of Palms not to remove these pilings before a serious storm strikes. Before departing, she asked when she could expect to hear from the City on her request. She also left a letter addressed to members of the City Council.

In response to her question, Councilman Bettelli stated that, once there is a decision about what the City can do about removing the pilings, she will be informed.

5. Old Business:

D. Beach Debris and Holes

reason Officer O'Donnell had been asked to attend. Sgt. O'Donnell stated that, at the end of the week, he will have completed his first month with the City of Isle of Palms, and that, during this time, he has been very busy with issues related to trash cans. He related that he has driven neighborhoods, spoken with residents, sent approximately twenty (20) letters and spoken with the real estate companies. He stated that all of the persons in the real estate offices have been more than enthusiastic about assisting him in solving this problem. He has encountered questions on corrals and asked what the City Council intends to do about them; he informed the Committee that he and the other officers on patrol are trying very hard not to fine people - maybe one (1) or two (2) fines have been issued – but trying hard to educate people. He noted that when he has cause to call one of the real estate offices, they all tell him that they will address the problem immediately. On the other hand, the assistance he is getting from the real estate offices has become a burden for them, in his opinion, in that some have hired additional personnel just to deal with trash and rollout carts.

O'Donnell asked Director Pitts if there had been stickers placed on trash cans in the past. Director Pitts said that there was an "OOPS" ordinance that was placed on the cans when there were violations; he noted that he still has the list and would provide copies for O'Donnell.

Based on O'Donnell's review of the City's records since March 1, 2007, the majority of the problems are trash related; therefore, he asked the members of the Public Works Committee what they thought could be done to resolve the problems.

Councilman Bettelli agreed that this Committee had been wrestling with the answer to that question for some time. The item in the ordinance stating that the rollout carts are not to be left in public view has been mostly overlooked except for blatant disregard for the ordinance. Councilman Bettelli stated his opinion that the best solution was public education and cooperation from the real estate companies.

Councilwoman Hanbury observed that the biggest problems come from what she referred to as "internet renters;" these are the renters who deal directly with owners via the internet. Councilwoman Hanbury believes that these property owners are not informing their prospective tenants of the island's rules and regulations nor are they providing a listing of them in the rental homes. As a result, the City's ordinances are being broken by people who do not know they are doing it.

Councilman Bettelli also explained to Officer O'Donnell that there are island residents who get special treatment from Public Works due to medical issues. In these cases, the

Public Works employees retrieve the trash can from the resident's yard, empty it and replace it. Director Pitts will provide Officer O'Donnell with this list.

Officer O'Donnell stated that he has also gotten very positive response to the letters he has sent to property owners who are not residents and who have been cited for rollout cart violations; only one person has not been cooperative. In response to the question "What can I do to comply?" Officer O'Donnell has informed the property owners that there are real estate companies who will take the cans to the street and return them after pick up for a fee. Director Pitts stated that there are four (4) firms, which are licensed, and he will provide the list to O'Donnell, as well as what each charges for the service. Councilman Bettelli said that, when Officer O'Donnell receives such inquiries, he should give the names and numbers of all four (4) companies to allow the property owner to make their own selection.

On the subject of Beach Debris and Holes, Councilman Bettelli explained to Officer O'Donnell that the Public Works Department is also responsible for maintaining the beach paths. He reported that he has seen this year that the paths are being used by golf carts and they are eroding the paths. Councilman Bettelli is of the opinion that the Beach Services Officers can begin to monitor the paths for golf cart traffic. The only access paths that are legally authorized for golf carts are 25th and 42nd Avenues. There may be a need for signs saying "No Golf Carts Allowed" at beach access paths.

Officer O'Donnell brought the discussion back to the subject of the corrals and asked if there was any kind of time agenda for that particular discussion by Council. Councilman Bettelli assured him that the corrals will be addressed over the winter in anticipation of having a concrete policy for the 2008 season. Councilman Bettelli added that he is one (1) of several Council members who want to see the corrals totally go away. Administrator Tucker encouraged Officer O'Donnell to familiarize himself with the ordinances and to make whatever recommendations he feels will be productive in solving the island's issues that relate to livability. Director Pitts added that the corrals that are in the rights-of-way are illegal, but that Public Works will empty them; whereas the Public Works employees are not allowed to enter private property to gain access to the rollout carts due to liability issues. Action on the corrals in the rights-of-way is dependent on the response the City gets from SCDOT.

Councilman Bettelli distributed a starting point for a sign to be placed at the beach or a tag to be placed on items left at the beach. The information included requests that everyone remove their personal items from the beach and explained that the holes people are digging create hazards to the turtles and to man. He added that he sees the Beach Services Officers as good allies both to fill in the holes and to educate the public on the dangers they pose. The Committee was amazed to find that it is adults with large shovels who are digging these large holes, not children; it also seems that the holes are much more prevalent than in previous years.

Administrator Tucker reported that she and Councilman Bettelli had discussed using a tag similar to the destination tags placed on one's luggage at the airport. On the tag would be printed information like Councilman Bettelli has presented, but additionally information on littering. If the tagged item is seen a second evening, the owner is subject to receive a ticket. In response to Councilwoman's Hanbury's question about who would carry out this program, the Administrator responded that any City official who sees a violation could tag the item(s). The officers who drive the four(4) wheel vehicles are on the beach both day and night; employees of Public Works are on the beach, as well as members of the Fire Department, whereas the Beach Services Officers are only on duty for the summer season. She reported that any morning or evening that one is on the beach there are abandoned umbrellas, tents and chairs – some are left overnight while it is obvious that others have truly been deserted. Director Pitts commented that the flatbed had been on the beach today and been filled with this type of discarded objects.

Councilman Bettelli reminded the members of the Turtle Team present that the subject will also be discussed by the Public Safety Committee. He stated that he was hopeful that this Committee could come up with an idea that the Public Safety Committee could pursue.

A. RFP for Pre-disaster Response/Post-disaster Debris Removal – Update

Administrator Tucker informed the Committee that Director Pitts has compiled the draft of a contract to get vendors in place to perform these services; when signed, the City will notify and/or put them on notice, when a storm is threatening, that the contract will likely be activated in 12, 24, 72 hours. In the meantime, FEMA has a new pilot program that requires the municipality to get two (2) pre-qualified debris and wreckage removal contracts, as well as to have a debris management plan. Administrator Tucker stated that she did not know if the City of Isle of Palms was under the Charleston County plan or if Isle of Palms would be required to have its own debris management plan; Director Pitts is investigating that situation. Director Pitts commented that he understood that the City could have the post-disaster debris contractor, and, through this pilot program, the City would get additional monies from the federal government for vegetative recycling, which is what the City does with 4B; therefore, there is an incentive to participate in the pilot program. Administrator Tucker stated that the question, at this juncture, is whether the benefit would outweigh the administrative effort. This FEMA program will be examined in detail, and, in the meantime, work will continue to complete the RFP for debris removal contractors, to get contractors signed up and to consider the FEMA program for next year.

B. NPDES - Update

The permit has been released and a meeting is being scheduled between Isle of Palms officials and the Legal Department of Charleston County to try to finalize the City's ordinances before second reading later this month. The focus of the meeting is to look at the NPDES guidelines and determine exactly how they will work thereby ensuring that the City's ordinances are all inclusive. There is also the need to confirm that the City's understanding of a contract with Charleston County to handle the stormwater program is the same as their understanding of handling it.

C. Continued Discussion of Public Works Flyer

Director Pitts confirmed that he and Councilman Cronin have not worked on the flyer since the last meeting.

In response to Councilwoman Hanbury's question on her most recent memo, Councilman Bettelli remarked that Saturday trash pickup is not feasible at this time; it is something to be considered, but the problem remains that there is no place to take the garbage once it is collected. Councilwoman Hanbury suggested using an outside contractor to do the Saturday pickup; once the garbage was picked up, the issue of what to do with it was someone else's problem. When asked by Councilman Bettelli if there were such companies in the Charleston area, Councilwoman Hanbury replied that she has not looked into, but would be happy to do so. Councilman Bettelli then countered that there was no money in the budget for such an activity; Councilwoman Hanbury thought it could be a consideration for the next budget. An extended debate followed between Councilman Bettelli and Councilwoman Hanbury.

Councilwoman Hanbury did state that she was totally against producing the flyer and sending it at this point in vacation season; she did not feel that it warranted the expense. Councilman Bettelli commented that the flyer could go out now and another in the spring of 2008 with the cost for production and mailing to come from ATAX funds. Councilman Bettelli remarked that he thought it was worth determining the cost before making a final decision on whether to send it or not. He did urge Councilwoman Hanbury to send her suggestions for changes, additions and/or deletions to the flyer to Councilman Cronin within the next week; she agreed to put her thoughts in writing to Councilman Cronin.

Before moving on to New Business, Councilwoman Hanbury asked what had been done regarding one resident's complaint about kudzu that was discussed at the last meeting. Director Pitts informed her that, as directed by the Committee, he had talked with Roger Lemons of SCDOT, who has placed a work order to look at the kudzu to determine what they can do – spray, cut, etc. Any issues the property owner has about the kudzu that has spread onto his property will have to be resolved with SCDOT, not the City of Isle of Palms.

6. New Business – Ideas from MASC on Improved Public Works Service Delivery

Administrator Tucker described and explained the GPS system for Public Works she had seen at the MASC Annual Convention. Councilman Bettelli noted that he had not reviewed the CD she given him at the last meeting, but he would do so and pass it along to other members of the Committee. The Administrator stated that the municipalities that are now using the product are reporting savings in fuel usage, better efficiency and more productivity from their employees. She believes that it is definitely something that should be considered during the budget preparation for FY2008.

7. Miscellaneous

Beach Sweep/River Sweep is scheduled for Saturday, September 15, 2007.

Councilwoman Hanbury announced that the Exchange Club has agreed to take over the project since they now have a member who is willing to provide the leadership. This year will be a joint venture, and in 2008 it will be an Exchange Club project. The usual group of ROTC students will do heavy clean-up on the Wild Dunes beach, and a special group of Wild Dunes employees is willing to perform special tasks as details are worked out. Councilwoman Hanbury asked Director Pitts to notify her if there were any areas in need of special attention. Councilman Bettelli asked if the Sweep went to the marina, to which Councilwoman Hanbury responded that, in the past when she has contacted the marina, there has not been a need.

Councilwoman Hanbury commented that Kai Dilling is back on Isle of Palms beaches teaching surfing and asked that anyone who sees his vehicle call the police since he is not licensed and what he is doing is illegal.

NIMS training is required for department managers and there is a course for elected officials as well. For anyone who is going to work at the EOC office at Charleston County, the training is mandatory. NIMS is an acronym for National Incident Management System and the program came into existence after the 9/11 tragedy; the goal of the program is for everyone to have a common understanding of how the incident command system works.

The next meeting is scheduled for **at 4:00 p.m on Monday, September 10, 2007.**

With no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was duly adjourned following a motion by Councilman Bettelli at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Marty Bettelli, Chairman