

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
9:30 a.m., Wednesday, August 12, 2015

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was called to order at 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, August 12, 2015 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bergwerf and Carroll, Chair Bettelli, City Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham, Police Captain Usry and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Chair Bettelli 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 Carroll moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of July 7, 2015 as submitted; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments

Carolyn Marsland, 3103 Palm Boulevard, brought to the Committee's attention the problem she is having at her home with vehicles being parked so close to her driveway that she has no line of sight when she is exiting her driveway. She showed photographs to the Committee that clearly depict the problem. (Her comments and photographs are attached to the historical record of the meeting.) In her opinion, the City was "not enforcing any sort of traffic or parking law" on the non-ocean side of Palm Boulevard.

4. Old Business

A. Discussion of Additional Golf Cart Parking

Administrator Tucker recalled that at the last meeting, the Police Department was tasked with assessing the beach accesses to determine which would be most conducive to dedicated golf cart parking; the lack of any dedicated golf cart parking between Breach Inlet and 10th Avenue was also pointed out.

Captain Usry reported that assessing the beach access paths was a project in-progress; she stated that the Department had received a request from a resident for designated golf cart parking at 45th Avenue. Chief Buckhannon, Director Kerr and Captain Usry made a site visit to 45th Avenue and determined that the area was too small for a golf cart to turnaround and the path has a drop of two to three feet (2-3ft.) only a short way down the path; they concluded that this location could not be turned into dedicated golf cart parking.

The Captain stated that the assessing would continue and would progress quicker once the season has ended.

Responding to Councilmember Bergwerf, Captain Usry said that they have not looked at the area between Breach Inlet and 10th Avenue; the concern is retaining enough vehicular parking spaces to satisfy the Beach Management Plan.

Councilmember Carroll commented that the signs for dedicated golf cart parking at 31st Avenue were quite small and could be easily be overlooked by resident who regularly uses that path; he did not know that a red line had been painted marking the golf cart spaces. He, therefore, stated that these types of changes require a learning process on the part of island residents; he opined that there should be a better way to educate residents.

Captain Usry explained that the new signage was to SCDOT specifications for size and height and that a notice was posted to the City's website, Facebook, Twitter and the newspaper to notify residents and visitors to inform people of the change. Residents are also allowed a thirty (30) day grace period to acclimate themselves when such changes are made before tickets are written.

Administrator Tucker added that the City is constrained by what SCDOT will issue an encroachment permit for; she stated that she had asked that the red line be added after people began getting tickets as one other measure to draw attention to the change to dedicated golf cart parking.

B. Update on Public Access to Traffic Camera on the Connector

The City Administrator reported that Chief Buckhannon had made a presentation to the ATAX Committee seeking funding for the project, and the Committee "enthusiastically" gave their approval. The funding request will now go through the Ways and Means Committee and City Council.

Administrator Tucker opined that people would find the new feed advantageous in the off-season as well as in-season; the feed will be on the SC511 camera system along with SCDOT cameras. The Administrator and the Mayor shared the information about the public feed with Sullivan's Island since they would like to do the same for the Ben Sawyer Bridge.

Councilmember Carroll asked that the Administrator reach out to Linda Page, Mayor of Mount Pleasant, and to Elliot Summey, Chair of County Council, to request that they put cameras on Rifle Range Road at the Connector and on US17 and the Connector to provide more information.

The Administrator explained that she has contacted her counterparts at Mount Pleasant and Charleston County; her best suggestion at this time was for IOP elected officials to contact elected officials in the other jurisdictions.

C. Consideration of New Short-Term Rental Placard for the Noise Ordinance

Included in meeting packets was the draft of the sign prepared by staff; a copy is attached to the historical record of the meeting. Chair Bettelli suggested underlining the words "absolute quiet;" he liked the size and verbiage used on it.

Councilmember Carroll noted that even during the allowed time for people to be louder, guests or residents who are excessively loud could be cited.

The Administrator concurred and read the second sentence into the record as follows:

'The noise ordinance is strictly enforced and prohibits any noise that disturbs the quiet, comfort or repose of any person in any dwelling at any time.'

Councilmember Bergwerf indicated that she, too, liked the size, but she thought the text message should cover the page because people reading it would be outside with bright sunlight during the day or dimly lit in the evening. She added that people tend to ignore signs when there are too many words.

D. Update on 2015 July 4th Fireworks Display

Chief Graham reiterated that the City knew it would not get the fireworks display that she expected from the moment that they unloaded the racks from the truck. The Chief contacted the company representative she had dealt with and he assured her that, if there was anything wrong, they would make it right despite his confidence that the right shipment had been sent to the Isle of Palms. After the show, the Chief talked with the same person and gave him the count the City taken. When he was informed that the City had paid for half of the display in advance, eighty five hundred dollars (\$8,500), he agreed to accept that as payment in full.

For future contracts, the Chief suggested that the City should detail what it wants in the fireworks display and let the vendors submit quotes based on that information. She added that she would have no issues with using this company again, but she would like to have them price out the fireworks specifications submitted to them without exceeding what the City has traditionally paid.

Administrator Tucker opined that they have demonstrated in their response to the City that they are a good and reputable company and want to work with the City; the Administrator noted that the company had come to the City with very good recommendations from other coastal local governments. Plus, the City has contracted to use East Coast Pyrotechnics next year.

5. New Business

A. Award of a sole source contract to Palmetto Custom Carts in the amount of \$40,500 for 3 low speed vehicles for Beach Services Management Plan C (page 23, Muni ATAX/Police Department Capital Outlay - \$40,500)

Chair Bettelli stated that he thought the City would not get these vehicles until the beginning of the 2016 tourist season. Captain Usry agreed because these will custom built low speed vehicles; the order is being placed now to get ahead of the golf courses and resorts and guarantee that the City has them when the season begins. The company is out of Simpsonville and was pleased to work with the City; this specialty vehicle will be capable of going on the beach as well as the street.

The City Administrator noted that this was the first purchase toward the implementation of Concept C, but, if for some unforeseen reason Concept C does not get implemented in 2016, these vehicles would still be valuable assets to the Police Department fleet of vehicles.

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Councilmember Carroll asked the Administrator to give him a reason why the parking management plan would not be implemented as scheduled.

Administrator Tucker recalled that staff was preparing for Concept B when Council adopted Concept C; she explained that the City has not received the encroachment permit from SCDOT for the signs and the signs will not be ordered until the permit is issued.

MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to recommend the award of a contract to Palmetto Custom Carts in the amount of \$40,500 for 3 low speed vehicles to be used in cooperation with the Parking Management Concept C; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Award of a contract to Vic Bailey Ford in the amount of \$26,733, state contract pricing, for 1 – 2016 Ford Interceptor Utility vehicle (pg. 20. Capital Projects/Police Department Capital Outlay - \$34,000)

Councilmember Carroll confirmed that the difference between the vehicle cost and the budgeted amount was the cost of accessories that will be added after the car is received.

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to recommend the award of a contract to Vic Bailey Ford for 1 – 2016 Ford Interceptor Utility vehicle as detailed above; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Award of a contract to Vic Bailey Ford in the amount of \$24,543, state contract pricing for 1 – 2015 Ford Police Interceptor sedan (pg. 25, Hospitality Tax Fund/Police Department Capital Outlay - \$32,000)

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to recommend the award of a contract to Vic Bailey Ford for 1 – 2015 Ford Interceptor sedan as detailed above; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

D. Consideration of Job Description Changes for Positions within the Fire Department

Chief Graham stated that the reason for the changes for Captain and Battalion Chief, as well as Chief and Assistant Chief, is to require that to be considered for hire or promotion to these positions, a candidate must have completed EMT training before being eligible. Since these changes must go before Council as well, the Chief has made minor changes – housekeeping issues – to other job descriptions; the EMT requirement will also be made to the job description for Training Officer.

Referring to the second page of the firefighter job description, Councilmember Carroll questioned the extension of time for a person to get a Class E permit and Class C driver's license. Chief Graham explained that the first two (2) weeks that a firefighter is with the Department are filled and that left insufficient time to obtain the Class E permit. She stated that firefighters are learning to drive to become engineers.

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MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to approve the changes to Fire Department job descriptions as reviewed by Chief Graham; Councilmember Carroll seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The changes in job descriptions will go before the Personnel Committee for approval at their next meeting before going to City Council.

E. Consideration of Providing Golf Cart Path between 20th Avenue and the Island Center

Chair Bettelli introduced the discussion noting that the City cannot widen the sidewalk and that it is illegal to drive a golf cart on the sidewalk.

Administrator Tucker presented the idea of creating a path parallel to the sidewalk since there is adequate space on the land-side of the sidewalk between the sidewalk and the property line; she voiced the opinion that it must be very different from the sidewalk to indicate that it is distinctively the golf cart path. The Administrator has contact the person who has constructed the wooden bridges on the golf courses in Wild Dunes; since there is a drop-off in the topography, something must be constructed to level it. The Administrator noted that to do this may not be possible due to infrastructure that is in-place. It would not be inexpensive, assuming it is feasible, and SCDOT might not issue an encroachment permit.

Councilmember Carroll indicated that the primary complaint he is hearing is that the City is putting its residents in jeopardy requiring that they cross Palm Boulevard four (4) times to get to the grocery store in their golf carts legally.

The Administrator reminded Councilmember Carroll that the prohibition is imposed by the State of South Carolina, not the City of Isle of Palms.

F. Consideration of Additional Crosswalks in the North End of the Island

Captain Usry recalled that she and Chief Buckhannon had been tasked with evaluating 38th Avenue as the street for an additional crosswalk; when they went to the location, they decided that 37th Avenue was more feasible because SCDOT already has white lines there and the street would provide more community access. In order to do this and be consistent with the other cross-walks, the City would need the portable sign for weekend-only use which costs four hundred fifteen dollars seventy-three cents (\$415.73); the actual traffic pattern on the pavement has been quoted at fifty-six hundred fifty dollars (\$5,650) by the company that recently refurbished the current crosswalks. The total price for a crosswalk at 37th Avenue is six thousand sixty-five dollars seventy-three cents (\$6,065.73). The details of the project are

included in a memo to the Committee dated August 10th; a copy of which is attached to the historical record of the meeting.

After Chief Graham related a story about a near-miss with a pedestrian on the curve at 21st Avenue, the Committee discussed the possible need for a flashing red light to warn drivers of the curve.

Chair Bettelli asked Administrator Tucker about the source of funds for an additional crosswalk.

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The Administrator assured the Committee that she and Treasurer Suggs would identify a source of funds for the Ways and Means Committee meeting on August 18th.

MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to recommend adding a crosswalk at 37th Avenue at a cost of \$6,065.73 to the Ways and Means Committee; Councilmember Carroll seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

G. Consideration of Parallel Parking on Both Sides of Palm Boulevard

Chair Bettelli stated that the Committee had looked into parallel parking on both sides of Palm Boulevard in the past, but SCDOT only approved parallel parking on the ocean-side since the right-of-way is wide enough for all vehicles to park four feet (4 ft.) from the pavement. The Chair also cautioned that, if parallel parking was allowed on the land-side of Palm, drivers would end up going into the neighborhoods to turn around or would make u-turns at Cameron or on Palm.

Councilmember Carroll reported that SCDOT states on their website that they prefer parallel parking on roads like Palm and that Chief Buckhannon would also prefer to see parallel parking on both sides of the road. He opined that backing into the traffic on Palm Boulevard was very dangerous; he thought everyone would be safer if parallel parking were implemented.

Councilmember Bergwerf commented that people could park parallel or perpendicular in the ocean-side of Palm with adequate space.

Councilmember Carroll said that, in addition to parallel parking on both sides of the street, he would prefer to see the cars parked in only one (1) layer, not two or three (2-3) side by side.

Administrator Tucker recalled that parallel parking on the non-ocean side of Palm was fully vetted at prior meetings where the need for vehicles to turnaround was also discussed as well as the reduction to the number of spaces as it relates to the Beach Management Plan.

Captain Usry noted that key to the Chief's preference of parallel parking is the added space that would be available for public safety vehicles to use.

Chair Bettelli reminded the Administrator that space in the right-of-way must be kept open to allow the Public Works' pickup truck to pass.

The Beach Management Plan needs six (6) parking spaces every one-eighth mile (1/8 mi.); the reduction in volume parallel parking would produce would make it difficult to guarantee that the City was in compliance with the Plan.

Chair Bettelli expressed the opinion that the first step should be to approach SCDOT about requiring parking to be four feet (4 ft.) off the road on the non-ocean side of Palm; if that request is positively received, to then ask about parallel parking only on Palm Boulevard.

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The Administrator suggested that, often when vehicles are stacked in front of a residence, the cars belong to guests of the property owner.

The Administrator stated that staff would investigate the feasibility of vehicles parking four feet (4 ft.) from the road on the land-side of Palm and, if there was not adverse impact, she would bring it back to the Committee for a decision. The Administrator also wanted to give the Public Works Director the opportunity to weigh in on the issue; she also wanted to review the minutes of prior meeting when parallel parking was discussed.

6. Highlights of Departmental Reports

Fire Department – Chief Graham

Chief Graham reported that Fire Department personnel had responded to a report of a bomb at a business on Front Beach on July 8th; after law enforcement personnel secured the scene, no bomb was found. On July 10th, personnel assisted in the search for the occupants of an overturned boat off the Charleston jetties; boat 1020 searched Dewees Inlet. With the onset of rough seas ninety minutes (90 min.) into the mission, personnel returned to the marina via the Intracoastal Waterway. On July 30th, personnel responded to a report of a structure fire on Waterway Boulevard; the source of the smoke was an air handling unit on the third floor. Once power to the unit was secured and restored to the remainder of the house, all units returned to service. On July 31st, personnel responded to a report of a structure fire on Hartnett Boulevard; the source of the smoke was found to be an exhaust fan in a bathroom that had overheated and ignited insulation in the attic. After extinguishing the fire and overhauling the affected area, crews thoroughly checked the house for any other signs of smoke or fire, and, finding none, the scene was turned over to the owner. Personnel responded to one hundred sixty-three (163) calls in the month; of which eighty-three (83) were EMS calls. Twenty-seven (27) fire inspections were conducted in the month that located twenty-seven (27) violations. Vehicle maintenance expenses were within normal ranges. On July 13th, Chief Graham, Battalion Chief Hathaway, Engineers Fassos and Puckhaber and Firefighters Ackerman and Helm attended to the needs of the families of several lost boaters as the search was being conducted; they also set up a private area where the family members could speak with representatives from the Coastal Crisis Chaplaincy.

Police Department – Captain Usry

On July 5th, officers responded to a report of an ex-boyfriend breaking into a residence, undressing and slipping into the bed of a woman on the island; she called the Police

Department, and the male was arrested and charged with burglary and criminal sexual conduct. As reported earlier, on July 8th, officers responded to an unknown person's phone call of a bomb in a business on Front Beach; with the assistance of the Charleston County Bomb Squad, no bomb was found, and the case has been assigned to CID and federal agencies for further investigation. Burglaries occurred in the seven hundred (700) and nine hundred (900) blocks of Ocean Boulevard on July 8th; items stolen were valued at an estimated twenty-five hundred dollars (\$2,500). Responding to a report of a noise ordinance violation at 3:00 a.m., officers could hear the loud music from the street; the homeowner, who was uncooperative, was arrested and transported to the Charleston County Detention Center. The Department's enforcement of littering, alcohol and glass on the beach have made an impression on beachgoers; only twenty-nine (29) citations for alcohol on

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on the beach were written in July. Dispatchers responded to five thousand four hundred ninety (5,490) calls in July, and four thousand one hundred seventy-four (4,174) were for the IOP Police Department. One hundred thirty-six (136) tickets were written as a result of four hundred fifteen (415) traffic stops. Eighteen (18) noise complaints were made in July; two (2) received citations, nine (9) received warnings and seven (7) were unfounded.

7. Miscellaneous Business

MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to add a discussion of police body cameras to the Agenda; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Captain Usry reported that she had attended a meeting on the body-worn cameras held by the Law Enforcement Training Council. Presently, the City has sixteen (16) officers wearing the cameras; Captain Usry is reviewing the videos and downloading them to CDs then returning the scan disk to the officers for reuse. This has become a very labor intensive process, and Captain Usry is training the Communication Specialists to take on this task. In the future, the City plans to upgrade the body-worn cameras to cameras that will automatically upload. [The State has allocated three million four hundred thousand dollars (\$3,400,000) for body-worn cameras.] The City keeps the videos for thirty (30) days unless there is a criminal incident or a complaint; when those things happen, the incident is pulled off the video for use in resolving the case. The length of time that the videos are kept varies from one hundred eighty (180) days in North Charleston to fourteen (14) days in the City of Charleston.

Next Meeting Date: 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, September 9th in the Conference Room

8. Executive Session – not needed

9. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:56 a.m.; Chair Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk