

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

5:30 p.m., Monday, November 9, 2015

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee was called to order at 5:30 p.m., Monday, November 9, 2015 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Ferencz and Loftus, Chair Ward, Administrator Tucker, Public Works Director Pitts, Assistant Administrator Fragoso and City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

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

MOTION: Councilmember Loftus moved to re-order the Agenda to discuss Item A under Old Business and to discuss the item noted in New Business at this point in the meeting; Chair Ward seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Citizens' Comments

Jim Raih, 3904 Cameron Boulevard, stated that he had sent an email to Council and the Mayor in the last month relevant to drainage issues on the island. He used 3808 Palm Boulevard as a good example of people doing improvements on their own without getting the proper permitting and the landscape architect doing the work without approval from the City's Building Department; he said that he has watched the landscaper do work on all four (4) sides of the property, resulting in pushing water in all directions, including Palm Boulevard. He noted that he has lived on the island since 1984 and that he has never seen water standing on Palm Boulevard as it has recently.

5. Old Business

A. Further discussion of extending sewer to replace septic systems

Bill Jenkins of the Isle of Palms Water and Sewer Commission said that he was present to answer the Committee's questions about sewer versus septic systems.

Chair Ward said that the Committee was interested in knowing what the capacity was of the new plant on 41st Avenue.

Councilmember Loftus asked whether, in a partnership between the City and the Water and Sewer Commission, the capacity was available if the entire island were to be sewerred, eliminating septic systems completely. The Councilmember explained that one (1) idea being considered was when a home with a septic system was purchased, the new owner would be required to hook into the sewer system; when a house is passed along to a family member(s), the property would not be required to get sewer until it was sold to someone outside the family.

Mr. Jenkins commented that the Water and Sewer Commission had recently replaced the plant on Forest Trail; when that was done, the capacity was slated to treat three hundred thousand (300,000) gallons per day. The new plant at 41st Avenue was built for seven hundred twenty-five thousand (725,000) gallons ultimate treatment capacity per day but it was designed for three hundred fifty thousand (350,000) gallons per day; to upgrade that facility would require the addition of two (2) additional cassettes to each membrane (basin) to attain the seven hundred

fifty thousand gallon (750,000 gal.) treatment capacity. If they were to sewer other portions of the island and capacity was reached, the Water and Sewer Commission would have to build another facility. The goal for the second phase was to bring in an additional seven hundred fifty thousand gallon (750,000 gal.) capacity; when this phase was completed, the plan was to eliminate the plant in Wild Dunes. Mr. Jenkins stated that, since residents appear to be more favorable about tapping into the sewer system, he thought the Commission would be willing to build that facility and to reach out to the residents of the island.

Mr. Jenkins informed the Committee that in 1990 when the City first obtained the system, it hired Thomas and Hutton to study and develop a plan for sewerage the entire island. The plan focused on land that did not perk, therefore, not suitable for septic systems, as the first project; Thomas and Hutton also computed the cost to the residents for putting in that infrastructure.

In 1990 and again in 2004, the Water and Sewer Commission approached the City about a mandatory connection across the entire island that would allow them to reach out to sewer areas of the island. Without a ninety percent (90%) commitment from residents today, the Water and Sewer Commission finds it difficult to go into a neighborhood to offer sewer.

Councilmember Loftus asked if it was feasible to build the cost of the sewer connection into the sale price of the house, leaving new residents to pay the cost; he stated that the transition would take at least ten years (10 yrs.) and deserved study.

In the Administrator's opinion, there are things that people do not understand; citizens who are interested in connecting to the sewer system do not realize that there are expenses involved in making the connection, and citizens who have a functioning septic system are not interested.

Director Kerr stated that, of the two thousand residences outside of Wild Dunes, about sixty percent (60%) are on septic.

Mr. Jenkins commented that the Water and Sewer Commission are maintaining ninety-eight (98) grinder pumps on the island, but he does not know how many are in operation on the island. Since the one thousand year (1000-yr.) storm, Mr. Jenkins reported receiving many phone calls from residents who are interested in connecting to the sewer system.

Responding to Councilmember Ferencz, Mr. Jenkins said that the Water and Sewer Commission currently has the capacity to add about six hundred (600) properties to the system.

6. New Business

Discussion of possible drainage improvements following 1,000-year storm

Administrator Tucker said that Dave Stevens of Civil Site Environmental has typically been the person the City has called when engineering services are needed, particularly on drainage issues. The Administrator explained that the City has something of a conundrum in its drainage system because the City knows the part of the system that belongs to it, but there is a huge part

of the drainage system that was installed by the original developer, by the County or by SCDOT, and it

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is part of that system “that needs huge improvements to avoid what the City has experienced in recent days and weeks.” Some of the smaller fixes Mr. Stevens has recommended could be done

now and at the City’s expense. The Administrator expressed the opinion that it is incumbent upon the elected body to be responsive to the residents who have been reaching out to the City asking for relief. On the larger drainage issues that are the County’s and SCDOT’s responsibility, the City must reach out to them and get them involved.

Mr. Stevens spread out cut-and-pasted drawings of the City’s drainage system and pointed out specific problems on the island, for instance a blockage in the 23rd Avenue ditch due to the lack of maintenance. He also noted that many of the ditches are not functioning properly; he stated that he thought the open system creates a large piece of the island’s drainage problems. One of Mr. Steven’s recommendations was to change to raised inlets in active areas, and in many instances, he noted that the pipes were too small at fifteen inches (15 in.).

Director Pitts noted that every ditch on the island is cleaned once every five (5) years.

Mr. Stevens suggested that, as possible, the City might upgrade some of the outfall lines to open up the major drainage ways – in general, he suggested that the City should develop an overall drainage plan, and establish a hierarchy of what areas to do first.

MOTION: Councilmember Loftus moved to authorize Administrator Tucker to get a full assessment of the island’s drainage system; Councilmember Ferencz seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting’s Minutes

MOTION: Councilmember Loftus moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 7, 2015 as submitted; Councilmember Ferencz seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Department Report for October 2015 – Director Pitts

A. Vehicle Maintenance and Trash Collection Tracking Reports

The Director reported that sixty-two tons (62 T.) of debris were taken to the landfill, and the bulk of it was storm-related; the focus of work for October was pumping water. Vehicle maintenance was higher than normal primarily attributable to the purchase of tires and repairs due to the storm.

Garbage was down for the month as was debris collection; Charleston County FEMA operations were on the island on October 9th and 10th, and they carried the debris they collected off the island.

B. Discussion of vehicle and hopper purchase

This is a carryover of business from the October meeting when Director Pitts was asked to research the differences between the Ford F250 and the Ford F350. The Director indicated that he had contacted Ford and was told that the two (2) trucks have the same motor, but different

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suspension and a slightly different gear ratio, so the fuel mileage would be relatively equivalent. Ford is recommending the F350 due to the weight of the hopper.

MOTION: Councilmember Loftus moved to purchase the Ford F350 in the amount of \$28,468, state contract pricing; Councilmember Ferencz seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. Old Business

B. Discussion of IOP Public Works debris operation

Director Pitts referred to the photographs sent by Lenora White of the small debris left after a debris pickup and the markings left by the equipment; the Director noted that the debris removal on the island is in keeping with the ordinance and that loose limbs and debris are to be bagged by the homeowner. (A copy of the photos is attached to the historical record of the meeting.)

Chair Ward recalled that this subject has been discussed many times by the Committee.

Since Wild Dunes is made up of a lot of small homeowners associations, Councilmember Loftus suggested that personnel develop a presentation to them explaining what debris the ordinance states will be removed by Public Works personnel and where debris should be placed to avoid damaging curbs and landscaping.

Administrator Tucker noted that having a more refined debris removal operation would not be cost effective for the City.

C. Update on golf cart path between 20th Avenue and the Island Center

Director Kerr reported that he has spoken with representatives of SCDOT about the proposed golf cart path and was only told that it “probably” could be done, but the final decision would have to be made on the state level. The Director informed the Committee that the path would have to be widened to eight feet (8 ft.), doubling its width, and a barrier would have to be constructed between the path and the roadway; the savings anticipated by not relocating the utilities would be negated by the cost of widening the sidewalk to eight feet (8 ft.) for a distance of over two hundred feet (200 ft.).

Chair Ward stated that this path was something that the citizens wanted, and he opined that the project should move forward in the most cost effective way.

In the Administrator's opinion, the City will agree with whatever SCDOT will approve because the consensus is that a golf cart path is needed there, and to get SCDOT approval will require the City to submit a design with a request for an encroachment permit.

MOTION: Chair Ward moved to authorize up to \$4,000 for a design to submit to SCDOT with a request for an encroachment permit for a golf cart path between 20th Avenue and the Island Center; Councilmember Ferencz seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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D. Request to clean ditch along 45th Avenue

Administrator Tucker reminded the Committee that, the last time the City cleaned the ditch at 45th Avenue, it generated a negative response from another resident who lives on 44th Avenue; there-fore, she has asked Director Pitts to contact Mrs. Johnson, who made the request, to show him exactly what she wants done. From the pictures she submitted, the Administrator was not clear about her request. (Copies of the letter and photos are attached to the historical record of the meeting.)

7. Miscellaneous Business

July, August and September beach monitoring results were all good.

Next Meeting Date: 5:30 p.m., Thursday, January 7, 2016 in the Conference Room

8. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilmember Ferencz moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m.; Councilmember Loftus seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland
City Clerk