

**PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE**  
5:30 p.m., Monday, February 1, 2016

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee was called to order at 5:30 p.m., Monday, February 1, 2016 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Ferencz and Kinghorn, Chair Ward, City Administrator Tucker, Public Works Director Pitts 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 had been duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

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

**MOTION: Councilmember Ferencz moved to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of January 25, 2016 as submitted; Councilmember Kinghorn seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. **Citizens' Comments – none**

4. **Departmental Report for January 2016 – Director Pitts**

According to Director Pitts, the highlights for January were the continued cleaning of the rights-of-way and the pumping of water on 46<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> Avenues on January 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Miscellaneous debris was up to thirty-six and a quarter tons (36.25 T.); the Department did not have any large expenditures for vehicle maintenance for the month. Garbage increased by some nine tons (9 T.) over the same month in the previous year, and yard debris was up nearly eleven tons (11 T.) for the same period in 2015.

Councilmember Kinghorn thanked the Director for the way his report was presented; it was easy to understand and brief.

Councilmember Ferencz asked for clarification on the issue at 3705 Palm Boulevard. Director Pitts stated that the property owner was a Columbia resident, and the pampas grass was overgrown and impeding the right-of-way. The Public Works staff cleaned it as well as the corner, which he did not think was in question; he noted that one of the residents of 3703 Palm was a member of the native wild flower plants group. The Director did contact the owner at 3705 who gave him permission to cut; although the task was not a normal one for Public Works, such work happens when property owners are not year-round residents.

Councilmember Ferencz then asked whether the problem was large enough for the City to establish a policy that the City would cut it once, but any subsequent maintenance provided by the City would be charged back to the owner.

Administrator Tucker explained that the City would need to have the ability to put a lien on the property in order to collect.

Historically, Director Pitts, Director Kerr or the Livability Officer has contacted the owner and given him the opportunity to do the work, but, if he takes no action, the City will do it. But the Director did not think that such instances occur frequently enough to be considered a real problem.

As to the flurry of emails on 3705 Palm Boulevard, Administrator Tucker explained that, sometimes when a resident is enforced on for whatever reason, he feels it becomes his responsibility to report other situations that the City might not have seen.

## 5. Old Business

### A. Further discussion of extending sewer to replace septic systems

One of the issues this Committee needs to discuss is whether or not this initiative rests in the Public Works Committee to gather the information or stays with the Planning Commission until they finish their work and present their recommendations to City Council. Director Kerr researched meeting minutes and locate the source of confusion between the two (2) bodies; the trail from meeting to meeting was followed in the handout. (A copy of the handout is attached to the historical records of the meeting.) The Water and Sewer Commission has received inquiries from both the Planning Commission and Public Works Committee members and has asked to be responsive to one (1) or the other.

Chair Ward stated that he understood that the Planning Commission was to give the Public Works Committee recommendations.

Councilmember Ferencz opined that the Planning Commission has a broader range of talents than the Public Works Committee, making them more qualified than the Committee to take the information and make recommendations.

**MOTION: Councilmember Ferencz moved to the issue of replacing septic systems with sewer be assigned to the Planning Commission to research and make recommendations to City Council; Chair Ward seconded.**

When asked whether the Planning Commission needed guidance from the Committee or City Council, the Administrator responded that they understand the concerns and the nature of the task, but the motion could be amended to narrow the scope if the Committee wanted to do so.

Chair Ward was of the opinion that the scope was defined in the City Council meeting of October 27, 2015 and quoted the following:

“The [Public Works] Committee requested that the Planning Commission research the recommendation to require residences to be on sewer, grandfathering the existing septic systems; once the property changed ownership [outside of the estate], the new owner had to tie in to the sewer system.”

In Director Kerr’s view, the original request has morphed into sewerage the entire island at some point in the future; therefore, the Planning Commission is looking at a broad spectrum of things.

Chair Ward asked if they were planning to make tying into the sewer mandatory.

From input from the Water and Sewer Commission, the Planning Commission has concluded that the idea of triggering a tie-in when a property is sold would not give the Commission the leverage they need to install sewer systems; therefore, transitioning to sewer island-wide could not be

accomplished that way. The Commission did not want to stop there; they then heard that there was a movement to go to sewer and they should look at other avenues to achieve that goal.

Councilmember Kinghorn indicated that he was not convinced that the Planning Commission knew what its task was.

Chair Ward supported Councilmember Ferencz' opinion that the Planning Commission has the experience and background knowledge that meets the needs of addressing the problem.

Director Kerr anticipated that the Planning Commission would make a very focused recommendation that might or might not reflect the discussions thus far in the meeting. They have been talking about extending lines where interest has already been expressed, a project that might create an impetus for running a line and maybe that could be expanded; for new construction, the property owner would be required to tie-in to sewer if it were within a specific distance from the property; the Water and Sewer Commission could impose an additional fee on bills that would grow and be used for expansion of sewer lines. The Director stated that he did not expect a fully comprehensive plan, not a roadmap of how to get sewer island-wide.

Administrator Tucker stated that she did not think the Planning Commission knows the following:

- where there is sewer and where there is none;
- where there are grinder pumps;
- what a grinder pump is and why was it required;
- would a grinder pump facilitate getting sewer installed if it were no longer allowed since it is the middle step between septic systems and sewer;
- what is the exact capacity of the treatment plant and how much remains;
- what basins on the island would be selected as priorities for receiving the public sewer;
- how the 208 Water Management Plan would factor in to any requests for expansions of permits for treatment at the facilities; and
- at what point would they meet the limits of their permit, which means they would have to apply for an upgraded permit which might trigger the requirements of the Water Quality Management Plan, which means a study of whether or not it makes better sense to take the waste to a larger provider rather than treating it and going inactive with the existing plants in treating at a larger plant and taking it to a larger body of water to re-open shellfish zones.

Councilmember Kinghorn asked if this type of guidance was helpful to the Planning Commission and did it provide the type of direction they need. Director Kerr indicated that the guidance would be helpful, and, knowing that the Director had forwarded his email, Councilmember Kinghorn suggested that the schedule he included in the email be added to the motion as an amendment.

**Amendment: Councilmember Kinghorn moved to amend the motion by adding the following schedule; Councilmember Ferencz seconded.**

**Proposed draft schedule and topics:**

- March Overview of service area currently served ad not served. ID priority areas to be served. Capacity considerations for future tie-ins.**
- April Best practices of municipalities/SPD (3) who have made similar implementations**
- May FAQ's. Identification of technical issues to be considered**
- June Best practices (3) for citizen input, acceptance and implementation**
- July Budget estimates and best practices (3) for financing**
- Sept. Draft recommendations for Phased in implementation**
- Oct. IOPW&S needs from City**
- Nov. Draft implementation plan**

Director Kerr explained the “email storm” from last week had been started by the fact that the Planning Commission requested that the Water and Sewer Commission be present at their next meeting, and they initially responded that they would be present. They have since indicated that they will not attend and that questions be sent to them in writing to which they will respond. He inquired if the Public Works Committee was now clarifying for the Water and Sewer Commission that they now have to be responsive to one (1) group; the Director opined that, if the communication between the Planning Commission were to be limited to letter writing; the Commission will be unable to agree to a schedule.

Chair Ward stated that his wish was for the Planning Commission be the only entity representing the City on matters relative to septic and sewer systems.

The Administrator suggested that, if the Planning Commission could meet earlier, part of the complication of having Water and Sewer personnel available might be eliminated.

Councilmembers Kinghorn and Ferencz withdrew the amendment and second, respectively.

**VOTE: The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**B. Update on golf cart path between 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the Island Center**

Administrator Tucker reported that staff continues to put together the documents to submit the permit application; staff has had the survey done and the landscape architect is working on a design.

Director Kerr stated that he was confident that the permit documents would be in SCDOT hands in the next thirty (30) days.

**C. Update on request to clean ditch along 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

Director Pitts reported that he spoke with the homeowner in Virginia, and she told him that, on her last visit, there had been some general debris in the ditch, but that the grass had impeded onto 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue creating elevation that pushed water into her driveway. The Public Works' personnel need to scrape the grass off the road to allow water to get into the swail.

**D. Discussion of public restrooms**

This is the time of year when the general maintenance of the building is done, i.e. clean up, painting, repairs, etc. in anticipation of the start of the season.

Councilmember Kinghorn suggested that this item be listed on the *Agenda* as public restrooms and beach access, which speak to a larger issue. He also suggested that the City contact the CVB to ask that they advocate on the City's behalf to County Council and to the Council of Governments for funding for new public restrooms. In addition, he reminded the Committee that the City contributes more than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) to the CVB annually.

Administrator Tucker noted that the CVB did pay for and assist the City with information gathering to prove that the users, based on cell phone usage, were not from this area; this data will help the City with grant funds because it substantiates the numbers of users who are not Isle of Palms' residents.

Councilmember Ferencz asked at what point the City would begin to put money into savings for the construction of the new public restrooms.

In the Administrator's opinion, the greatest leverage to get outside participation would be the City's having "skin in the game" as it does in beach restoration. She and the Mayor plan to speak with people in Columbia on Wednesday in part about the public restrooms; staff put a placeholder for construction in the FY16 budget.

On the subject of beach accesses, the Administrator reminded the Committee that the City has a permit for the beach access path at the public restrooms, but the City has held off on the replacement because the access could be degraded by work on new restrooms or construct something that, when the building is constructed, the two (2) do not marry up properly. The permit has three (3) years remaining and can be renewed for another five (5) years.

Councilmember Kinghorn said that the remaining life on the permit for a new beach access is limited and should be a talking point when seeking funds.

A drastic action that staff discussed was demolishing the building because it is in sub-standard condition and installing port-a-lets, hoping to put pressure on other local governments in the area.

**E. Discussion of improvements to Public Works site**

The Administrator reported that both Directors Kerr and Pitts were working hard, but still do not have approved plans by Thomas and Hutton, but the City was close.

**F. Discussion of sign for Mayor Carmen R. Bunch Park**

According to the Administrator, the City has received the sign proof, and it will be manufactured shortly. Once it is installed, the City will arrange with the family to have a small ceremony for its unveiling.

Since they are related, Chair Ward decided to address items G through I together.

**G. Timeline for installations of Parking Concept C signs**

**H. Consideration of estimated cost to remove signs at end of beach season**

**I. Discussion of total budget for Concept C parking, including signs.**

The timeline is that the vendor has signed the contract and received the Notice to Proceed, giving him forty-five (45) days to fabricate and install the signs.

Councilmember Ferencz asked whether the vendor had been told that there might be a need to take the signs down at the end of the season, and the Administrator did not think so, but staff was fully aware. Administrator Tucker explained that the signs will not be set in cement in the ground; following SCDOT regulations, the signs will be mounted on breakaway poles.

Chair Ward asked for the total sign cost; the Administrator reported the cost to be fifty-eight thousand nine hundred dollars (\$58,900).

A schedule of projected expenses for the managed beach access parking plan was included in meeting packets; all of the numbers in the upper half of the page are from the budget, and the only factual number is the sign cost since that contract has been awarded.

Staff's internal goal was to have all of the signs installed when implementation starts.

**J. Status of Phase II Drainage**

Administrator Tucker was pleased to announce that progress is being made on this project; easement documents are being signed and recorded – this must be done before the project can be bid. A portion of an easement is in a parking lot on 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue; since the construction will disrupt the parking lot, the City will go to the owner for a temporary construction easement.

**6. New Business**

**Review of FY17 Revenue Budget**

Administrator Tucker reported that revenue estimates are based on the past twelve (12) months actual collections; revenues do not vary much from year-to-year, so the review will cover the highlights. Where there is a change in the amount budgeted, the numbers are bolded. Looking at line 22 – Parking Lot Revenue in the General Fund, an increase of forty-two thousand dollars

(\$42,000) is proposed; the increase is based on the daily rates that were increased at the last Council meeting and the possibility of off-season revenue.

Responding to Councilmember Kinghorn's question, the only revenue generated directly from the Public Works Department is for the sale of additional rollout carts to residents and rental property owners who might have as many as eight (8) carts.

Any lines in this round of the budget referring to transfers should be ignored; these numbers typically are calculated as a function of balancing the budget.

In the Capital Project Fund, the only real income is from interest income; the grant funds are the anticipated NPDES funds the City will receive for the improvements to the Public Works site.

Both Municipal Accommodations Fees and County Accommodations Taxes are projected to have small increases in the next fiscal year, as are Hospitality Taxes. In State Accommodations Taxes, the revenue to the City is expected to increase slightly over FY16.

For the Disaster Recovery Fund, the only revenue shown is interest income.

Administrator Tucker explained that the Victims Assistance Fund is a fund to watch as its fund balance has gone down steadily for the past several years, and the police officer who performs that function along with other functions receives a portion of the expense attributed to the officer from this fund. As the fund balance is reduced, more of these expenses will move to the General Fund.

The Volunteer 1% Fund gets its revenue from a percentage of the casualty insurance premiums homeowners pay; the City makes no decisions about the use of these funds; it only performs fiduciary responsibilities for it. The funds are to be spent for entertainment for Fire Department personnel; the majority of the funds at the Isle of Palms buys additional life insurance for them.

Plant-a-Palm revenue saw a big uptick at the end of 2015 as people bought commemorative bricks to go on Front Beach; staff believes that the increase was due to the use of social media.

Chair Ward asked if there was a map of the bricks, and the Administrator replied that the map, a photographic key, was in the Building Department.

For the Recreation Building Fund, revenues come from a donation to the Connector Run of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) and registration fees from the Beach Run of about seventy-five hundred dollars (\$7,500). In addition, the State ATAX Fund gives a three thousand dollar (\$3,000) sponsorship for the Beach Run that is returned to the Building Fund; at times there are private donations.

Councilmember Kinghorn stated that he did not think either of these funds were marketed well; as a resident of the island for eight (8) years, he only learned of them by attendance at meetings. Whether it is through social media or special events or newsletters going out to citizens, he thought that residents should be made aware of these funds and how the funds can be used. He stated that "they were easy revenues [the City] was missing out on."

The final page is Marina Revenue which consists of primarily of rents from the marina tenants and the additional rent usually collected from the restaurant.

Councilmember Kinghorn asked about the Non-standard Service Clause the City has with SCE&G and how they were accounted for. Administrator Tucker explained that those funds do not show on the City's books; she explained that the fund is rolling every year for the previous three (3) years. If the City wants to use those funds, which are a fifty-fifty (50-50) match, notification of an initiative is given to SCE&G; the most recent activity with the Non-standard Service Clause were the new lights installed at Front Beach last year, the gateway to the Recreation Center and the light between 21<sup>st</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue. A placeholder is always put in the budget in case a project comes up during the year.

Councilmember Kinghorn asked if the funds could be used for technical assistance or engineering plans to determine the feasibility of a project.

The Administrator stated that she has been told that the intent of the Non-standard Service Clause was to do special, unusual and/or beautifying kinds of electrical projects.

Councilmember Ferencz commented that she was not aware of the City pursuing a lot of grants and asked if there were not governmental grants that the City could be looking out.

Administrator Tucker stated that the City does seek as many as the City qualifies for, but there are likely more, and it is a challenge to do it. She reported that the switch to LED lighting at the Front Beach was the result of an energy grant; and the HVAC at the Recreation Department came through a Community Block Grant. The City applies every year for funds from FEMA for the Fire Department. She remarked that the City has a stigma that drops it to a non-competitive place; the Isle of Palms is perceived as a very affluent community and quite often the City's competitors are not as affluent and get more points on need than the City.

The City does not have a person who is assigned to write or administer grants, which was one (1) reason that the City reached out to the COG about the public restrooms. Having been a grants writer when working with the COG, the Administrator noted that there are not as many grants available as there were in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Councilmember Kinghorn encouraged the City to do more; he suggested incentivizing the department managers, and, if they get a grant, the City either matches it for use elsewhere in the department or some other reward system to encourage them to look for more. He commented that there are state, local, federal, corporations, and foundations that fund grants, and they are more competitive today.

Getting back on track, the Administrator directed attention to the large schedule that compares revenues budgeted for FY16 versus projected for FY17 by sources of funds and the small box at the bottom of the page. She noted that the General Fund and the Capital Projects Fund are listed together since the only source of money for the Capital Projects Fund is the General Fund; these funds comprise sixty-four percent (64%) of the total budget. The tourism funds make up twenty-six percent (26%) of the total, the marina fund makes up three percent (3%) and all other funds



are one percent (1%). The Administrator stated that the figures for Beach Restoration and Maintenance Funds have not been compiled for this version of the schedule.

## **7. Miscellaneous Business**

Councilmember Kinghorn asked to put two (2) items on the March *Agenda*; they are the City's interface with SCDOT in regards to Palm Boulevard between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues that is deteriorating and a discussion with SCE&G and a plan for undergrounding all of the power lines on the island.

Next Meeting: 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 1, 2016 in Council Chambers.

## **8. Adjourn**

**MOTION: Councilmember Kinghorn moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 p.m.; Councilmember Ferencz seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland  
City Clerk