

**TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, August 29, 2017

A meeting of the Public Safety Committee of Council was held at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, August 28, 2017 at Town Hall, 2056 Middle Street, all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied. Present were Committee members, Chauncey Clark, Chair, Council members Mayor Pat O'Neil and Sarah Church; staff included Administrator Benke, Fire Chief Stith, Acting Police Chief Griffin and Asst. to Administrator Darrow.

**I. Call to Order.** Chair Clark called the meeting to order, stated the press and public were duly notified pursuant to state law and noted that all Committee members were present. Approximately twenty (20) residents and one media (Zach Giroux, Moultrie News) were in attendance.

**II. General Discussion Traffic Control and Island Speed Limits**

Committee briefly reviewed the posted speed limits for the Island as referenced on the map attached as **Exhibit A**. Generally, the speed limit is 30 mph island-wide unless otherwise posted. Posted signs, as identified on the map (Exhibit A), are either 25 mph or 35 mph.

Staff reviewed the process required to request a speed limit change with SCDOT:

- (1) Provide SCDOT with an engineering traffic study and other empirical evidence (accident and speeding tickets);
- (2) SCDOT reviews request against state/industry traffic standards and guidelines, and, comprehensively against the speed limits and traffic on the balance of the Island.

Chair Clark noted Town can approach SCDOT with a designated "hot spot" to consider a speed limit change and requested Committee consider sending a recommendation to Council for the same.

Committee discussed the new police radar trailer, which the Town owns, and new features available on this device. It can record the number of cars travelling through the sign area and the speed limit of the vehicles in front of the radar.

Chair Clark asked Staff to inquire whether SCDOT would accept the radar's statistics in lieu of, or in addition to, engineering traffic studies, accident reports and traffic tickets.

Councilmember Church noted that, traditionally, people modify their behavior when they see the flashing speed sign, slowing down as they approach it. The point being that the radar information alone may not give an accurate representation of the true speeders on the Island.

Committee discussed whether the radar sign could be tweaked, dimmed or modified so that motorists would not know it was recording speed. Staff speculated the device may not operate effectively if modified as Committee suggested.

## **Public Comments**

### **Paul Flaherty (2208 Atlantic Avenue, SI)**

Regarding Sullivan’s Island Elementary School: expressed concern with children biking to the school and speeders, noting this morning he saw six children biking to SIES and two cars speeding down his block of Atlantic Avenue, clearly going close to 40mph in a 25mph zone.

### **Tim Reese (305 Station 20, SI)**

Speaking on behalf of himself, Callie Shell and Vince Musi (2002 Middle Street), he requested the Town include the section of Middle Street at Station 20 toward Fort Moultrie as “hot spot” area. Noted vehicles tend to significantly speed up just past The Co-Op at Station 20.

### **Duke Wright (3034 Marshall Blvd, SI)**

Stations 30-31 at Marshall Boulevard area are a “hot spot” for traffic issues. Speed is posted at 25mph, but he regularly sees vehicles speeding, usually trucks with water gear in it, near the beach paths.

### **Wayne Guckenberger (2105 Pettigrew, SI)**

Asked if the Town has manpower to enforce speeding and requested information on the number of speeding ticket the Town normally issues.

Committee discussed Town enforcement of speeding. Staff (acting Chief Griffin) noted he did not have speeding ticket statistics available to share with Committee at present; noted Staff takes a balanced approach with enforcement: speed radar sign (tool); ticketing speeders; patrolling the area and staging patrol vehicles on the Island.

Mayor O’Neil asked acting Chief Griffin to provide speeding ticket statistics in the near future.

### **Linda Perkis (2871 Brownell Ave, SI)**

Noted Jasper Boulevard, a straight and wide stretch of road, is tantamount to a small highway. Vehicles routinely drive that road (signed for 35 mph) at close to 50mph, passing other vehicles on the road.

### **Paul Flaherty (2208 Atlantic Avenue, SI)**

Inquired about existing golf cart rules and their enforcement in order to avoid accidents and increase safety.

Noted he has witnessed the following on golf carts:

- Drinking and driving, or, drunk drivers
- Failure to signal and/or yield at intersections
- Underage driving of carts
- Children hanging off the carts (carts don’t have seat belts)
- Overload of children on a cart (5 children crammed into a 2- seater)

What can Town do?

Staff (Administrator Benke)

- Noted golf carts are regulated by state statutes and follow the same road rules as cars, except golf carts cannot ride on an SCDOT primary road (Jasper Boulevard), cross bridges or drive at night (low speed vehicles may drive at night).
- Town cannot supersede state laws for golf cart regulations and provide for stricter statutes.
- Town can enforce the motor vehicle laws for golf carts.

Committee discussed public outreach and education regarding golf cart rules: highlight on website and push information through social media outlets.

**Mike Walsh (2530 I'On Avenue, SI)**

Noted other motorized vehicles that contribute to safety issues include mopeds, usually rentals, and three-wheel mopeds that look like side cars. He also observed that bicyclists are increasing in quantity. Town residents need to know what considerations bicyclists and motor vehicles must demonstrate to safely share the road.

**Wayne Guckenberger (2105 Pettigrew St, SI)**

Added that electric bicycles are increasingly being seen and these vehicles can operate at up to 20mph speeds. He has witnessed children age 12-13 operating these electric bicycles and asked what the minimum age is for operating same?

Staff noted they would check the minimum age to operate an electric bicycle.

Mayor O'Neil also noted electric skateboards are a safety consideration.

**Committee closed public comments at this point.**

Chair Clark proposed Committee recommend to Council the designation of a traffic "hot spot" to study and pursue speed limit change with SCDOT.

**MOTION: Councilmember Church moved to recommend to Town Council the reduction in speed limit from 35 mph to 25mph for the portion of Middle Street from Station 20 Street to Station 14 Street; seconded by Mayor O'Neil. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.**

**III. General Discussion Parking Matters**

**A. Drop Off/Pick Up at Beach Paths**

Concern: beachgoers dropping off or picking up families at beach paths, creating traffic backlogs on the street and blocking access paths for safety personnel. Of specific concern are the designated emergency paths most often impacted: Station 16, Station 18 ½, Station 22 and Station 28 ½. Administrator Benke noted Stations 18 ½, 22 and 28 ½ are the three worse areas.

Committee briefly discussed options: erecting barricades on the emergency access portion of path or creating a designated drop off spot for beachgoers.

Councilmember Church expressed concern that established drop-off spots near the beach paths would draw people to those stations and create a back-log of cars dropping off/picking up family. She did note the Town could potentially create drop-off locations near less frequented paths, to pull beachgoers away from the most popular access paths. Chief Stith concurred with Councilmember Church and noted such designations would clog the roads.

**ACTION: Committee asked Staff to review and recommend options for dealing with beach access drop off/pick-up. Committee will retain this item for future discussion and study.**

### **B. Drop Off/Pick Up in Commercial District**

Concern: Like the issue of drop off/pick up near beach access paths, vehicles engaging in this activity in the Commercial District slow and/or block traffic along Middle Street. Staff noted state statues (Section 56-5-2510; 56-5-2532(A) and 56-5-2533) allow for vehicles to temporarily stop on the side of the road, provided the vehicle is not blocking traffic.

Administrator Benke noted the Town has considered construction of a sidewalk along Middle Street CC District in front of Dunleavy's, Home Team, etc. He further noted that the current perpendicular parking in front of the restaurants and stores on this side of Middle Street was established circa 1950's (when the area was a pharmacy, small grocery mart, post office, etc.) and would not be approved the SCDOT today.

Committee encouraged outreach to taxi outfits like Uber and Lyft to educate drivers on the Town's drop off/pick-up requirements and staging vehicles. Other strategies discussed included signage and stepped-up parking ticket enforcement

### **Public Comments**

#### **Joe Vergilio (3013 Middle St, SI)**

Noted the City of Charleston has zones where Uber drivers have to navigate to side streets for pick-up and drop-off. When someone arranges for an Uber driver, the computer app or website indicates drop-off/pick up sites on secondary roads.

He suggested the Town contact the Charleston Market manager for Uber to discuss appropriate drop-off/pick up sites.

#### **Tim Reese (305 Station 20, SI)**

Recommended advising Uber and Lyft drivers that they can stage for future Sullivan's Island taxi calls at the Town Hall and/or use it for pick-up and drop-off location.

**ACTION: Committee directed Staff to reach out to Uber and Lyft agency managers to establish safe drop-off/pick-up and/or staging locations and requirements.**

### **C. Vehicle Parking on Station 22 Street at Middle Street**

Concern: Vehicles, particularly trucks with extended beds and tailgates, extend into the roadway near the Station 22/Middle Street intersection, partially due to a construction business in the CCD. Concerns include bicyclists, vehicles and pedestrians having to walk into Station 22 to clear these obstructions, especially at night (trucks park there overnight for business).

#### **Tim Reese (305 Station 20, SI)**

Noted he has spoken with the owner of the construction related business who is amenable to transferring the parking spaces in front of his store to golf-cart only parking as long he has ingress/egress for his business.

Committee discussed options. Staff noted that the Town painted the lines one observes at the end of each parking space. These parking lines do not provide a mechanism to enforce ticketing larger vehicles parking in the spaces. State statute does not define what is considered a small or large vehicle. The Town can enforce parking violations for vehicles that block safe road access.

Administrator Benke noted the biggest traffic problem continues to be the perpendicular parking along Middle Street between Stations 22 ½ and 22. The Town has considered parallel parking in lieu of perpendicular parking.

#### **Cheryl Clark (2119 Pettigrew)**

Submitted the Town's state legislators should provide assistance by modifying state legislation to allow flexibility for towns like Sullivan's Island to develop rules and regulations that address the Town's unique parking and traffic demands, particularly as the demands are largely due to increased traffic stemming from the population explosion in neighboring municipalities.

**ACTION: Committee directed Staff to reach out to the commercial area business owner at corner of Station 22 and Middle Street to discuss construction business overnight parking solutions.**

## **IV. General Discussion Boat Trailer Parking**

### **A. Parking on Town Property**

Concern: In the past boat trailers had been parked on Town property at Thompson Avenue/Station 15. A small group of boat owners in this general area have difficulty parking trailers on their lots, as the lots generally have small front/side/rear yards. Residents ask to relocate boat trailers, currently parked along rights-of-way throughout the area, back to the aforementioned Town lot.

Administrator Benke noted the Town's ordinance regarding vehicles (including boats/trailers) on public rights-of-way mirror the state statute: trailers are allowed to be located on a given right-of-way location for up to 7 days. Town cannot force placement of resident stickers on trailers.

Committee discussed the option of boat storage at the Station 9 Volunteer Fire/Rescue Boat Landing for these homeowners. Staff noted the boat landing is very busy and full, particularly in the summer. Councilmember Church expressed concern with allowing boats to be stored on Town property, particularly as it sets a precedent of the Town going against its zoning ordinance (currently boat storage is not allowed on Town property).

### **Public Comments**

Wayne Guckenberger (2105 Pettigrew St, SI)  
Suggested using the mound behind Stith Park for boat storage

#### **Sydney Cook (1614 Thompson Ave, SI)**

Noted she was on the Planning Commission when this topic was discussed in the past. The Commission's conclusion, after extensive discussion, was that Sullivan's Island is a boating community.

Submitted there are a small number of residents with trailers needing storage (estimating less than a dozen) and most living near/across from the Town lot at Thompson Avenue/Station 15.

Suggested this matter could be moved back to Planning Commission for quick consideration and recommendation to Council.

Committee and Staff briefly discussed enforcement of current trailer parking, noting the Town does not want to encourage non-residents to bring and stage boat trailers on Town right-of-way. Committee asked what would be considered a reasonable and practical enforcement of the 7-day boat/trailer storage rule.

#### **Paul Flaherty (2208 Atlantic Avenue, SI)**

Asked Town to consider rules to prevent boats/trailers being left on the Island, either in right-of-way or yards, in an evacuation situation, noting they are a safety hazard to all homeowners.

#### **Tim Kelly (1456 Thompson Avenue, SI)**

Echoed Ms. Cook's comments, noting that providing residents easy access to boats for quick water access is a valuable asset to this boating community, and, one of the reasons he chose to live on Sullivan's Island.

Noted non-resident trailers/boats are gone from the Island and there are a handful of residents who need the boat storage.

Requested special exception for 6-8 trailers to be placed on the Town lot (Thompson Avenue/Station 15) with the proviso that the owners would maintain the space and groom/weed around the boats. Alternatively, he would like to see strong enforcement of trailer parking throughout the Island.

**MOTION: Mayor O'Neil recommended to Council that it refer this matter to the Planning Commission for a quick review and recommendation, specifics being: consideration for private boat/trailer storage on Town property located at Thompson Avenue/Station 15 provided a letter of agreement is signed between residents and Town that considers legal/liability ramifications, provides that homeowners maintain the lot, and that the residential boat trailers are tagged with a residential sticker. Planning Commission to receive scope of request and proposed language from Staff. Seconded by Councilmember Church. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.**

**Suzie Callahan (1665 Middle St, SI)**

Noted she is one of the homeowners with a boat trailer currently in the right-of-way in front of her home, an unsafe space where the trailer has already been struck. Asked for guidance on what she should currently do with her boat: move it onto the Thompson/Station 15 lot or keep it on the right-of-way.

Staff will discuss Ms. Callahan's situation with her after the meeting.

**V. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned (Mayor O'Neil motion; Councilmember Church seconded; unanimous approval) at approximately 9:55a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chauncey Clark, Chair  
Public Safety Committee

Approved at the October 2, 2017 Council Workshop





