

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

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

The Public Safety Committee of Council met at 8:30 A.M., this date, 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, 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 all Committee members were present. Approximately eight (8) members in audience: four (4) residents (including Councilmember Mark Howard) and four (4) additional staff members (3 police and 1 fire staff); no media.

**II. St. Patrick's Day Celebration and Report from Staff**

Committee reviewed 2019 St. Patrick's Day Celebration in the Community Commercial District (CCD) held on Saturday, March 17, 2019.

Chair Clark provided report of event held by CCD businesses:

- Event ended at sunset (7:30PM)
- Roadblocks were in place by 9:00AM with traffic cones removed by/before 7:00PM
- Three arrests were made: reckless driving, excessive drunkenness (inside Dunleavy's) and an assault by girlfriend against her boyfriend. Other notes: there were a number of people significantly intoxicated, with one intoxicated person rescued from the marsh, and signs of alcohol being carried on the street.
- Town spent \$5,500 for event; expense includes staffing costs above/beyond the staffing that would have already been on duty.

Committee reviewed Staff recommendations for 2020 event:

1. All vendors outside of right-of-way (ROW) by 5:00PM (terminate outside alcohol sales by 3:00PM)
2. Street closure on March 17<sup>th</sup> only, whichever day that falls
3. Outside sales of beer and wine only
4. Traffic flow control for 2019 remains in effect
5. Insurance provided by vendors with application remains unchanged
6. Event cost for 2019 remains static for 2020
7. Vendors provide for security, dumpsters and porta potties in 2020 as in 2019
8. Barricade consideration
  - a. Vendors study their risk considerations for increasing barriers, i.e. Jersey barriers at Station 22.5 Street and Middle Street;
  - b. Vendors study their risk for Middle Street with plastic fence vs closure of Station 22.5 Street area

## Committee Discussion

Discussion points included:

1. Breakdown time for vendors in ROW. Administrator Benke advised vendors can tear-down/clear out within 15-30 minutes, depending upon items in ROW.
2. Staff clearing of barriers during event. Administrator Benke advised staff would slide barriers to the side of the public ROW when it was time to open space. He also noted that vendors have to abide by ABC licensing on outside alcohol sales, which he believes restricts outside liquor sales.
3. Active event length for 2019. Chief Griffin noted the event site was active for approximately 6 hours (1:00PM – 7:00PM), with most of the crowd beginning to congregate after 12Noon. Incidents occurred later in the afternoon (4:30PM-6:30PM).
4. Date of Future Events. Committee consensus to only hold future events on St. Patrick's Day (March 17<sup>th</sup>), regardless of the day of the week St. Patrick's Day falls.
5. Event termination in right-of-way.

Councilmember Church noted she previously lived near the CCD area (I'On Street) and remains sensitive to the impact this event has on the neighbors. She is amenable to a 5:00PM termination of outside/ROW events.

Mayor O'Neil observed that when future St. Patrick's Day celebrations occur on weekdays, residents who work off-Island would have difficulty participating with a 5:00PM event termination. Accordingly, he expressed support for a 6:00PM termination of events in ROW.

Chair Clark noted the next Saturday on which St. Patrick's Day will fall is March 17, 2029 (10 years from now).

6. Outside Food Sales. Administrator Benke noted outside food sales is allowed but not required currently. Committee consensus that outside food sales should be mandatory, to offer opportunities for outside activity other than drinking alcohol.
7. Traffic Calming & Intersection Safety at Station 22 ½ Street and Middle Street

Mayor O'Neil suggested approaching SCDOT to allow inclusion of temporary stop sign for Station 22 Street eastbound toward Isle of Palms, noting this would require vehicles to approach Station 22 ½ Street from a start of -0- mph.

Chief Griffin suggested Town could approach SCDOT for a similar temporary stop sign at Station 23 and Middle Street, noting this would slow down vehicles approaching Station 22 ½ Street and Middle Street intersection westbound from Isle of Palms.

Committee discussed the temporary stop sign, jersey barriers versus concrete barriers and options to retain Station 22 ½ Street open. Committee consensus was to leave this discussion for Staff to have with businesses participating in the 2020 St. Patrick's Day CCD event.

**MOTION: Mayor O'Neil recommended that Council adopt the following Staff recommendations for the 2020 St. Patrick's Day Celebration, specifically:**

- 1. All vendors outside of right-of-way by 6:00PM**
  - 2. Street closure on March 17<sup>th</sup> only, whichever day that falls**
  - 3. Outside sales of beer and wine only; outside food sale mandatory**
  - 4. Traffic flow control for 2019 remains in effect**
  - 5. Insurance provided by vendors with application remains unchanged**
  - 6. Event cost for 2019 remains static for 2020**
  - 7. Vendors provide for security, dumpsters and porta potties in 2020 as in 2019**
- Seconded by Councilmember Church. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.**

### **III. Traffic Calming and Crosswalks**

**Betsy Fuller (421 Station 26 Street, SI)** noted she was the mother of the elementary school child who was involved in the bicycle-vehicle accident at Station 21-Middle Street on Friday, May 10, 2019. She reported her son's injury were not severe and he was recovering from the accident. She noted her son attends Sullivan's Island Elementary School and, like many other children, walk their bicycles on the sidewalk/ROW along I'On Avenue to Station 21 or 22 before re-entering Middle Street. Her son's intention was to go to Stith Park ball courts and he was walking his bicycle across Station 21 when the accident occurred.

Ms. Fuller advocated for a crosswalk at Station 21 Street, citing the distance between the existing crosswalks (Station 20 ½ -Middle Street, Post Office area, and Station 22-Middle Street, Republic Ice Cream area) and since the Station 21 intersection is in front of Stith Park. Alternatively, or additionally, she would like to see a speed bump in this area, to slow traffic.

**Cheryl Clark (2119 Pettigrew Street, SI)** noted the City of Isle of Palms has 15 mph speed limit signs in front of their Park. She noted SCDOT advised it did not have signs of this nature; however, the Isle of Palms signs are clearly SCDOT. She suggested a Town grass-roots effort to SCDOT might help break through bureaucratic rigidity.

#### **Committee Discussion**

Committee noted the Town has previously approached SCDOT with the concept of a crosswalk at Station 21-Middle Street and SCDOT declined the request. Administrator Benke noted Robert Clark of SCDOT met with Staff in the past and advised Station 21 Street was an atypical intersection not appropriate for a crosswalk. Crosswalks are typically SCDOT approved for intersections where four roads connect with a sidewalk system.

Committee suggested SCDOT appears, recently, to be more responsive to community concerns and allow for municipal assistance with items such as stormwater management work.

Committee discussed speed humps, 3-way stops and crosswalks, both at Station 21-Middle Street and at advantageous places along Jasper Boulevard.

**MOTION: Mayor O’Neil recommended Council direct Staff to coordinate with SCDOT for potential crosswalks at Station 21-Middle Street and strategic locations along Jasper Boulevard; seconded by Chair Clark. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.**

#### **IV. Public Parking and Traffic Flow**

Chair Clark stated the Town continues to monitor its island-wide parking plan, noting this plan and other traffic flow strategies are designed with the primary goal of moving first response vehicles across the Island for emergency responses. He noted that most of the emergency calls are for life-saving rescue operations along the beach and waterway where response time is life-death critical, and seconds matter.

Committee focused discussion on intersection of Station 22 ½ - Middle Street and traffic flow/traffic calming suggestions, specifically:

- 3-Way Intersection Stop
- Intersection Light

Committee discussed installing a red light at the Station 22 ½-Middle Street intersection, noting it could flash red for Station 22 ½ Street traffic and yellow/amber for Middle Street traffic, and could be controlled by Town patrol officers.

Administrator Benke advised the Town has traffic counts conducted for the CCD plan (circa 2010) by Kimley Horne wherein the Station 22 ½ -Middle Street intersection traffic was rated as “moderate.” He noted SCDOT may find this traffic count data outdated. Administrator Benke noted the Town of Mt. Pleasant utilizes traffic light software that allows patrol officers to manually control lights from their vehicles in the ROW. Software packages could include the ability to set lights for weekday, weekend and holiday traffic patterns. The price for traffic light system would be more expensive depending upon the sophistication of the software. Regardless of SCDOT approval, any traffic light equipment and software would be at the Town’s expense.

Committee expressed interest in gathering more data on a traffic light equipment and accompanying software.

**MOTION: Chair Clark recommended that Council direct Staff to research the feasibility and cost for traffic light equipment and software for the intersection of Station 22 ½ and Middle Street; seconded by Mayor O’Neil. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.**

## V. Speed Limits and Traffic Calming Strategies

Chair Clark noted that various streets island-wide currently have 25mph speed limits (i.e. Atlantic Avenue, Bayonne Street, Marshall Boulevard and I'On Street), but lack sufficient signage to assist with enforcement.

Administrator Benke noted SCDOT was on the Island last week to verify their signage. Town has requested installation of additional signage, notably along roads with 25mph speed limit, in advance of the summer season. SCDOT has not provided Staff with the timeline for speed limit sign installation at present.

**Betsy Fuller (421 Station 26 Street, SI)** recommended installation of speed bumps wherever possible to slow traffic, particularly along Jasper Boulevard, Middle Street CCD and Stations 21 and 23 intersections.

**Mark Howard (Councilmember)** suggested applying fresh paint to crosswalks and no parking areas, where warranted, as a means to alert drivers to use extra caution in those areas. He also supports liberal use of the temporary caution/crosswalk/speed reduction cones/signs in the roadway, particularly in the CCD area.

Chief Griffin recommended acquiring and utilizing flashing speed limit signs. He noted the three flashing caution signs near CCD/Station 22 ½-Middle Street intersection remain flashing daily. Chief Griffin reported he was approached by a citizen who expressed interest in donating funds toward the purchase of a flashing speed limit sign.

Chief Stith noted that the flashing speed limit signs along McCants Drive in Mt. Pleasant (a long residential road with 25mph speed limit) is effective, in his opinion. He submitted use of the same devices along Middle Street and Jasper Boulevard would be helpful.

Administrator Benke noted that repainting crosswalks require SCDOT approval but Town pays for the painting expense. He noted that three years ago crosswalks at Station 22 ½ and Middle Street, Station 22 and Middle Street, and Station 18 ½ Street were repainted at a cost of \$27,000. The Town used CTC grant funds to help off-set this expense. SCDOT requires removal of thermoplastic paint and re-application of same product in crosswalks. Town cannot repaint over existing thermoplastic paint. Since the painting is expensive, SCDOT typically waits 5 years between crosswalk repaint projects.

Administrator Benke noted Staff could check with SCDOT on repainting yellow curb areas where applicable.

**MOTION: Chair Clark recommended Council direct Staff to gather equipment and pricing options for the purchase of electronic flashing speed limit signs, and explore donation requests for same; seconded by Councilmember Church.  
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.**

#### **IV. Adjourn**

There being no further written or public comment, and there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned (Mayor O'Neil motion; Councilmember Church seconded; unanimous approval) at approximately 9:30A.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chauncey Clark, Chair  
Public Safety Committee

Approved at the May 21, 2019 Regular Council Meeting