

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

Friday, August 9, 2019

The Public Safety Committee of Council met at 8:45 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 Tim Reese, Chair, Council members Mayor Pat O'Neil and Chauncey Clark; staff included Administrator Benke, Fire Chief Stith, Police Chief Griffin and Asst. to Administrator Darrow.

I. Call to Order. Chair Reese called the meeting to order, stated the press and public were duly notified pursuant to state law and all Committee members were present. Seven (7) staff members present (aforementioned plus Fire Battalion Chief Hawver, Police Lieutenant Wallace and Enforcement Officer Capone of Police Department); no public; no media.

No changes to published agenda

II. Discussion Regarding Sullivan's Island Elementary School Paid Parking
Chair Reese provided overview of project status:

Town has held recent meetings with representatives from Sullivan's Island Elementary School (SIES) and continues to negotiate with SIES and/or Charleston County School District (CCSD) to reach a compromise arrangement to allow for:

- Town control and management of public demand for parking spaces (very high), outside school hours, in the paved lots in front of SIES: bus loop accessible from Mike Perkis Way and faculty/guest parking lot accessible from I'On Avenue/Atlantic Avenue
- Town control of high traffic flow that currently exists in/around SIES outside school hours and particularly in summer season
- Provide Town opportunity to off-set municipal expense related to Island visitors by making existing parking lots 'paid parking' for a portion of the week.
- Public ability to safely access ocean/beach in front of SIES. New boardwalk adjacent to SIES, off Mike Perkis Way, has been open for approximately three (3) weekends with strong, positive public response to the new boardwalk/access path (commonly known as SIES beach access path).
- Offer accommodations to SIES to address their safety concerns for school season hours and after-school/summer Kaleidoscope program (for working families of school age children).

Committee reviewed current feedback from SIES/CCSD. SIES/CCSD representatives, citing student safety concerns, relayed to Town their current position on paid/unpaid parking and sidewalk/beach access paths:

1. SIES/CCSD does not support parking (paid or unpaid) in lots (Mike Perkis Way bus loop/faculty and guest parking lots) on weekdays during school season and summer (due to Kaleidoscope program)
2. SIES/CCSD does not support public access of any kind (i.e. pedestrian, bicycle) weekdays during school/after-school hours, year-round, on the aforementioned parking lots and school grounds, to include sidewalks along school's building front, and/or the beach access path entrance off Mike Perkis Way
3. If the Town were to proceed with paid parking on the bus-loop lot (Mike Perkis Way) and faculty/guest parking lot, CCSD shall share in a portion of the parking proceeds.
4. Town shall cover or remove current signage, during school year, identifying beach access path and/or parking in Mike Perkis Way (bus loop lot) and faculty/guest parking lots

Committee discussed SIES/CCSD items above noting the following:

- School has been open for five (5) years and there have been no incidents of safety issues/public intrusion
- Safety measures for school grounds, under the purview of CCSD/SIES, have remained in effect these five years and have not changed to date
- School facility and youth recreational grounds are secure behind fencing with no public access to building entrances except monitored front door during school hours
- Oceanfront school recreational grounds have been, and remain, secure even with new beach path
- Mike Perkis Way bus loop and faculty/guest parking lots have remained accessible to public, with no gate or fence barricade in place, since school opened five years ago
- Since SIES opened, there has been high public traffic and parking demands for this area and the aforementioned parking lots outside of school hours, especially in summer season
- The only change to existing situation is the Town's strategy to monitor and charge for parking on the aforementioned lots, and, the new beach access path boardwalk next to Mike Perkis Way
- SIES was made aware of the new beach access path boardwalk project (known as SIES beach path), school officials approved of the project and offered a letter of project support to the Town. Boardwalk is on Town owned property that is not incorporated in the Town's long-term lease to SIES
- The Town, by making the aforementioned lots 'paid parking', would actively manage the site and offer a layer of safety to the school, currently not available, by managing the vehicles entering and parking in the area; cleaning the lots of debris; controlling the times for parking; etc.

Committee members noted the Town continues to explore strategies and options to accommodate SIES/CCSD concerns. Some ideas discussed by Committee and Staff included creating a

separate footpath to access SIES boardwalk/beach access path during school hours; creating paths to navigate beachgoers to SIES path without traversing Mike Perkis Way bus loop parking lot (for school hours), etc.

Chair Reese provided Committee with potential paid/non-paid parking lots and beach access scenarios on an annotated aerial map of the SIES, Poe Library, Battery Thompson and Battery Gadsden area (Exhibit A attached)

Committee members stressed that safety and traffic control are two important but different issues. The Town is mindful of safety concerns for the school campus, but is primarily focused on managing the safe traffic flow and parking demands in this area.

Committee noted that CCSD retains a resource officer (SRO) from the Deputy Sherriff's offices who is specifically charged with maintaining the safety of students and faculty on the school grounds. This SRO works directly with CCSD and SIES on the school's safety needs, but Staff assumes the SRO is mindful of parking lot safety considerations. Town stressed that its Staff remain available to respond to emergency calls and assist with facilitating safety around the school campus; however, the SRO/Deputy Sherriff's office is exclusively mandated by CCSD with identifying and maintaining safety on SIES school grounds.

Mechanics of paid parking: Committee noted the method for managing paid parking would flow from the final arrangements with SIES (whether paid attendants, parking kiosks, etc.).

No action taken: Committee and Staff will continue negotiations with SIES/CCSD. Item to remain on Committee's agenda for status updates.

III. Discussion Regarding Commercial District Traffic Flow

IV. Discussion Regarding Commercial District Parking

Chair Reese noted agenda items 3 and 4 would be addressed together

Chair Reese offered an annotated aerial view of the Community Commercial District (CCD) and entrance into the CCD area in/around Station 22 ½ Street, Jasper Boulevard, I'On Avenue and Middle Street between Stations 22 ½ - Station 22 Streets (**Exhibit B attached**).

Chair Reese noted Exhibit B was his view of a 'master plan' to address traffic flow and parking problems in this CCD/Island entrance corridor. **Highlights he mentioned (see areas marked in 'blue' ink Exhibit B):**

1. Increased golf-cart parking opportunity along Station 22 ½ between Middle Street & I'On, and, similar parking along I'On Avenue
2. Remove all perpendicular parking spaces on Middle Street between Station 22 ½ - Station 22 Streets
3. Identify potential parking lots, either on Town owned parcels or privately-owned parcels, off of Middle Street and Jasper Boulevard (split zoned lots)

4. Establish permanent turn restriction hardscape and install medians along Station 22 ½ Street and/or Jasper Boulevard as shown in Exhibit B

Chair Reese requested Committee support to move the potential parking/traffic flow changes in Exhibit B forward to Council with recommendation to retain a traffic engineer to study and provide feasibility analysis of a master plan.

Committee and staff noted that SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT) would have to review and approve traffic related changes on state owned roads and this agency would require a traffic study and analysis.

Perpendicular Parking on Middle Street

- Administrator Benke, in response to Committee questions, advised that vehicles currently parking in a perpendicular parking space in front of a CCD restaurant/store (i.e. Dunleavy's or Home Team) park on both public owned and privately-owned space
- Committee noted there are currently twenty-four (24) perpendicular parking spaces along Middle Street
- Chair Reese submitted these perpendicular parking spaces contribute the most to traffic congestion and safety issues in the CCD area between Station 22 ½ - Station 22 Streets and Middle Street. Removal of these spaces would make a tremendous impact on increased traffic flow and safety in the area
- Administrator Benke noted the Committee should remain mindful of the unintended consequences of removing the perpendicular parking spaces in front of the restaurants (opening up approximately 20 feet of space in front of restaurants). Town should remain vigilant against pedestrian 'creep' outside the affected establishments, such as patrons loitering outside (noise considerations), chairs and tables being increased outside. He acknowledged this would be a Town Staff enforcement matter.

Scope of Study/Analysis

- Councilmember Clark noted that, before engaging a traffic engineer study, the Town would need to have a clear idea of what it wanted the traffic engineering firm to study
- Chair Reese concurred with Councilmember Clark and noted this Committee and Town Council could continue solidifying the scope of work for the traffic study/analysis. Chair Reese noted the Master CCD Study/Plan was last done 10 years ago (circa 2009-2010) and submitted much has changed in the past decade, especially in terms of visitor demand to the area and population growth in neighboring municipalities (i.e. Mt. Pleasant and East Cooper as whole) who see Sullivan's Island as their beach destination.
- Mayor O'Neil recommended the Town focus priority on traffic flow changes and parking on public owned land, noting parking lots on privately owned lands would involve coordination along multiple private land owners, zoning changes, etc.

- Chair Reese acknowledged Mayor O’Neil’s points regarding privately owned land but lobbied to include these options in a macro-study of the area, as all potential parking lot opportunities should remain under consideration at this point, regardless of the complexity of different scenarios

Medians, Signage, Cost and Other Considerations

- Administrator Benke advised that, in addition the cost of the traffic study, should SCDOT approve raised medians in the roadway, the Town should be prepared to pay for all of this expense (unlikely SCDOT would offset the cost)
- Committee discussed raised medians and beautification along Station 22 ½ Street and Middle Street as traffic flow and traffic calming strategies. These are strategies the Town should explore and include in a traffic study
- Committee submitted Town should include signage, now, to direct beach visitors away from a right turn at Station 22 ½ Street – Middle Street (corner of gas station). Most visitors turn right in search of a beach access path to discover a traffic jam. Clear signage in this area pointing these beachgoers to the beach access paths would be helpful. Signage should start as early as Station 22 ½ Street-Myrtle Avenue intersection area.

MOTION: Chair Reese recommended that Town Council direct staff to develop a scope of work to retain an engineering firm to conduct the necessary traffic studies to develop a feasibility analysis of traffic and parking changes in the corridor bounded by the Island entrance from Mt. Pleasant at Station 22 ½ Street, the Jasper Boulevard area, Stations 23 – Station 21 Streets, the Community Commercial District (CCD) corridor along Middle Street and I’On Avenue immediately adjacent to the CCD area (see Exhibit B). Seconded by Councilmember Clark. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

V. Uber Drop-off at Beach Paths and Commercial Districts

Chair Reese noted SC Code addresses restrictions for dropping off/picking up passengers in an unparked vehicle on public highways and roads. Administrator Benke referenced SC Code of Laws Title 56, Chapter 5, reading aloud §56-5-2510(A)

 [hyperlinks to referenced SC Code: <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/title56.php>
 §56-5-2510(A): <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t56c005.php>]

Text online set forth below:

ARTICLE 19

Stopping, Standing and Parking

SECTION 56-5-2510. Stopping, standing, or parking outside of business or residential district.

(A) No person shall stop, park, or leave standing a vehicle, whether attended or unattended, upon the roadway outside a business or residential district when it is practicable to stop, park, or leave the vehicle off the roadway. An unobstructed width of the

highway opposite a standing vehicle must be left for the free passage of other vehicles and a clear view of the stopped vehicle must be available from a distance of two hundred feet in each direction upon the highway.

(B) This section and Sections 56-5-2530 and 56-5-2560 do not apply to the driver of a vehicle which is disabled making it impossible to avoid stopping and temporarily leaving the vehicle in the roadway.

(C) Notwithstanding another provision of law, a vehicle used solely for the purpose of collecting municipal solid waste as defined in Section 44-96-40(46) or recovered materials as defined in Section 44-96-40(34) may stop or stand on the road, street, or highway for the purpose of collecting solid waste or recovered materials. The vehicle shall maintain flashing hazard lights when engaged in stopping or standing to collect solid waste or recovered materials.

HISTORY: 1962 Code Section 46-481; 1952 Code Section 46-481; 1949 (46) 466; 1979 Act No. 105 Section 1; 1996 Act No. 298, Section 1.

Committee and staff interpretation of aforementioned state code is that vehicles, whether Uber driver, taxi driver or privately-owned vehicle, can load/unload a passenger roadside as long as other vehicles can navigate around the vehicle and the vehicle remains operational (ignition on, attended and not parked). Staff noted Town can aggressively enforce (ticket) illegal parking on Town owned property.

Councilmember Clark excused himself from balance of meeting (previous appointment)

VI. Station 22.5/Jasper Boulevard Crosswalk (stormwater drains) Combined with Fixed Median (right-turn only)

Chair Reese noted that Committee will continue to monitor this agenda item as projects continue through the year.

Additional Notes

Chair Reese noted the Committee and Town Staff seek to identify opportunities to increase golf cart parking spaces on roads with beach access paths in response to high resident demand for more of this parking opportunity.

Mayor O'Neil noted the ongoing problem with vehicles making a 'rolling stop' at Station 22 ½ and Middle Street intersection, particularly to turn right (by gas station). He noted there are multiple pedestrian crosswalks at this intersection, plus bicyclists, and stressed the safety threat with vehicles failing to legally and fully stop at the intersection. Chief Griffin assured Mayor and Committee his staff would increase enforcement in this area/intersection.

VII. Adjourn

There being no further written or public comment, and there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned (Mayor O'Neil motion; Chair Reese seconded; unanimous approval) at approximately 9:45A.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Reese, Chair
Public Safety Committee

Approved at the August 20, 2019 Regular Council Meeting



