

**Town of Sullivan’s Island, South Carolina**  
**Public Safety Committee of Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, September 3, 2020

The Public Safety Committee of Council met at 4:00 P.M., this date, VIA Zoom, all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act have been satisfied. Present were Committee members Tim Reese, Chair, Council members Mayor Pat O’Neil, Chauncey Clark and Sarah Church; staff included Administrator Benke, Fire Chief Stith, Police Chief Griffin, Deputy Administrator Jason Blanton, Amanda Hawver, Courtney Liles, and Pam Otto.

**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, no media and 5 members of the public were present.

**II. Review of Stantec Parking Options and Probable Costs.** Chair Reese presented pictures of the right of way at Station 28.5, Pettigrew, Atlantic Ave., and Bayonne, to show the state of disrepair. He stated that SCDOT did not have the funds to stabilize the right of ways. STANTEC was tasked with the following:

- SCDOT permitting for On-Street parking-STANTEC looked island wide at areas that need improvement in the 1700 parking spaces available south of Middle Street. The cost they came up with was over \$400,000.00 to stabilize the right of way in this area.
- Battery Thompson Parking Lot Layout- Battery Thompson has 37 dedicated spaces available. They can be used for the public or commercial district employees.
- Battery Gadsden Parking Lot Layout- Battery Gadsden can have 130 spaces. Sullivan’s Island Elementary has about 150 parking spots but they can only be used on weekends or holidays.
- Middle Street and Station 22 Parking Lot Layout-The right only turn from Jasper onto the causeway needs a fixed median as well as the right only turn from short Jasper onto Station 22.5. The right only turn at Middle and Station 22.5 needs to be made permanent for traffic and safety reasons.
- Middle Street Concept Opinion of Probable Construction Costs-Safety is an issue here. It was recommended to expand the sidewalk and lose the perpendicular parking on the south side of Middle Street. The cost would be over one million dollars to complete the project.

The stakeholders in this process are the Island residents and property holders, Town staff, business owners, hospitality/restaurant employees, contractors –

construction and general service, places of Worship, dog walkers, day trippers/beachgoers and the restaurant patrons.

The Sullivan's Island paid parking Pilot Plan could be overseen by Lanier parking, they run the program for Folly Beach. Lanier runs every aspect of the program with their own staff. The plan is to:

- Operate March through October
- Enforce only 10am to 5pm
- Run 7 days of the week
- Rate would be \$2 per hour
- Payment options are Flowbird app and 4 to 5 kiosks
- Parking is free with ADA placard or plate
- Parking is free with SCDMV golf cart permit
- Parking is free for residents
- Each resident address will be issued "Resident Guest" placards
- Decals must be re-registered each year
- Merchants will get a free decal with business license
- Hospitality employees pay \$100 per year for decal spot in Battery Thompson
- Contractors get a pass with a business license, employees can get weekly or monthly passes
- No enforcement in Church vicinity during worship hours
- Events would need to inform staff 48 hours prior with an estimate of number of vehicles and receive a free day pass

**III. Discussions on Concerns/Variable to Consider on a Paid Parking Plan to bring to Council.** Councilmember Clark commended Chair Reese for a comprehensive plan and an inventory of available parking spaces. He also mentioned that the plan would provide for maintenance of the spaces after the initial cost to ready them and the flexibility of the process appealed to him.

Councilmembers asked Administrator Benke if the SCDOT will not allow paid parking if the spaces are not deemed safe. Administrator Benke verified that the state allows municipalities to charge for parking as long as the proceeds must go back into improving the right of way. Benke mentioned the engineer had found 61 locations and about 9,250 linear feet of right of way that needs improvement. Benke said that with the amount of rain this area gets, and the amount of people who come over to the beach, there is no way the SCDOT can do all of these repairs and the problem will not fix itself. Paid parking is one way to fund these repairs to the right of way. Previously, the Town has paid for these out of its

general fund, the Town does not receive outside money for this. Paid parking can take the burden of these repairs off of the taxpayers on Sullivan's Island.

Mayor O'Neil asked if the funds could be used to help solve the stormwater drainage problem, as most of the drainage system is in the right of way. Benke said that has not been discussed with the SCDOT but he did not see that they would object as stormwater infrastructure is in the right of way and stormwater drainage contributes to the right of way problem, but they would have to ask them.

Mayor O'Neil felt that Chair Reese had created a fine pilot program that shows the degrees of steps that can be taken. Chair Reese felt it was important that people realize that the Town alone is responsible for this upkeep and there must be a means to pay for it.

Mayor O'Neil wanted to know how we would find vendors if we were looking to do paid parking. Benke said it would be best to work with STANTEC and have them do encroachment permit, then put out an RFQ for vendors. Benke stated that the process can take at least a few months in order to select a vendor.

Chair Reese said the time to start the process is now in order to set everything up as it takes time. He felt it needed to be taken to Council to start the process. Councilmember Clark felt that a schedule needed to be set, as most of the work will take time and needed to be done in the correct order. Mayor O'Neil asked if we had a price quote for STANTEC to do the encroachment permit. Benke stated not yet. Mayor O'Neil also asked the information that they would need to file for the permit. Benke stated it would probably have to be pretty detailed, providing hours, locations, improvements to the right of ways to prepare them.

Councilmember Clark asked if we are interested in doing the roadside improvements even if we don't do paid parking. Benke stated that an encroachment permit would be necessary anyway.

Benke stated that Council needed to decide if they wanted to change the look and feel of the Island with paid parking or if they wanted to continue to pay for improvements from the general fund. As of now, the Town is responsible for the necessary upkeep of a public beach and this is an opportunity to get help with that cost.

Mayor O'Neil asked Chief Griffin how he would feel about using a vendor for paid parking. Griffin stated that it would free up staff in many ways. Officers would not have to patrol parking and could be on the beach. Also, it would free

up the court as the vendor would have their own administration to deal with ticket disputes.

Chair Reese wants to approach Council and ask if they are ok to study paid parking through Town staff, look at the options and also coordinate with STANTEC for the encroachment on the improvement aspect. We also need STANTEC to work on the RFQ process and see about getting a vendor. There would need to be two permits, one for the improvement and one for paid parking. Benke said the cost of the permits would be around five hundred dollars, so Council would have an idea of the encroachment permit cost.

#### **IV. Adjourn**

There being no further written or public comment, and there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned (Councilmember Clark motion; Mayor O'Neil seconded; unanimous approval) at approximately 5:15pm

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Otto, Public Safety Committee Secretary