

**TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA
ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL
MINUTES**

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

A meeting of the Administration Committee of Council was held at 8:30 a.m., Wednesday, December 18, 2019 at Town Hall, 2056 Middle Street all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied. Present were Committee members: Council members Sarah Church (Chair), Greg Hammond and Bachman Smith; Staff: Administrator Benke, Deputy Administrator/Comptroller Blanton and Asst. to Administrator/Human Resources Darrow.

I. Call to Order. Chair Church called the meeting to order, stated the press and public were duly notified pursuant to state law and all Committee members were present. Two members of the public (including Councilmember Kay Smith) were present; no media.

II. Plastic Pellet (Nurdle) Pollution – Discussion of how the Town can best protect the beaches and marshes from plastic pollution

Chair Church noted that Council received two presentations at its meeting last night on the topic of plastic pellet (nurdle) pollution on Sullivan's Island: Andrew Wunderley with Charleston Waterkeepers and Barbara Melvin with the SC State Ports Authority

Chair Church commented that nurdles have been sighted on Sullivan's Island for some time and relayed anecdotal reports of residents collecting larger quantities over the past few weeks. Chair Church noted she joins other residents in cleaning the beach, regularly collecting nurdles of various quantities, especially visible after high tides.

Committee members expressed support for pursuing a variety of measures to combat plastic pellet (nurdle) pollution in the local waterways and on Sullivan's Island beaches:

1. Increase communication with SC Ports Authority and Frontier Logistics (pellet shipping company operating at the port): reporting sightings of nurdles on the Town beaches and waters (frequency of sightings and nurdle pollution concentration);
2. Support legislative initiatives spearheaded by State Senator Sandy Senn (R-Charleston) to combat the nurdle pollution;
3. Monitor impact of legislation and potential litigation measures on nurdle pollution rates.

Committee Discussion:

Councilmember Hammond suggested the Town's Police Department should cite Frontier Logistics for every nurdle sighting on the beach. This enforcement would move the matter toward the court system. Councilmember Smith concurred with Councilmember Hammond, noting this would also help push media to increase/elevate coverage of this pollution problem.

Committee discussed federal penalties that should arise from nurdle pollution incidents, citing the federal Clean Water Act.

Administrator Benke sought clarification that the Committee asks that residents collecting nurdle samples should notify Town Hall of its findings so that the Town could have data to provide in its correspondence with Frontier Logistics and the State Ports Authority (copy to Charleston Waterkeepers).

Chair Church noted she would coordinate with Administrator Benke on nurdle pollution collection data she has compiled for the Town's initial correspondence/dialogue with involved parties.

No formal motion or action taken on this matter.

III. Sullivan's Island Youth Council – Consideration of a timeline and possible activities

Chair Church proposed the Town establish a Sullivan's Island Youth Council as a youth outreach program that would both educate and engage Island youth in local government. Chair Church reviewed a program proposal she prepared (**Exhibit A**) patterned after a nascent Town of Mount Pleasant program, due to launch in 2020. Chair Church proposed the Town accept applications in fall 2020 for a 2021 launch.

Committee members endorsed the concept as a means to motivate students on Town issues. Addressing concerns about staff time needed to supervise this program, particularly oversight needed by Administrator Benke, Chair Church reported she has met with Administrator Benke on this matter. Administrator Benke has identified staff members to help monitor this youth council. Chair Church volunteered to assist with the program launch, much as she did with the Farmers' Market.

Committee recommended project for Town but no formal motion was made.

IV. Review of the Process Used by Staff to Handle Complaints Made by Residents

Administrator Benke observed that, as a general rule, the Town does not receive many complaints about Town Staff. A common example of a complaint the Town might see would be a person receiving a speeding ticket he/she thought was unfair and stating the officer issuing the ticket was rude. In that case, the speeding violation would be adjudicated by the municipal judge and, as for the complaint regarding unprofessional staff, Town management would bring the driver into the Town to review with management the footage from the patrol vehicle dash camera or patrol officer's body camera. As for escalated events, such as arrests and/or alcohol violations, the Town does have measures to monitor the professionalism of its staff. As for complaints regarding other Town employees, management's process is to speak with the member of the public making the complaint to gather incident facts, consult CCTV footage (available throughout Town Hall, for example) as available and meet with employee(s) in question.

Administrator Benke noted that disciplinary measures available to management range from counseling staff member to written notices, administrative time-off (without pay) and, if necessary, termination.

Committee asked methods by which residents/public might lodge a complaint. Is there a link/form on the Town's new website?

Deputy Administrator Blanton advised there is no link on the Town's website for complaints. Administrator Benke advised Town usually receives a phone call or email. He observed some municipalities require all complaints be made in writing.

Councilmember Hammond asked, in the absence of a published standardized complaint method on the Town's website, how the Town would be able to identify departmental-wide issues, not really individual staff issues.

Administrator Benke stated Staff would pursue methods to raise public awareness as to whom, or to what department, a resident/general public member should call with a problem. Town will increase awareness that residents should reach out to Town Hall with any concerns, be it trash or recycling collection, or general questions.

Committee noted Council continues to rely upon Administrator Benke to advise its members should there be an ongoing problem, significant individual situation or recurring complaints that should be reported to Council.

No formal motion or action taken on this matter.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 a.m. (Council member Hammond motioned; Councilmember Smith seconded; unanimously passed).

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Church, Chair
Administration Committee

To be reviewed/approved at the January 21, 2020 Regular Council Meeting