

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

Thursday, November 13, 2014

A meeting of the Public Safety Committee of Council was held at 4:00 p.m., Thursday, November 13, 2014 at Town Hall, 2050-B Middle Street, all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied. Present were Committee members, Chauncey Clark, Chair, Council members Pat O'Neil and Mary Jane Watson. Staff included Administrator Benke

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 all members were present (approximately five audience members and two media in attendance)

II. Managed Parking – General Discussion by Commission Members

Chair Clark commented on light attendance at this meeting and asked residents to encourage neighbors to provide input on the managed parking matter.

Councilwoman Watson noted the managed parking issue has been on the Town's agenda for study and discussion for a number of years, noting discussions as early as June 2008.

III. Staff Presentation

A. Review of 2009 Study – Administrator Benke

Town process started process in 2006 with study and research in 2007-2008 with several public meetings in 2008-2009 on the topic. Sullivan's Island and Isle of Palms have researched and discussed managed parking separately and in tandem, monitoring each municipality's progress and maintaining communication lines between staff members.

Administrator Benke provided a powerpoint slide reviewing parking options, ramifications for Sullivan's Island, legal considerations, financial considerations, new technology options, etc. **(Exhibit A)**

Framework for discussion of managed/paid parking: Public safety (primary consideration) and Town finances.

Comments on Supply & Demand:

Demand:

- Noted population shift within the East Cooper and Charleston community over the last forty years (1970 to present).
 - Mt. Pleasant – current population increased over 10x from 1970 to present
 - Isle of Palms – population almost doubled (2,657 to 4,133 residents)
 - Sullivan's Island – population increased from 1,426 to 1,791
- Tri-County area population increases (1970-present)
 - Berkeley County – tripled in population size over forty years
 - Dorchester County – four times the population in forty years
 - Charleston County – moderate growth in forty years (102,000-103,000 people)

Salient point is that the residents from the tri-county area avail themselves of the three public beaches available in the area: Folly Beach, Isle of Palms and Sullivan's Island.

Supply:

- Over 99.5% of the roads on Sullivan's Island are owned by the SC Department of Transportation.
- Staff estimated available parking spaces, using GIS software, to adjust for roads with no parking spaces and other limitations such as state code for parking restrictions (i.e. minimum 15' parking from hydrant and 30' from a corner/stop sign), stormwater ditch restrictions and private parking considerations. The Town's zoning ordinance allows one driveway per lot and twelve feet at the street for resident parking, eliminated from available parking inventory. Staff estimates approximately 3,000 on-street parking spaces are available on Sullivan's Island.
- Administrator Benke commented the 3,000 parking spaces is not an absolute number, noting that patrons driving large vehicles, such as a Suburban, would reduce the parking spaces.
- Generally, Staff note that day trips increase seasonally with high traffic from March-October each year, for both Sullivan's Island and Isle of Palms.
- Staff anecdotally notes that Sullivan's Island's parking peaks on July 4th and then crowds stabilize and/or taper off in late summer to Labor Day weekend. Weekend and holiday traffic is busier than week-day traffic (Monday-Thursday).
- He also noted that there is other visitor traffic that is relatively un-impacted by the seasons, one example being dog walkers. He noted daily there are large numbers of people walking dogs on the beach every morning and evening. Sullivan's Island issues over 2,300 dog licenses each year – more dogs licensed to go on the beach than people living on the Island. He noted that visitors such as surfers and bikers come to the Island regardless of the season and weather.

Traffic Analysis

- Staff conducted an unofficial parking analysis of traffic flow from Hwy 703 (Ben Sawyer Causeway) on a weekend, impacting Sullivan's Island for south-bound traffic.
- Compared a Saturday in February and Saturday in June, at the 10AM and 6PM period. Comparison illustrates the significant impact seasonal traffic has on Island traffic, almost doubling and remaining steadily high in the summer until late afternoon.
 - February: 3,070 cars during eight hour period
 - June: 6,219 cars during eight hour period

Councilman O'Neil noted that the traffic illustration is all inbound and does not include traffic leaving the Island after visiting the beach.

Potential/Future Mt. Pleasant Development in Hwy703 Corridor:

- Former Channel 4 television station, at the beginning of the marsh portion of Ben Sawyer Causeway: 300+ multi-family units with restaurant and retail space
- Sullivan's Pointe, directly across the street from the old Channel 4 television station: 40-50 homes planned

- Hindman property, a large tract of property recently sold with no immediate plans for development.
- Large multi-family development behind the Bi-Lo shopping center on Ben Sawyer Causeway.
- Scott's Creek on Rifle Range Road: moving toward build out.
- Hassell Property and continued developed along Coleman Boulevard and old Mt Pleasant

All this traffic impacts the Hwy 703 corridor.

2008 Sullivan's Island Car Count Study – Fire Staff counted cars almost daily during different seasons to provide a snapshot illustrating the fluctuation of car parking on Island rights-of-way. This information substantiated the general understanding that traffic begins to increase in spring, peaks in July and begins to taper toward late summer. He noted the Island could potentially have over 9,000 people (assuming three people per car) on the Island during the summer high point, in addition to Island residents.

B. Discussion of New Considerations for Managed Parking

Public Safety Considerations

Response Times

Police or fire apparatus: Good/clear conditions: 2-4 minutes. Middle Street congestion and beach traffic negatively impact response time.

EMS from Mathis Ferry Road to Island: from 7-10 minutes, up to 20-30 minutes if Hwy703 is gridlocked and vehicles are slow to move aside.

Response Incidents

Winter season common calls: suspicious vehicles, resident checks, regular patrol

Summer season common calls: traffic accidents, distressed swimmers, drowning, missing children, etc. due to large number of visitors on Island.

Financial Considerations

Municipal operating budget (2014 audited) \$4.3 million + water/sewer \$1.5 million for a total of \$5.8 million annual budget.

Departmental expenditures: Police: \$923,000/year Fire: \$1million

When looking at the seasonal peak for visitors (March-October), a third of the Town's assets and income are tied up with handling the impact of visitors to the Town of Sullivan's Island. He commented that the regular population of 1,791 grows to as many as 6,000-6,500 people on a Saturday in the summer. The public safety departments have to increase staffing and expenditures to manage the population influx during the high season.

Financial Options

Raising property taxes:

- Structured limitations on tax increases exist per state statutes. Property tax increases are tied to the CPI over previous 12 months (millage rate cap) and percentage in population change that lives on Sullivan's Island, not visiting it.
- Sullivan's Island, as an island, is not annexing more land and island population is fairly stable.
- As such, the Town is limited in options with property tax revenues.

Other revenues beach communities can collect:

- Hospitality tax – directly related to the amount of food and beverage sold on the Island.
 - Sullivan's Island – \$320,000
 - Isle of Palms - \$619,000
 - Folly Beach - \$466,000
- Accommodations Tax – directly related to transient housing (vacation rentals, hotels)
 - Sullivan's Island – \$68,000
 - Isle of Palms – \$2.8 million
 - Folly Beach - \$1 million
- Business Licenses/Permits– all types
 - Sullivan's Island – \$1.8 million
 - Isle of Palms - \$2.6 million
 - Folly Beach - \$1 million
- Franchise Fees – Miscellaneous revenues Sullivan's Island collects
 - Comcast Cable
 - SCE&G right-of-way structure
 - Spoil area in rear of Island (dredge material at Toler's Cove)

Property Taxes/Other Revenue Mix

Property taxes, as a percentage of revenues to cover budget expenditures: In 2001 – almost 47% of budget. Town increased fees, licenses and permits to reduce the mix of revenue to a higher user fee mix, reducing impact of tax burden for Island residents. Currently property taxes comprise 37% of the Town's budget.

- Briefly reviewed state legislative considerations for public parking on rights-of-way
- Reviewed Isle of Palms city-run municipal parking lots and kiosk/meter street parking plus one county park.
- Reviewed Folly Beach parking, which is similar to Isle of Palms: parking meters/kiosks the Town privately contracts out, plus two county parks.

Administrator noted that in 2008, when the Town really studied this matter, the common practice for paid/managed parking had been expensive kiosks and meter boxes (approximately

\$12,000/box). He noted technology has drastically improved over the past six years, incorporating smart phones and applications.

Options for Paid Parking

Town, if it wished, could create a flexible parking plan. Some options could include:

- Paid parking charges could begin at 10-11AM and terminate after 5PM-6PM.
- Method of payment could be prescribed by Town: smart phone application, kiosk, combination of two.
- Area for paid parking: could be island-wide or targeted areas/streets
- Could be seasonal paid parking: March-October or year-round
- Varying rates for parking – higher rates during high seasons

Staff has discussed the value of synchronizing paid parking with Isle of Palms, to prevent unintended parking rush to either Island, economies of scale if parking coordinated between Islands (i.e. third party contractor), shared public feedback for coordinated SI-IOP paid parking.

Administrator noted parking companies offer applications and websites for purchasing tickets. State/SCDOT requires parking fees to be equitable and fair, not a profit-centered operation.

Councilman O'Neil: Asked if residents would be required to pay the same amount of money as non-residents for parking.

Administrator Benke: Clarified it is the Town's understanding that the State/DOT requires residents to pay the same parking fees as visitors.

Council: Suggested consideration for resident rebate for parking fees, flat fees for a house party guests, Sunday church attendees.

Chair Clark:

- Submitted the difficult issues, as reflected in Isle of Palms minutes on this topic, relate to policy: residents paying to park, resident guests paying to park, etc.
- He noted the purpose of today's meeting is to review options and initiate a public dialogue on the policy issues related to the paid parking concept.

Committee members discussed:

- Public safety levels for Island visitors and limiting parking sales as a mechanism to limit the safe number of visitors on the Island.
- Technology considerations for different technologically knowledgeable visitors.
- Formats to minimize time/energy spent managed the paid parking.
- Seasonal ticket sales and access to Island, particularly for less affluent county residents.

Administrator Benke noted that the primary consideration for managed parking is to control the number of visitor parking on the Island to ensure the Town can provide adequate safety for visitors and residents, and, safe emergency access through the Island during high visitor season.

Secondly, the Town seeks to find ways to recoup the financial impact visitors have on public safety departments during the high visitor season.

Administrator Benke noted that seasonal unlimited parking passes, if offered, should be sold at a fee that encourages people to use the pass.

The Committee discussed different business models for pass sales, such as airplane over-booking with the understanding all the spaces would not be used, limiting seasonal passes, etc. Chair Clark reiterated the Committee's questions are policy related and should be compiled for study and discussion.

Timeline

Administrator Benke noted Isle of Palms' consultant has mapped out a process to move the Island to paid/managed parking by May 2015, subject to DOT approval.

If the Town intended to move forward on this project in tandem with Isle of Palms, the Town would need to:

- Review vendors
- Craft a parking plan
- Dialogue with SCDOT (agency's approval would be required)

Committee members commented on their reluctance to charge for parking, but recognize the increasing impact visitors have to the Island and the Town's limited capacity to handle ever increasing traffic and parking on the Island, particularly as the region's population grows.

Administrator Benke noted the Town graciously welcomes scores of visitors to the Island year-round, happily acting as host to the guests. The Town provides fire/rescue and police protection and extensive, expensive sanitation services for visitors. He noted that the Town provides over 180 garbage receptacles along the beach paths that are emptied twice/week with extra collection on holiday weekends. The Town does that to provide a service to residents and to keep the beach and Island clean. At the same time, the Town needs to ensure a level of safety for visitors and residents. The Town needs to be able to get the visitors in distress and to safely, quickly get the injured visitors off the Island.

Chair Clark noted the point of this meeting was to inform the public about the background and considerations for managed parking, and, give Staff approval to move forward gathering information on options and get public feedback.

IV. Public Comments

Administrator Benke noted Isle of Palms Council member Barbara Bergwerf was in attendance and invited her to make comments. Isle of Palms Councilwoman Bergwerf noted Isle of Palms worked through many of the considerations discussed at this meeting, and, was currently working with the SCDOT on guidelines.

V. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:45p.m.
(Councilwoman Watson motioned; Councilman O'Neil seconded; unanimously passed).

Respectfully submitted,
Chauncey Clark, Chair
Public Safety Committee

Approved at the November 19, 2014 Council Meeting

TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND

SULLIVAN'S ISLAND
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

November 13, 2014

OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

- I. Framework for the Discussion of Paid Parking
- II. Parking and Traffic By the Numbers
- III. Public Safety
- IV. Town Finances
- V. State Law Related to Parking
- VI. Options for Paid Parking
- VII. Questions and Answers

FRAMEWORK FOR THE DISCUSSION

- Public Safety
- Town Finances



PARKING SPACES- SUPPLY & DEMAND

Population

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2010</u>
Mt. Pleasant	6,155	41,119	67,843
Isle of Palms	2,657	3,680	4,133
Sullivan's Island	1,426	1,623	1,791
Berkeley County	56,199	128,776	177,843
Dorchester County	32,276	83,060	136,555
Charleston County	247,650	295,039	350,209

PARKING SPACES- SUPPLY & DEMAND

- Approximately 3000 spaces in public R-O-W
- Seasonal Increases of Day Trips
 - March-October
 - Peak at July 4th
 - Saturdays, Sundays & Holidays
 - Dog Walkers and Surfers

Parking By the Numbers - Supply

- Approximately 3000 Right-Of-Way Spaces
- SI Zoning Code 21-15(b) 12 Foot Street Front Drive
- SC 56-5-2530(A)(2)(b) 15 Feet From Hydrant
- SC 56-5-2530(A)(2)(d) 30 Feet From STOP Sign

Parking By The Numbers - Traffic

Southbound Traffic SC703

<u>Hour</u>	<u>02-01-14 (Sat)</u>	<u>06-28-14 (Sat)</u>
10-11	247	567
11-12	326	689
12-1	346	766
1-2	403	890
2-3	397	871
3-4	422	807
4-5	468	776
5-6	461	863

Development Near SC703 Corridor

- Television Station Property
- Sullivan's Point
- Hindman Property
- BiLo Property
- Scott's Creek
- Hassell Property
- Coleman Boulevard

PARKING SPACES- SUPPLY & DEMAND

Volume – 2008 Study

May Saturday Noon 850 Cars

Monday Noon 375 Cars

July Saturday Noon 1300 Cars

Monday Noon 600 Cars

September Saturday Noon 775 Cars

Monday Noon 325 Cars

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Average Response Time
 - 2 to 4 Minutes Clear Conditions
 - Summer Delays: Parked Vehicles, Congestion During Ingress/Egress
 - EMS 7 to 10 Minutes From Mathis Ferry Road
- Summer Incidents vs. Winter Incidents
 - Winter Resident Assistance, Medical, Etc.
 - Lost Child, Beach Related, Traffic Related
- Ingress and Egress to Island

Parking Violations – May to August

Year

Tickets Issued

2010

473

2011

332

2012

399

2013

253

2014

223

TOWN FINANCES 101

Snapshot of Fiscal Year 2014 Budget

Government.....\$4,360,451

Water & Sewer.....\$1,548,630

Total.....\$5,909,081



TOWN FINANCES 101

2014 Budget By Department

General Administration.....	\$1,401,730
Police.....	\$922,799
Fire.....	\$1,065,747
Zoning, Building & Construction.....	\$286,719
Recreation.....	\$53,611
Maintenance.....	\$629,845
Total.....	\$4,360,451

TOWN FINANCES 101

Property Tax & Millage Tax Limitations

STATE CODE SECTION 6-1-320 (A)

A municipality may increase property tax millage rate for operating purposes above the previous year's rate by:

1. CPI for the previous 12 month period
2. Equal percentage of population change

TOWN FINANCES 101

Beach Community Comparison



	SI	IOP	FB
Hospitality Tax	\$320,345	\$619,399	\$466,173
Accommodations Tax	\$ 67,956	\$2,819,395	\$1,010,948
License and Permits	\$1,808,418	\$2,622,426	\$ 968,376

TOWN FINANCES 101

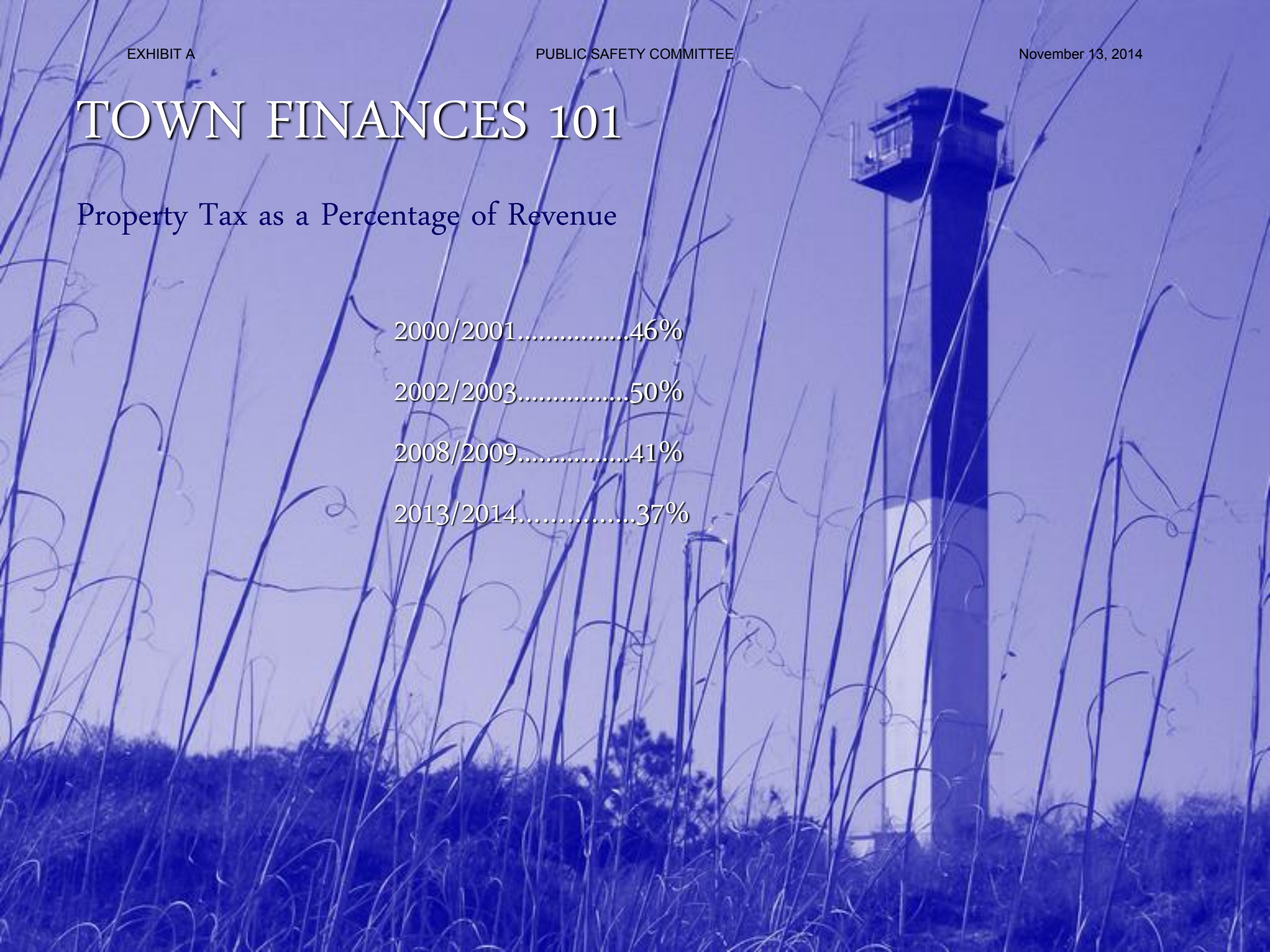
Other Revenue Sources

- Franchise Fees
- Cell Tower
- Spoil Area
- Business License Fees



TOWN FINANCES 101

Property Tax as a Percentage of Revenue



A background image of a lighthouse with a black upper section and a white lower section, situated in a field of tall, thin grass. The lighthouse has a small observation deck at the top.

2000/2001.....	46%
2002/2003.....	50%
2008/2009.....	41%
2013/2014.....	37%

STATE LAW & PAID PARKING

SECTION 56-5-710: Allows municipalities to regulate parking of vehicles

SECTION 5-29-30: Reaffirms the right of a municipality the right to establish on street parking

Section 56-5-2510: Parked Vehicles

PARKING AT OTHER BEACH COMMUNITIES

Isle of Palms

- Meter Parking in the Commercial District
- Paid Parking in City Lots in Commercial District
- Paid Parking in County Park
- Free Parking in Right of Way
- Program Operated by City



PARKING AT OTHER BEACH COMMUNITIES

Folly Beach

- Meter Parking at the Wash Out
- Honor Box Parking at Beach Paths
- Paid Parking at Two County Parks
- Free Parking in Right of Way
- Program Operated by Contractor



OPTIONS FOR PAID PARKING

- Flexible Plan – Certain Hours or Days
 - Method of Payment
- Island Wide or Area Specific
- All Year or Seasonal
- Coordination with Isle of Palms

Paid Parking

Questions and Answers

