



**Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina  
Town Council Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, December 19, 2023, 6:00 p.m.**

The regular meeting of the Town Council was held on the above date at approximately 6:00 p.m., all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied.

Present were: Patrick M. O'Neil, Mayor  
Justin Novak, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Ned Higgins, Councilmember  
Carl Hubbard, Councilmember  
Jody Latham, Councilmember  
Scott Millimet, Councilmember  
Gary Visser, Councilmember

Staff members present were Town Administrator Andy Benke, Fire Chief Anthony Stith, Police Chief Christopher Griffin, Jason Blanton, Judge Frank Cornely, Charles Drayton, Judge Lawrence Duffy, Greg Gress, Amanda Hawver, Joe Henderson, Glenn Meadows, Pamela Otto, Bridget Welch, Andy Williams, Becky Williams, and Max Wurthmann.

Mayor Patrick M. O'Neil called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and stated the press and public had been notified in accordance with State Law. There were over twenty-five (25) members of the public present and no (0) members of the media present. Mayor O'Neil led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence for prayer or reflection.

**I. Format: Public Comments**

- Cheryl Clark, 2119 Pettigrew St – thanked the Fire and Police departments for participating in the MUSC flashing lights.
- Tim Reese, 305 Station 20 – stated concerns about transparency around changes to ordinances regarding new construction principal building square footage.
- Manda Poletti, 1771 Atlantic Ave – wanted to confirm and reiterate language in a memorandum sent by the Planning Commission. She pointed out a line item in the ordinance that they did not discuss, specifically about square footage for additions.
- David French, 1765 Atlantic Ave – feels there has not been enough information presented concerning amendment changes to make a final

decision about new construction principal square footage. He had questions he would like answered.

- Karen Byko, 2862 Middle St – is against Dominion Energy’s tree trimming policies and would like Council to hold them accountable for adhering to standards.

## **II. Proclamation:** Appreciation for Judge Lawrence Duffy upon the Occasion of his Retirement

Mayor O’Neil presented a proclamation of appreciation for Judge Duffy’s thirty-eight years of service to the Town of Sullivan’s Island and read the proclamation in full. Judge Duffy received a standing ovation and was presented with gifts from the Town.

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Millimet, to affirm the Proclamation of Appreciation for Judge Lawrence Duffy upon the Occasion of his Retirement, passed unanimously.**

## **III. Presentation:** Dominion Energy – Presentation and Discussion of the 2024 Trimming Program on Sullivan’s Island

Representatives from Dominion Energy were in attendance and employee Mark Branham presented on behalf of the company. He reiterated the importance of vegetation management to prioritize safety, reliability, and resiliency. This program also helps to keep the time to get power turned back on low. The upcoming project will cover 87 miles in the Charleston area and 16 of those are on Sullivan’s Island and will begin on January 2, 2024, and can take between 8-10 weeks. Vegetation management projects are done every five (5) years and customers were notified via mail or email. Customers are encouraged to call the help number in the notification with any questions or concerns. Dominion provided handouts with clearance diagrams as well as OSHA diagram requirements. There will also be palmetto tree removals during this project, and they will be using a different contractor for the trimming. Customers will be notified if any palmetto trees are to be removed from their property via mail. Mr. Branum stated there will likely be the same amount of trimming done with this cycle.

Tammy Cogdill of Dominion Energy stated they provided links, FAQs, and the help number to the Town and can send anything else requested. The two took questions and listened to comments from Council. Mr. Branham also mentioned customers can call the help number and can request a service drop from Dominion which allows arborists or private landscapers to expand trimming on their property. Ms. Cogdill answered questions about the possibility of burying the power lines in the future.

#### **IV. Correspondence:**

1. Babak Bryan, Resignation Letter from Design Review Board
2. Rick Graham, 2101 I'On Ave – Concern with parking at Battery Thomson
3. John Holzworth, 2507 Raven Dr – Letter with Concerns of Invasive Species in Maritime Forest

#### **V. Council Action Items:**

- A. Approval of the November 13, 2023 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

**Motion was made by Councilmember Visser, seconded by Councilmember Hubbard to approve the November 14, 2023 Regular Council Meeting Minutes, passed 6-0 with Mayor O'Neil abstaining.**

- B. Approval of the November 3, 2023, Council Special Meeting Stormwater Outfall Minutes

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Visser to approve the November 3, 2023, Council Special Meeting Stormwater Outfall Minutes, passed unanimously.**

- C. Approval of the November 13, 2023, Land Use and Natural Resource Committee Meeting Minutes (Committee Members Only)

**Motion was made by Councilmember Hubbard, seconded by Councilmember Visser to approve the November 13, 2023, Land Use and Natural Resource Committee Meeting Minutes (Committee Members Only), passed 2-0, with Mayor O'Neil abstaining.**

- D. Approval of the September 18, 2023, Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes (Committee Members Only)

**Motion was made by Councilmember Millimet, seconded by Councilmember Hubbard, to approve the September 18, 2023, Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes, passed unanimously.**

- E. Third Reading and Ratification, Ordinance 2023-06, An Ordinance to Amend the Business License Ordinance of Sullivan's Island to Update the Class Schedule as Required by Act 176 of 2020

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to approve Third Reading and Ratification, Ordinance 2023-06, An Ordinance to Amend the Business License Ordinance of Sullivan's Island to Update the Class Schedule as Required by Act 176 of 2020, passed unanimously.**

- F. First Reading, By Title Only, Ordinance 2023-07, An Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Regulations Regarding Height, Scale, and Mass for New Constructions, Additions, and Historic Properties: Zoning Ordinance Sections §21-20, §21-25, §21-27, §21-31, §21-43, §21-44, §21-138, and §21-140; Consideration of Text Changes to Limit Height, Scale, and Mass

**Motion was made by Councilmember Visser, seconded by Councilmember Millimet, to approve First Reading, By Title Only, Ordinance 2023-07, An Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Regulations Regarding Height, Scale, and Mass for New Constructions, Additions, and Historic Properties: Zoning Ordinance Sections §21-20, §21-25, §21-27, §21-31, §21-43, §21-44, §21-138, and §21-140; Consideration of Text Changes to Limit Height, Scale, and Mass, passed unanimously.**

There will be more discussion about this motion and public comments made at the next Workshop.

#### **VI. Reports and Communication:**

- A) Mayor's Report: Comcast is raising its fees and removing channels
- B) Administrator's Report:
  - a) The Coast Guard has submitted an event permit to host a run on the beach on March 30, 2024 to commemorate their anniversary and in conjunction with the Coast Guard Marathon held in North Carolina. It will not require Town staff.
  - b) Municipal Association Training is being offered to Council members in 2024.
  - c) The Charleston County Sales Tax Program is asking for program suggestions for fiscal year 2024. The last request from the Town was to pave Raven Drive was not fulfilled so it is an option for this time.
  - d) Town Hall will be closed December 22-26 for the Christmas holiday. First responders will be available 24/7.
- C) Attorney's Report: Nothing to Report
- D) Boards and Commissions Report
  - a) Planning and Commission – Nothing to Report
  - b) Board of Zoning Appeals – Nothing to Report
  - c) Design Review Board – Nothing to Report
  - d) Tree Commission – Nothing to Report
  - e) Municipal Elections Commission – Nothing to Report

#### **VII. Committee Reports – Discussion Items:**

- A. Finance Committee – An update was given by accountant Jason Blanton for the month of November. Mr. Benke mentioned clean up from Sunday's storm (12/17/23) will cost approximately \$103,000 and will likely start on the beach as soon as possible. He also stated there will not be any FEMA grant money and DHEC will be involved with the clean-up and repairs at Breach Inlet and will likely require a permit. SCDOT is responsible for clearing storm water drains. Republic will pick up organic

debris and the contractor will be able to pick up dock debris but will clear drains and ditches.

- B. Public Facilities Committee – Nothing to Report
- C. Land Use & Natural Resources Committee – Chair Visser and Joe Henderson stated staff are reviewing the recommendations from the Historic Study Group and will send their recommendations to Council in two weeks. The next LUNR meeting will be held Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 8:45 a.m. at Town Hall.
- D. Administration Committee – The Ad Hoc Committees are moving forward with scoring the applicants for the Administrator and Director of Resiliency positions.
- E. Water & Sewer Committee –The permit for rip-rap has been received, but did not mention anything about cleaning the outfalls. Seamon & Whitesides will put in paperwork to include cleaning in the project, but it may be delayed some.
  - a. The public hearing for the proposed fourth tier will be held before the January 16 Council meeting. It was suggested to reach out to those whose bills would likely be affected by the rate increase.
  - b. The next Water & Sewer Committee meeting will be held Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 8:45 a.m.
  - c. Mr. Gress also reported there were no incidents during the recent rain event.
- F. Public Safety Committee – The Police Station collected 355 bikes and 70 helmets for their 2023 bike drive.
  - a. There will be an update on proposed beach bonfire policy changes at the next Workshop.
  - b. Chief Griffin presented data collected on speeding at the base of the causeway.
  - c. There were two reported coyote sightings the past month but there have been none caught in the traps.
  - d. Chief Griffin reminded residents of the house watch program and to not leave packages on porches.
  - e. The annual Polar Bear Plunge will be held January 1.
  - f. Deputy Chief Meadows reported on a project SRO Josh Poole participated in at SIES.
- G. Recreation Committee – Chair Higgins stated they are still waiting on Thomas & Hutton’s final suggestions for the Stith Park Master Plan.

### **VIII. Executive Session:**

**Motion was made by Councilmember Visser, seconded by Councilmember Higgins to go into Executive Session at 7:22 p.m., passed unanimously.**

- A. Legal Advice – Pacaso, Inc. and 2 SC Lighthouse LLC, vs. Town of Sullivan’s Island and Sullivan’s Island BZA in 2023-CP-10-1493 – Order Affirming the Decisions of the BZA Dismissing the Petition for Appeal

B. Personnel –

- 1) Personnel – Employee Sick Leave
- 2) Personnel – Associate Judge

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Visser to come out of Executive Session at 7:40 p.m., passed unanimously.**

**IX.** Upon Returning to Open Session, Council may take action on items discussed during Executive Session.

**X. Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Latham to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 p.m., passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,



Bridget Welch