



Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina
Town Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 19, 2024, 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 have 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 Monty Anders, Jason Blanton, Larry Dodds, Charles Drayton, Rebecca Fanning, Amanda Hawver, Town Administrator Joe Henderson, Police Chief Glenn Meadows, Fire Chief Anthony Stith, Chris Wallace, Bridget Welch, 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 fifty (50+) 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. Presentations: Thomas and Hutton Engineering Presenting Proposed Stith Park Master Plan (Open House 5-6 p.m.)

John Winters with Thomas and Hutton gave some brief background and goals of the project. He then presented their most recent plan that included public input and what should be preserved in the park. Samantha Mizell also spoke and emphasized the importance of inclusion of safety. Mr. Winters presented their initial concept plan (it has not been approved) they created based on input from residents, staff, and Council. They focused on elements such as a shaded multiuse community space, walking trails, and improvements to the playground equipment. Mr. Winters spoke about the proposal cost, but he mentioned drainage is the first priority. He also stated it would be beneficial to have the two projects run concurrently. He mentioned the survey that went out to residents and both he and Ms. Mizell presented data from it. They then took questions from Council.

II. Resolution: Honoring Betty Lancer on the occasion of her 100th Birthday (Council approval)

Motion was made by Scott Millimet, seconded by Jody Latham, to approve the resolution honoring Betty Lancer, 50-year resident of the Island, on the occasion of her 100th birthday, passed unanimously.

Mayor O'Neil then read the resolution to Ms. Lancer, and she received a standing ovation.

III. Format: Public Comments

- Cammie Camp, 2672 Middle Street – commented on two options she'd like to see in the park plan.
- Ralph Byers, 3025 Middle Street – supports the idea of a community pool and suggested some logistics on how to make it successful.
- Hunter Stunzi, 1734 Thompson Ave – appreciates the plan to renovate the park but wishes it could be completed sooner.
- Carol Killough, 1813 Back Street – opposes the idea of a pool and multiple other aspects presented. She stated her children were only interested in sliding down the Mound on cardboard.
- Melanie Burkhold, 1660 Atlantic Avenue – commented with suggestions for the park plan and companies to use for it and opposes the suggestion of a tower and putting things on top of the Mound.
- Laura Schroeder, 204 Station 19 – commented on her opposition to a community pool as well as some of the larger structures.
- Barbara Spell, 1702 Atlantic Avenue – feels the Stith Park plan does not align with the goals in the Comprehensive Plan. She also requested transparency for how the park will be funded, not just the cost of planning and construction but ongoing maintenance and staffing costs.

IV. Council Action Items:

A. Approval of Minutes:

- Approval of the October 15, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Councilmember Visser, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, to approve the October 15, 2024, Regular Council Meeting Minutes, passed unanimously.

- #### B. Consideration of Thomas and Hutton's final presentation of the Stith Park Master Plan, with respect to a) authorizing staff to consider Master Plan contract completed, and b) removing specific elements from further consideration in implementing Park improvements.

Motion was made by Councilmember Higgins, Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, to authorize staff to close out the contract with Thomas & Hutton related to Stith Park Master Planning process, passed unanimously.

Mayor Pro-Tem Novak confirmed this motion will end Thomas & Hutton's conceptual planning that they were asked to do a few years ago. This allows Council to now discuss their plans for moving forward. Mayor O'Neil reiterated that closing the contract does not mean we are accepting or denying any of the plans Thomas & Hutton presented. Councilmember Millimet expressed his agreement and hopes the public will understand that these plans were proposals and moving forward on any planning will depend on the Town's budget and that the Town will continue to keep the public informed and involved.

Motion was made by Councilmember Higgins, seconded by Councilmember Millimet, to remove several specific elements to be removed from consideration. The elements to be removed are the swimming pool, the observation tower on top of the mound and the community center located in Stith Park, passed unanimously.

Mayor Pro-Tem Novak provided some clarification on the suggestion of a community event space versus a shaded community gathering space. Councilmember Latham commented on the proposal to put in a community pool, stating it was proposed based on the public support for allowing a swimming pool at the proposed private club at the former Sand Dunes Club location. Councilmember Visser clarified that this motion was only taking these matters into consideration for the time being and does not mean a public pool is banned from ever being proposed again. Mayor O'Neil agreed with the above sentiments. Mayor Pro-Tem Novak reiterated that this motion does not mean a community pool cannot be proposed in the future and voiced his support for removing them from discussion for now.

C. Second Reading, Ordinance 2024-09, An Ordinance to Adopt the Town of Sullivan's Island Comprehensive Plan

Wise Daly with the Berkely Charleston Dorchester County Council of Governments spoke about his work with Charles Drayton on the process of creating and approving the Town's Comprehensive Plan. He reviewed the planning process and provided a timeline. He also provided data and some visuals as a refresher for the changes made in the Comprehensive Plan. He also took questions from Council and stated he would provide more data where possible as requested.

Mr. Drayton stated the Trolley Bridge project has been renamed to the "Cove Inlet Causeway" in the current Plan.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to approve Second Reading of the Comprehensive Plan as it stands currently, Ordinance 2024-09, An Ordinance to Adopt the Town of Sullivan's Island Comprehensive Plan.

Motion was made by Councilmember Visser, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to amend the existing motion to add back into the Comprehensive Plan language that was removed previously. The policy would read that "the Town will support initiatives from the National Aging in Place Council, the National Institute on Aging, or other similar leaders in the field that promote the citizens efforts, abilities, and aspirations to "age in place." Goals for this policy would read: "Identify opportunities and existing Town facilities to provide programming, facilities, and other opportunities which assist our citizens desire to age in place." The second goal is to "work with neighboring jurisdictions to create a local Aging in Place Chapter of the National Aging in Place Council," passed unanimously.

Mr. Drayton clarified the original language that was removed was because it was unclear, and this new language makes it clear with better direction. Language added is different than language being removed but on the same topic.

Motion was made by Councilmember Millimet, seconded by Councilmember Hubbard, that in keeping with the Natural Policy #3 currently in the Comprehensive Plan language be added that the town "will identify and implement strategies that create and enhance green spaces and passive parks within the community." This would include completion of Phase 2 of the Nature Trail in the maritime forest and allow for future planning of a potential Phase 3, passed unanimously.

The original motion has now been amended to approve second reading of the comprehensive plan with the addition of restoration of the aging in place element and additional language about nature trails. Amended motion, passed unanimously.

Councilmember Visser expressed his appreciation to the Planning Commission for their time and efforts in reviewing the Comprehensive Plan.

D. Approval of the 2025 Dates for Council Meetings and Council Workshops

Motion was made by Councilmember Visser, seconded by Councilmember Millimet, to approve the 2025 dates for Council Meetings and Council Workshops, passed unanimously.

E. Discussion and Approval of Alternative Beach Fire locations

Rebecca Fanning explained the reason for removing Station 30 as a beach fire location and recommended adding Station 28 as a location. She then took questions from Council. Fire Chief Stith and Assistant Fire Chief Hawver recommend not adding a third location. Mayor Pro-Tem Novak disagreed, citing a “burden” on nearby houses having fires near their home every weekend night. He suggested having Stations 22, 23, and 25.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Millimet to amend the beach fire locations to include Station 22, 22 ½, and Station 25 and eliminate Station 30 that would rotate amongst the possibilities for two fires a night, passed unanimously.

Attorney Dodds stated the Town cannot permit fires at Station 22 ½ as it is not Town or public property. He also stated permit holders need to be directed to use the beach to the west of Station 22.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Millimet to void his prior motion to amend the beach fire locations to include Station 22, 22 ½, and Station 25 and eliminate Station 30 that would rotate amongst the possibilities for two fires a night, and making a new motion to make new beach fire locations to the existing Station 22, the existing Station 25, remove Station 30 and add Station 23, passed unanimously.

V. Reports and Communication:

A. Mayor’s Report: Mayor O’Neil told the Councilmembers to expect an email with an invitation to the meeting of the South Carolina Beach Advocates, which he suggested they attend if possible.

B. November 2024 Correspondence:

- Karen and Brian Burke, 2902 Marshall Blvd – Stormwater Drainage Concern
- Katharine Crawford, 927 Middle St – Suggestions for Stith Park Master Plan
- Kathy Heller, 2320 I’On Ave – Suggestions for Stith Park Master Plan
- Bene Rittenberg, 1002 C Middle St – Suggestions for Stith Park Master Plan
- Christy Durbin, 1715 Atlantic Ave – Suggestions for Stith Park Master Plan
- Jamie Brownlee, 1102 Middle St – Suggestions for Stith Park Master Plan
- Amy Davidson, 1710 I’On Ave – Suggestions for Stith Park Master Plan
- Lynn Hodges, 2650 Jasper Blvd – Opposed to pool in Stith Park
- Karen & Brian Burke, 2902 Marshall Blvd – Opposed to Stith Park Plan

- Barbara Spell, 1702 Atlantic Ave – Questions regarding Stith Park Plan
- Keving Pennington, 1514 Middle St – Happy with Everbridge messaging and Attention needed in the Battery Thompson parking lot

C. Administrator’s Report

- a. Army Corps of Engineers Beneficial Reuse Sand Project: they have relocated 125,000 cubic yards of the 200,000 cubic yards of sand promised. They have completed placing stockpile one and are moving onto stockpile two. Robert Collins Company will begin work on November 20 for the Town project of moving relocating the sand. They will work for another week and then move onto stockpile three. The work is done 24/7 with minimal light and noise. The beach path accesses on either side of the Breach Inlet beach will be open to the public.
- b. Cove Inlet Bridge Project: Phase One will be to clear out vegetation along the path, most of it being nonnative, invasive species, which will be overseen by Rebecca Fanning and contracted with IPW. This will be the first two weeks of December.
- c. Town Hall Holiday Closures for the remainder of 2024: Closed Thursday, November 28-Friday, November 29 for Thanksgiving and Tuesday, December 24-Thursday, December 26 for Christmas. The annual tree lighting and fireworks will be on Friday, December 6.
- d. Personnel anniversaries:
 - JD Mann, 1 year – Maintenance Department
 - Frank Cornely, 1 year – Municipal Court Judge
 - Sam Stith, 5 years - Maintenance Department
 - Stephen Poole, 12 years – Fire Department
 - Sgt Christopher Wallace, 25 years – Police Department

Police Chief Glenn Meadows presented Sergeant Christopher Wallace with a pin commemorating twenty-five years of consecutive service with the Town and gave a brief background on his timeline of service. He received a standing ovation and stated it was “an honor and a privilege to serve the Town.”

- e. The Polar Bear Plunge: Consideration of the applications will be on the agenda for the December Regular Meeting.

D. Attorney’s Report: Nothing to Report

E. 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

VI. Committee Reports – Discussion Items:

- A. Finance Committee – Nothing to Report; Jason Blanton reviewed the monthly financial report. Mr. Henderson stated that the Cove Inlet Bridge Project will be funded through bond proceeds.
- B. Public Facilities Committee – Chair Hubbard hopes to set a meeting in January to hear a presentation regarding building a palmetto log fort on the Island for SC 250 celebration.
- C. Land Use & Natural Resources Committee – Nothing to Report
- D. Administration Committee – Nothing to Report
- E. Water & Sewer Committee – Greg Gress updated Council on the tests for lead and copper. The revised lead copper rule caused every utility in the nation to identify all their lead service lines on the

Town side and on private property and there are no lead service lines on the Island. The next Water & Sewer Committee meeting will be Thursday, December 19, 2024, at 9:15 a.m.

- F. Public Safety Committee –Fire Chief Stith stated the volunteers purchased a high-water rescue vehicle for the Town for \$81,000. They made some modifications and will add the Town seal to it. The new fire engine should be delivered in the next week or so. The choir will perform in front of the fire station rather than in the park this year.
Police Chief Glenn Meadows mentioned three good news stories involving Officer Poole, Trooper Bob, and a Thanksgiving feast at Sunrise Presbyterian Church. Deputy Chief Anders mentioned letters of commendation recognizing Sergeant Shaffer, Officers McMullen, and Mitchum during an incident involving a car driving into a resident’s pool. There have been no recent coyote reports. Mayor Pro-Tem Novak recognized School Resource Officer Poole for his dedication to the school’s Halloween activities. There were 154 bikes collected at the time of the meeting.
- G. Recreation Committee –Chair Higgins reminded citizens of the tree lighting and fireworks. There will be a meeting scheduled soon regarding moving forward with the Stith Park Master Plan.

VII. Executive Session:

Motion was made by Councilmember Higgins, seconded by Councilmember Millimet, to go into Executive Council at 8:06 p.m., and passed unanimously.

1. **Legal** – Attorney Linton to provide legal advice regarding Stockdale v. TOSI
2. **Personnel** – Staff to provide update on Council attorney search
3. **Personnel** – Staff discussion of personnel holiday events and benefits

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

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to come out of Executive Council at 8:38 p.m., passed unanimously.

No decisions were made, and no motions were taken during Executive Session.

IX. Adjournment

Motion was made by Councilmember Latham, seconded by Councilmember Millimet to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m., passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Bridget Welch