



**Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina
Town Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 20, 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 having been satisfied.

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

Councilmember Higgins had previously notified Council that he would not be available for this meeting.

Staff members present were Town Administrator Andy Benke, Fire Chief Anthony Stith, Jason Blanton, Town Attorney Larry Dodds, Charles Drayton, Greg Gress, Amanda Hawver, Deputy Administrator Joe Henderson, Deputy Police Chief Glenn Meadows, Bridget Welch, Pam Otto, Becky Williams, Andy Williams, Monty Anders, Mark McGougan 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 six (6) 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. He then read the names of Islanders that passed away in the last year.

I. Format: Public Comments

- Paul Vannatta, 1802 Back Street, would like to build a dock and wants Council to modify the dock ordinance.
- Karen Byko, 2868 Middle Street, is concerned about Dominion's tree cutting and would like the Town to do something. She presented pictures for the record.

II. Oath of Office: David Wolf, Esq. as Associate Judge – Sullivan's Island Municipal Court

David Wolf, Esq. was sworn in Associate Judge for the Sullivan's Island Municipal Court by Judge Frank Cornley and received a standing ovation.

III. Presentation: Isaac Cramer, Executive Director Charleston County Board of Elections and Voter Registration – Potential State and County Changes in Management and Scheduling of Municipal Elections

Isaac Cramer gave a report outlining the changes to the management and scheduling of municipal elections. The Board of Elections works closely with the Town, but the Town has authority over the local elections. The Board is requesting the Town transfer authority to Charleston County and move to November of odd years. The Board provides communication with local law enforcement, training, poll booths, and the EOC provides services on election days. There is a bill currently on the floor that may require municipalities to transfer authority, and this is an opportunity to get a head start if that were to pass. He then took questions from Council.

Town Attorney Dodds stated the election ordinance would need to change if Council would like for the County Board of Elections to continue running the elections. The Board can provide a draft ordinance, which the County would then formalize. Mr. Dodds also confirmed current Council members can legally extend their terms until the next Council members are elected. Mayor O’Neil requested Mr. Dodds draft an ordinance for Council to review and discuss.

IV. Correspondence:

1. Richard Graham, 2102 I’On Ave – Letter with Concerns about Flooding and Maintaining Ditches near property
2. Helen Elliott, 2908 Brownell Ave – Concerns with Landscapers and Loud Equipment
3. Paul & Andrea Stephenson, 2614 Bayonne St – Flooding on Bayonne Ave
4. Kimberly Brown, 2118 Pettigrew St – Concerned about the Proposed Parking Lot on Corner of Middle St and Station 22
5. Cheryl Clark, 2119 Pettigrew St – Concerned about the Proposed Parking Lot on Corner of Middle St and Station 22
6. Wayne Guckenberger, 2105 Pettigrew St – Concerned about the Proposed Parking Lot on Corner of Middle St and Station 22
7. Charlotte & Alan Artus, 2114 Pettigrew St – Concerned about the Proposed Parking Lot on Corner of Middle St and Station 22

V. Council Action Items:

- A. Approval of the January 16, 2023 Town Council Public Hearing Meeting Minutes, Consideration of Additional Rate Block to Irrigation Rates

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Visser, to approve the January 16, 2023 Town Council Public Hearing Meeting Minutes, Consideration of Additional Rate Block to Irrigation Rates, passed 5-0, with Councilmember Millimet abstaining.

B. Approval of the January 16,2024, Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Councilmember Visser, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak to approve the January 16, 2023 Regular Council Meeting Minutes, passed 5-0, with Councilmember Millimet abstaining.

- C. Resolution Authorizing Post Hurricane Idalia Beach Renourishment in the Vicinity of 1001 and 1009 Middle Street Based Upon the Prior Consent of SC DHEC, the Lowcountry Open Land Trust, and the Written Findings of Fact Contained Herein, with the Cost of Such Renourishment to be Paid for by the Adjoining Land Owner

Motion was made by Councilmember Millimet, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, to approve Resolution Authorizing Post Hurricane Idalia Beach Renourishment in the Vicinity of 1001 and 1009 Middle Street Based Upon the Prior Consent of SC DHEC, the Lowcountry Open Land Trust, and the Written Findings of Fact Contained Herein, with the Cost of Such Renourishment to be Paid for by the Adjoining Land Owner, passed unanimously.

Mr. Benke stated the two mentioned parcels had significant erosion after Hurricane Idalia. Under the terms of the agreement with the Land Trust for the accredited land, there must be finding of facts done before altering the beach. The Land Trust is in favor of moving forward.

- D. Resolution to Increase all General Fund Reserve Balances by a Percentage Equal to the Increase of the 2023 Consumer Price Index of 3.4% and to Increase the Emergency Reserve to Three Million Dollars

Motion was made by Councilmember Millimet, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, Resolution to Increase all General Fund Reserve Balances by a Percentage Equal to the Increase of the 2023 Consumer Price Index of 3.4% and to Increase the Emergency Reserve to Three Million Dollars, passed unanimously.

Mr. Blanton gave a breakdown of what the increases will look like in the different reserve accounts. The emergency reserves are what is spent on storm clean-up and this past year saw a large amount of debris cleanup needed. This motion would be moving money from the general reserve to the emergency reserve but can be moved back if needed. He then took questions from Council.

- E. Third Reading and Ratification, 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 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 5-1, with
Councilmember Hubbard opposing.**

F. Approval of the Beach Fire Policies and Procedures

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Millimet, to
approve the Beach Fire Policies and Procedures, passed unanimously.**

Town Clerk Bridget Welch outlined the new policies and procedures, which include the following:

- Beach Fires will be allowed only from October 1 – April 30 and this will begin on September 30 (Monday) of this year. These dates do not allow fires during turtle nesting season.
- Fires will be on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday only with a limit of two (2) fires per night.
- Locations for fires will only be available at Station 22, Station 25, or Station 30.
- The fees will increase to \$150 for residents (with a Sullivan’s Island Driver’s license as proof of residency) and \$300 for non-residents.
- Permits will be available weekly and will start being issued on Mondays, or Tuesday if Monday is a holiday.

Ms. Welch took questions from Council. It was also clarified that there is not going to be an ordinance change so policies can be changed in the future if needed.

VI. Reports and Communication:

A) Mayor’s Report: Nothing to Report

B) Administrator’s Report:

- a) Staff will meet with the engineer to review final construction drawings for the Old Bridge Restoration project, which will then be shown to Council, and can open up for bids.
- b) Stations 22 ½ and 26 ½ have begun construction for repairs and will start on Station 21 hopefully next week, pending on weather.
- c) The final draft for the Stith Park Master Plan has been given to Council. They can report any questions, issues, changes, edits, etc to Andy and Joe Henderson.
- d) The contract for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Beneficial Sand Reuse Project will be awarded in the next week.
- e) The St. Patrick’s Day Celebration will take place on Saturday, March 16. SCDOT has given approval to shut down vehicle traffic on Station 22 ½ between Middle Street and I’On Avenue. It will reopen at 6:00 p.m. A meeting to discuss final details with various stakeholders will be on Thursday, February 29.
- f) The Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission has notified staff about the next PARD grant funding cycle. Staff is researching possible uses for the \$5,900 available. The application is due Friday, May 3, 2024.

- g) The Charleston County Food Composting Project exceeded the total goal for composting with 155 tons for the entire County.
- 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 – Nothing to Report
- B. Public Facilities Committee – Mold has been tested at the Old Town Hall Building and it is safe to begin cleaning the building.
 - a. The next historic sign to be installed will be the Old Movie Theater on Middle Street.
- C. Land Use & Natural Resources Committee – The next LUNR meeting has not been decided, but there will be an Executive Session during that meeting.
- D. Administration Committee – Nothing to Report
- E. Water & Sewer Committee – The next Water & Sewer Committee meeting will be Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 8:45 a.m.
- F. Public Safety Committee – Deputy Police Chief Meadows stated coyote sightings have gone down recently and one female was caught last week.
 - a. The grant proposal for the School Resource Officer at Sullivan's Island Elementary School has been submitted.
 - b. A meeting will be held about mitigating beach traffic will be on March 15. Two deputies will be scheduled to work during high traffic weekends starting at the end of March, earlier if necessary.
 - c. Councilmember Millimet stated those who do any illegal cutting in the maritime forest will be prosecuted to the greatest degree possible. Past instances are still in the legal process and the Town is not at liberty to comment at present.
- G. Recreation Committee – The final draft from Thomas & Hutton has been circulated to Council for them to discuss and there will be a public hearing for the final presentation before beginning.

VIII. Executive Session:

Motion was made by Councilmember Visser, seconded by Councilmember Millimet to go into Executive Session at 6:58 p.m., passed unanimously.

- A. Personnel – Discussion by Attorney Cleveland and Dodds regarding investigation of complaint against Chief Chris Griffin.
- B. Legal Advice - Discussion by Attorney Linto and Dodds in the matter of 2023-CP-10-01493 Pacaso Inc et al. vs. Sullivan's Island BZA et al.

- C. Legal Advice – Discussion by Attorney Dodds regarding various tree cutting violations on Town property.
- D. Legal Advice - Discussion by Attorney Dodds regarding 2024-CP-10-0319 Randolph Friedman v. Sullivan’s Island Design Review Board.
- E. Contractual – Discussion by Attorney Dodds and Administrator Benke regarding US Army Corps of Engineers Beneficial Sand Project.
- F. Personnel – Discussion regarding Town Administrator candidate search.
- G. Contractual – Discussion of FEMA Grant 4241, and project cost increases for improvements at Station 18.

Motion was made by Councilmember Millimet, seconded by Councilmember Hubbard to come out of Executive Session at 9:10 p.m., passed unanimously.

Mayor O’Neil stated that no votes or actions were taken while in Executive Session

IX. 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 Millimet, to accept the resignation of Chief of Police Chris Griffin, and in the interest of finality, to avoid the incursion of unnecessary costs to the Town and to avoid further disruption to the Town’s operations that we authorize the payment of \$10,000 to dispense of this matter with finality, passed unanimously.

Motion was made by Councilmember Latham, seconded by Councilmember Millimet, with immediate effect to appoint Glenn Meadows as Chief of Police for the Town of Sullivan’s Island, passed unanimously.

Chief Meadows received a standing ovation and made comments about his new position.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to engage Coastal Science and Engineering to provide coastal engineering services related to beach restoration activities through the Army Corps of Engineers Beneficial Sand Project at Breach Inlet, passed unanimously.

X. Adjournment

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Millimet to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 p.m., passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Bridget Welch