



**Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina
Town Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 21, 2025, 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 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 Jason Blanton, Rebecca Fanning, Greg Gress, Assistant Fire Chief Amanda Hawver, Town Administrator Joe Henderson, Town Lawyer Anthony Stith, Jr., Police Chief Glenn Meadows, Fire Chief Anthony Stith, Bridget Welch, and Max Wurthmann.

Mayor 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 forty (40) 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:

- Resilience and Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan Overview (Kim Morganello and Dr. Nicole Elko)

Mrs. Morganello of Weston & Samson gave an overview of the plan. She mentioned multiple times that they had community engagement for the plan, beginning in summer 2024. This included stakeholder interviews, community engagement sessions, surveys, Council Workshops, and a presentation to the Planning Commission. Their goal has remained consistent since the beginning, which is to provide strategies on diverse scales, ranging from community-wide to site level opportunities, that honor the history of the Island and learn from past applications, identify open areas for storage and protection, and further understand challenges to provide adaptive solutions. The plan is a guidance document with strategies for the Town to consider; none of the suggestions are requirements. Weston & Sampson was requested by Town staff to work closely with Seamon Whiteside's Stormwater Master Plan while creating this plan.

Mrs. Morganello then presented the plan outcome, showing the H&H (Hydrologic and Hydraulic) models, which allowed them to combine proposed conditions of the two plans. She also mentioned utilizing some of the strategies in the plan that could potentially serve as a Green Infrastructure Plan for CRS credits that may reduce FEMA flood insurance rates for residents. She also said using nature-based solutions (NBS) will reduce the strain on the drainage infrastructure and provide water quality benefits.

One aspect of potential plan outcomes was identifying Town-owned properties where demonstration projects could be established. There are also ways to empower residents to act on personal property by identifying the most appropriate and effective NBS. To conclude, she reviewed the revisions to the plan that were made from their last presentation.

At Councilmember Millimet's request, Rebecca Fanning provided credentials for Ms. Kim Morganello and Dr. Nicole Elko. Ms. Fanning stated Mrs. Morganello is the former Water Resources Agent for the state of South Carolina's Clemson Extension program and is generally considered the state-wide expert on nature-based solutions for resiliency. She is currently a project leader at engineering firm Weston & Sampson. Dr. Elko has worked with the Town for many years, doing the annual beach survey and works with multiple other coastal communities.

Dr. Elko presented clarifications on changes that have been made over the past year, based on input from staff, Council, and the community, including residents and property owners. These changes are reflected in the final plan that is being presented tonight and include increasing allowances for low lying properties to include eco-friendly erosion control measures and flood protections, e.g. earthen berms, landscape walls, and allowing more than one foot of fill under building footprints. She pointed out that the plan recommends continuing to make accommodations for existing, non-conforming structures in the setback, as the Town already provides for, but also recommends adopting ordinances on native vegetation buffers on the marshfront in alignment with other municipalities in the region to filter stormwater runoff. Dr. Elko clarified that the Nature Trail extension was minimally disruptive to dune vegetation due to its advantageous positioning along an old dune ridge, and that the plan recommends its continuation along stable inland dune ridges to consolidate beach access to public paths. The plan is focused on Sullivan's Island through 2050, and causeway elevation may be something to consider. Dr. Elko stated that if DOT has work planned for the causeway, it may be beneficial for residents to let them, and elected SC officials, know there is a need for elevation. She reiterated none of the recommendations in the Plan are budgeted for next year and serves as a Guidebook of considerations for Council, staff, and residents. She recommended using the Project Story Map website as an educational tool for learning more about resiliency action on the Island. She also feels the entire team has put together an excellent plan that is more robust than other coastal communities in the area. She then took questions from Council.

Ms. Fanning stated in the last Planning Commission it was said that Council would "likely" be adopting the Plan in November, so there may be members of the public that expect the final vote on the Plan to be at the next meeting and not tonight's.

- 2024 and 2025 Beach Monitoring Survey, Coastal Science and Engineering (Steven Traynum and Dr. Patrick Barrineau)

Dr. Barrineau introduced the 2025 Beach Condition Update and provided some background information on the Island, pointing out the Island's shape is unusual in that it is influenced by inlets, shoals, and bars. Like other barrier islands, it is also influenced by storms and sea level rise. There has been an uptick in storms since 2015 and sea levels have risen one foot since 2000, are likely to increase by at least one foot by 2050. He then

Motion was made by Councilmember Higgins, seconded by Councilmember Visser, to approve the September 12, 2025 Public Facilities Committee Meeting Minutes, passed 3-0.

- September 4, 2025, Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes (Committee Members Only)

Motion was made by Committee member Novak, seconded by Committee member Latham, to approve the September 4, 2025 Recreation Committee Meeting Members, passed 3-0.

- B. First Reading, by Title Only, Ordinance 2025-06, An Ordinance to Amend the Business License Ordinance of Sullivan's Island to Update the Class Schedule as Required by Act 176 of 2020 (J. Blanton)

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Millimet, approve the Business License Ordinance of Sullivan's Island to update the class schedule as required by Act 176 of 2020, passed unanimously.

Comptroller Jason Blanton explained Act 176 of 2020, which happened after the State became involved with standardizing the business licensing process in municipalities. This will reclassify a business' NAICS Code and the Town is required to adopt the new codes by the end of the year.

- C. Acceptance of the Resilience and Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan document (R. Fanning)

Motion was made by Councilmember Visser, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to defer the vote of the Resilience and Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan to the November 18 Regular Council Meeting, passed unanimously.

Councilmember Visser suggested deferring the plan's acceptance to the November Regular Council Meeting due to Ms. Fannings prior comments. Ms. Fanning stated moving the vote will allow residents and Council to provide feedback and ask questions, but she does not think the consultants will make any substantial changes before the adoption. Councilmember Millimet suggested any changes be highlighted at the November meeting. Mayor O'Neil reiterated this is a collection of recommendations and no official action will be taken other than accepting the Plan from the consultants, as we paid them to do. Town Administrator Joe Henderson clarified that the BRIC grant required that the document be called a Plan in order to receive grant funds.

- D. Consideration of Recreation Committee recommendation to replace Stith Park playground equipment (tot-lot), and to accept a bid proposal from Just for Fun Playgrounds, using the Sullivan's Island Park Foundation donation of \$35,000 for the purchase of a playground ship (J. Henderson)

Motion was made by Councilmember Higgins, seconded by Councilmember Latham to approve the proposal from Just For Fun Playgrounds to renovate the Stith Tot Park and accept the generous donation of \$35,000 from the Park Foundation, to include a commemorative plaque recognizing their generosity, put that plaque on the boat, passed unanimously.

explained their survey system, stating they divide the Island into four “reaches.” Some take away messages included topics like the shoal bypass at Breach Inlet, pond creations, accretion, and erosion. Overall, total island-wide change was minimal, with just a few spots showing significant erosion and accretion. He also went over heat map changes, which was also minimal. He also mentioned the pond at Station 28, saying it will keep attaching and detaching multiple times in the future. He stated it may be possible to get permits from the State to dig a channel to the ocean to allow the pond to drain into the ocean. The permit will likely take weeks to procure and may only be good for one event. Mr. Traynum clarified there is not a general permit that would allow that kind of work, but the State may be willing to work with the Town. Dr. Barrineau reviewed some key events of the past year and stated they were isolated and there were no threats to property. The pond began forming in 2021 and the recent dune restoration project done by the Army Corps of Engineers did not impact it. The migration of shoals and bars happens naturally every few years and there is no one event that causes it. He concluded with suggestions of actions the Town could take to help with the erosion hot spots. He then took questions from Council and meeting attendees.

II. Format: Public Comments

- Ralph Byers, 3025 Middle Street – requested homeowners be notified when the stormwater construction begins because houses at the end of Middle Street will be cut off from the street and there is potential of utility lines being cut during construction.
- Karen Byko, 2862 Middle St – stated she is happy with the final report for the Resilience Plan and has followed along since the first open house in May 2024. She thanked Council for their thoughtful and transparent approach to implementing any suggestions. She is also happy with the Stormwater Master Plan as well.
- Eric Dodson, 1462 Thompson Ave – thank Councilmember Higgins and Hubbard for earlier comments. He feels there was not enough notice for public input on the Resilience Plan because changes were not made until the second or third reading. He feels himself and others do not understand what is being produced in the Plan. He feels the plan has good suggestions but there needs to be line-item additions and vetoes.
- Pierre de Lucy, 405 Station 12 St – feels the plan should have been discussed further, particularly man-made solutions. He also had concerns about the Stormwater Plan’s impact on the quality of water.
- Barbara Spell, 1702 Atlantic Ave – feels there should have been more input and engagement from residents for the Resilience Plan, rather than staff or hired professionals.

III. Council Action Items:

A. Approval of Minutes:

- September 16, 2025 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Councilmember Visser, seconded by Councilmember Higgins, to approve the September 16, 2025 Regular Council Meeting Minutes, passed unanimously.

- September 12, 2025, Public Facilities Committee Meeting Minutes (Committee Members Only)

Personnel anniversaries:

- Max Wurthmann, 7 years – Building Department
- Bridget Welch, 9 years – Administration
- Eric Stinnett, 14 years – Fire Department
- Jason Blanton, 18 years – Administration

Special Events:

- The Lovello Ride – Saturday, November 1, 2025.
- Christmas Tree Lighting – Friday, December 5, 2025
- Commercial District Special Event Planning – upcoming Safety Committee Meeting to be scheduled

Cove Creek Dredging: Planning Commission passed along a memo encouraging Council to look into this concept. Dredging has been an objective within the Comprehensive Plan since its inception of the plan. Since the memo was received, Staff has been working to gather information and looking at the permitting process, how we would develop a program and options for funding. A meeting with the National Park Service is scheduled for late October but is not confirmed due to the Federal Government shutdown. Fort Moultrie is currently renovating their dock in Cove Creek and have permits for dredging. They will meet with the Isle of Palms Town Administrator to learn about their dredging permitting process they already have in place for residents. They are also going to meet with Toler's Cove, who have a dredging cycle of every three to five years. The Mayor and Mr. Henderson have met with residents to discuss options as well.

D. Attorney's Report: Attorney Anthony Stith, Jr. – nothing to report

E. Boards and Commissions Report:

- a) Planning 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

IV. Committee Reports – Discussion Items:

- A. Finance Committee – Jason Blanton presented the budget report for September, reviewing the revenue and expenditures for the month. The work to replace the Town Hall porches has been completed and paid for. He also discussed the balance in the South Carolina Investment Pool. The current interest rate for the fund is 4.3956.
- B. Public Facilities Committee – There are 250 days until the 250th anniversary of the USA. Battery Gadsden is being considered as a location for the palmetto log fort replica. The Committee would like suggestions from residents for a commemorative welcome sign. Lynn Perotti with Lucky Dog will also post an ad in the Island Eye Newspaper with how to submit suggestions once that is decided. There was discussion about sending out a survey or having people email their suggestions.

Mr. Henderson reviewed the plans from Just For Fun Playgrounds and stated the funds were raised and donated by the Park Foundation. Council voted to update the ground cover in the lot in addition to updating and replacing some of the larger toys. The total proposal comes to \$83,100, with the Town covering \$48,100 and the Park Foundation contributing \$35,000. It will come out of the Capital Fund budget and possibly emergency reserves for repair. The work is planned for January, the rest of the park will still be open, and it will not interfere with Stormwater construction.

E. Approval of the 2026 dates for Council meetings and Council Workshop meetings

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to approve the 2026 dates as proposed with September 1, the first Tuesday, as a substitution for our regular first Monday Workshop Meeting, passed unanimously.

The first Monday in September is Labor Day, so September's Workshop will be held Tuesday, September 1, 2026.

F. **Reports and Communication:**

A. Mayor's Report: The Coffee with Chiefs event at the Co-op was a success and there is a good news story from the Police Department. Police Chief Glenn Meadows thanked Mike Walsh and the Battery Gadsden Cultural Center for sponsoring Coffee with Chiefs. School Resource Officer Josh Poole was recognized as a hero but multiple kindergarteners from Sullivan's Island Elementary School.

- A Thank You note was sent to the Mayor from Daniel Heller for attending his Eagle Scout ceremony.

B. **October Council Correspondence:**

- Penn Hagood, 2424 Raven Dr – Email thanking Town Council and Staff for approving stormwater maintenance work
- Kelly & Steve Bellone, 2824 Brooks St – Concerns regarding the stormwater drainage plan
- Town Attorney's Letter regarding planned stormwater work at 28.5 area of the Island
- Mike and Claire Walsh – Thanked the Police Department for their response to an incident at their home.

C. Administrator's Report:

Project Updates:

- Town Hall and Battery Thompson parking lots – they are finishing up the landscaping and gravel work and both should be open to the public in the next week or so.
- SCIIP Grant – the Stormwater project is starting at Station 28 ½ with clearing the outfall and dropping well points to de-water in preparation for installing pipes. In two weeks, they will start work at Station 31. They will need to bring in cranes in order to move the pipes and there will be some street closures. Nearby residents will be alerted to road closures, changes in traffic patterns, and if any work will be done in front of their home, such as removing a mailbox or driveway.

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

VII. Adjournment

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m., passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Bridget Welch

- C. Land Use and Natural Resources Committee – The next meeting will be on Friday, October 24, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. Ms. Fanning stated pet waste disposal will be a discussion item, as it has been brought up several times recently by residents as an issue.
- D. Administration Committee – Nothing to Report
- E. Water & Sewer Committee – The next meeting will be on Thursday, December 11, 2026, at 9:15 a.m.
- There was a main break in front of Stith Park and there are now sidewalk repairs being done as a result. Mayor Pro-Tem Novak and Councilmember Visser praised Mr. Gress and the Water & Sewer Department for restoring water quickly and without any major incidents.
 - At the next committee meeting, there will be discussion of a request from a research project to look at samples of our wastewater and whether or not to allow access to data and participate in the SC wastewater program, which will last two years.
 - Councilmember Millimet mentioned a Post & Courier article about water quality testing around Charleston and that the water in Cove Creek tested much better than all others.
- F. Public Safety Committee –
- Police Chief Glenn Meadows stated there have been some coyote sightings reported near Station 24, but nothing caught in the traps lately. He also stated the Toys for Tots Bike Drive officially starts November 1, but they have already been receiving donations.
 - A meeting on noise level reduction was held on Friday, December 17 with residents, Council members, and representatives from landscaping companies. Councilmember Millimet reviewed the survey results and said the next step would be to get more data about electric blowers before creating any restrictions. They would like staff to reach out to the landscaping company that services the park, Yellowstone, about the cost and requirements for using electric blowers for Town jobs.
- G. Recreation Committee – The Committee is excited for Tot Lot renovations and may personally try them out.

V. Executive Session

Motion was made by Councilmember Latham, seconded by Councilmember Higgins, to go into Executive Session at 8:24 p.m., passed unanimously.

Items Discussed:

1. **Contractual** – American Tower lease agreement – Second Amendment (A. Stith, Jr.)

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Higgins to return from Executive Session at 8:43 p.m., passed unanimously.

There were no votes taken or motions made during Executive Session.