



**Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina**  
**Town Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, August 19, 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  
Gary Visser, Councilmember

Councilmember Scott Millimet previously notified Council he would not be available for this meeting.

Staff members present were Deputy Police Chief Monty Anders, Jason Blanton, Town Attorney John Dodds, Town Attorney John Linton, Charles Drayton, Rebecca Fanning, Water & Sewer Manager Greg Gress, Amanda Hawver, Town Administrator Joe Henderson, Police Chief Glenn Meadows, Fire Chief Anthony Stith, Bridget Welch, and Max Wurthmann. Multiple members of the Police Department were also present.

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 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. Oath of Office:** Promotions for Police Department

- Markley McGougan, Corporal
- Josh Poole, Corporal
- Elias Shaffer, Lieutenant

Each officer was presented with a certificate of promotion and re-stated their oath alongside their families.

**II. Presentation:** Sea Level Rise Adaptation and Resilience Plan Overview (Nicole Elko)

Katie Finegan from Weston and Sampson started with the vision of the plan, 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. She then reviewed the four goals of the plan which are: engage, protect, restore, and adapt. She then presented five strategy possibilities with examples and suggestions on implementation. Each strategy is optional, and she provided a slide with more information on each one.

Nicole Elko from Elko Coastal Consulting presented five more strategies in the same manner. She mentioned monitoring marsh conditions as a top priority, in her opinion. She also discussed the possibility of adding eco-friendly erosion control measures on private marsh-front property and ways to manage and restore the dunes on the front beach. She provided the final plan outcomes which include a physical resilience plan through 2050 that is place-based and actionable, locations, forms and function, and cost estimating for in-the-ground strategies, improved communication for diverse audiences through established and proposed channels, and policy update recommendations to guide future decision-making and land use. They both took questions from Council.

### **III. Format: Public Comments**

- Laura Aringer, 1320 Pherigo St Mt Pleasant – in favor of dredging Cove Creek
- Stephanie Bell, 329 W Main St Lexington – has concerns with people trying to change their property line to Cove Creek and feels trees should not be allowed to be removed from Osceola Avenue.
- Bobby Cummings, 1450 Thompson Ave – in favor of dredging Cove Creek and requested the Town begin the permitting process.
- Ben Hagood, 2424 Raven Dr – discussed his flooding issue and asked to allow more than one foot of fill on Raven Dr.
- Susan Middaugh, 2420 Raven Dr – noted sea levels have risen, causing more flooding, and would like to see steps taken now to improve the flooding and possibly allow more than one foot of fill for properties like hers.
- Angie Polk, 1652 Thompson Ave – concerned with the Stormwater Plan’s lack of filtration at outfalls.
- Steven Kerr, 1424 Thompson Ave – in favor of dredging Cove Creek, suggested beginning the permit processing, and expressed concerns for possible pollution caused by stormwater.
- Todd Abedon, 1658 Thompson Ave – in favor of dredging and is concerned with unfiltered water and runoff in outfalls.

### **IV. Council Action Items:**

#### **A. Approval of Minutes:**

- July 19, 2025 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

**Motion was made by Councilmember Visser, seconded by Councilmember Higgins, to approve the July 19, 2025 Regular Council Meeting Minutes, passed 5-0, with Mayor Pro-Tem Novak abstaining.**

#### **B. Consideration of a not-for-profit organization to receive contributions for Palmetto removal mitigation**

Mayor O’Neil stated they have gotten offers from Dominion Energy and SC Department of Transportation of \$25,000 to help with replanting and to offset the damage done by removing palmetto trees on Sullivan’s Island last year. They will donate this money to a not-for-profit organization that the Town must decide on. Director of Resilience and Natural Resource Management Rebecca Fanning stated Town staff has a few different local partners that are willing to participate in this project. Joe Henderson stated Town staff would be in charge of



deciding where the trees would be planted. Staff was given permission to look further into securing partners and further investigating project specifics.

## **V. Reports and Communication:**

A. Mayor's Report: Congratulations to Justin Novak for graduating from the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government recently.

B. Administrator's Report

### **August Correspondence:**

- Tim Kelly, 1456 Thompson Ave – In support of Cove Creek dredging
- Hannah Dodson, 1462 Thompson Ave - In support of Cove Creek dredging
- Bobby Cummings, 1450 Thompson Ave - In support of Cove Creek dredging
- Steven Kerr, 1424 Thompson Ave - In support of Cove Creek dredging
- Stuart McCluer, 1408 Thompson Ave - In support of Cove Creek dredging
- Kurt Polk, 1652 Thompson Ave - In support of Cove Creek dredging
- Mike & Betsey Carroll, 1308 Cove Ave - In support of Cove Creek dredging
- Mary Kerr, 1424 Thompson Ave - In support of Cove Creek dredging
- Nelson & Samantha Ploch - In support of Cove Creek dredging
- Rochelle Rutledge, 1764 Atlantic Ave – Opposed to Cove Creek dredging
- Tam & Mike Penska, 1656 Thompson Ave and Pam & Peter DeVito, 2873 Marshall Blvd & 2256 Middle St – Email requesting to reconsider the Island's welcome signs
- Betsy Fuller, 421 Station 26 - Email requesting to reconsider the Island's welcome signs
- Andrea & Charles Kellner, 1744 I'On Ave - Email requesting to reconsider the Island's welcome signs
- Hannah Dodson, 1462 Thompson Ave - Email requesting to reconsider the Island's welcome signs
- Michael Allen, Retired National Park Service - Email requesting to reconsider the Island's welcome signs
- Karen Byko, 2862 Middle St - Email requesting to reconsider the Island's welcome signs
- Jose & Raquel Biascoechea, 2830 & 2859 Jasper Blvd – Comments and questions regarding the SCIIP grant drainage project.
- Dale Poulnot, 2820 Marshall Blvd – Comments regarding the SCIIP grant drainage project
- Vivian Scarborough, 2830 Atlantic Ave – Comments regarding the SCIIP grant drainage project
- Ali Berney, 852 Middle St – Cove Inlet Bridge walkway maintenance.

#### **a. Project Updates:**

- i. Annual Audit: Green, Finney, Cauley have begun their yearly audit of the Town's financial records and governmental records for all FY2025 activity, ending June 30, 2025. A final report will be presented at the October 2025 Regular Council meeting.
- ii. Undergrounding Powerlines: Town Staff and Council members have provided comments to Dominion Energy regarding an RFP to start the engineering study for the possibility of burying all the powerlines on the Island.

b. Personnel anniversaries:

- Michael Mitchum, 1 year – Police Department
- Lisa Lawson, 2 years – Police Department
- Joseph Garavelli, 2 years – Water & Sewer Department
- Glenn Meadows, 4 years – Police Department
- Gary Erickson, 9 years – Police Department
- Amanda Hawver, 22 years – Fire Department

- C. Attorney's Report: Town Attorney John Dodds – discussed the Town adopting a hate crime ordinance, similar to surrounding municipalities. He also discussed the difference between hate crimes and hate speech. He explained these types of ordinances essentially boost any punishment associated with a crime if there is any evidence of motive based on specific criteria. There have been incidents on Sullivan's Island that possibly would have qualified as a hate crime and would have given the offender to have more severe consequences. Mr. Dodd stated he would provide examples of other ordinances for Council to review.

Mayor O'Neil stated he had asked Mr. Dodds to look into the pros and cons of adopting a hate crime ordinance for the Town, prompted from the case Whitehurst vs. TOSI.

D. 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

**VI. Committee Reports – Discussion Items:**

- A. Finance Committee – Jason Blanton presented the budget report for July. He stated they sold the Water & Sewer dump truck and purchased a Polaris Ranger UTV for the Police Department. All expenditures for July are as expected. He also mentioned the audit started yesterday (Monday, August 18, 2025).
- B. Public Facilities Committee – There will be a meeting on Friday, September 12, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. to discuss the welcome sign.
- C. Land Use and Natural Resources Committee – Staff is working on presenting information about the possibility of dredging Cove Creek. A meeting will be scheduled once more information is available from staff, the federal parks department (Fort Moultrie), and the state.
- D. Administration Committee – Nothing to Report
- E. Water & Sewer Committee – The next meeting will be on Thursday, August 28, 2026 at 9:15 a.m. and the Town's deep-water wells will be discussed.



- F. Public Safety Committee –Ms. Fanning stated the temperatures and bacteria levels in the Station 28 ½ pond have dropped but it is still not safe to swim. There is an article about water quality on the beach in the August Town Newsletter.
- Police Chief Glenn Meadows reported one male coyote had been trapped on August 5 and there were not new updates on beach traffic.
  - A survey regarding gas powered lawn equipment went out to residents and the results will be reported later by Charles Drayton.
- G. Recreation Committee – There will be a meeting on Thursday, September 4, 2026 to discuss the tot park and drainage at Stith Park.

## **VII. Executive Session**

**Motion was made by Councilmember Hubbard, seconded by Councilmember Higgins, to go into Executive Session at 7:35 p.m., passed unanimously.**

Items Discussed:

1. **Legal** – Stockdale settlement negotiations (Linton)
2. **Contractual** – Cove Creek LLC's request regarding stormwater plans at Station 16 (Linton)
3. **Contractual** – Station 26-26 ½ Stormwater Infrastructure Maintenance plan (Henderson)
4. **Personnel** – Boards and Commission Seats and Terms: Review of applications submitted for seats and amend terms on various Boards and Commissions (Henderson)

**Motion was made by Councilmember Visser, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak to return from Executive Session at 8:22 p.m., passed unanimously.**

There were no votes taken or motions made during Executive Session

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to direct staff to accept the written proposal from Sanders Brothers Construction Incorporated to perform the work described on the bid submitted by them dated July 18, 2025 to improve the stormwater infrastructure located at Station 26 ½ and the stormwater infrastructure located at the two sites along Raven Drive, passed unanimously.**

**Motion was made by Councilmember Latham, seconded by Councilmember Higgins, to fill Boards and Commissions; for the Board of Zoning Appeals, I move that we re-appoint Cindy Kirkland Michael Scruggs for a three-year term ending September 2028; for the Tree Commission, I move that we re-appoint Donovan Glassburn and Milton Langley for a three-year term September 2028; and also that we re-appoint Charlie Cole and Manda Poletti and that we appoint Garth Lynch for three-year terms ending September 2028; as for the DRB seats, I move that we get back in touch with the applicants to discuss the fact that we need to stagger that Board, we have five seats expiring at the same time and for the good of the Board, we are looking to break that up, passed unanimously.**

Mayor-Pro Tem Novak explained they are going to defer appointing DRB members until the next meeting so they are able to properly address changing the terms, so the Board does not have five seats expiring every three years.

### VIII. Adjournment

Motion was made by Councilmember Latham, seconded by Councilmember Visser, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m., passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Bridget Welch