



**Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina
Town Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 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
Melanie Burkhold, Councilmember
Ned Higgins, Councilmember
Carl Hubbard, Councilmember
Jody Latham, Councilmember
Laura Schroeder, Councilmember

Staff members present were Town Administrator Joe Henderson, Deputy Police Chief Monty Anders, Jason Blanton, Town Attorney Jim Clement, Town Attorney John Dodds, Charles Drayton, Rebecca Fanning, Greg Gress, Assistant Fire Chief Amanda Hawver, 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 three (3) 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 or prayer.

I. Oath of Office: Police Officer Abraham Gil

Police Chief Glenn Meadows introduced Officer Abraham Gil, who was sworn in by Mayor O'Neil.

II. Presentations:

1. Recognition of the 2025 LENS SI Officer of the Year – Josh Poole (Ali Berney)

Ali Berney presented School Resource and Police Officer Josh Poole with the 2025 LENS SI Officer of the year award.

2. National Park Service presentation on parking and shuttle services for SC250 (Tim Sveum)

Brad Shattuck, Superintendent of Fort Moultrie & Fort Sumter National Historic Park and the Charles Pickney National Historic Site, presented information about the current agenda and parking and shuttle options for the various events that will be happening this year on Sullivan's Island for the SC250 celebrations. There will be

events all day on Saturday, June 27 and Sunday, June 28 for the celebration, including demonstrations, a military flyover, and cannons firing. There will also be food, water, and EMS available on site. Attendance is expected to be anywhere from 2,000-10,000, based on past events. They recognize parking will be a huge challenge but want to work collaboratively to lessen the burden for both visitors and residents. The committee has been working with the Town of Mount Pleasant to secure parking areas and will potentially use the grassy area in front of Battery Jasper as well. They are also coordinating with CARTA, emergency services, and contracting professional parking services/volunteers. Their main priority is safety and also want to make sure local residents are taken care of and feel as little impact as possible. Mr. Shattuck then took questions from Council. Tim Sveum and Mr. Henderson explained the NPS is asking permission to use spaces that are already public parking as part of their parking plan, should the lots in Mount Pleasant fill up. It is the lots at Battery Thompson, Battery Gadsden, and the spaces behind Town Hall. Mr. Henderson stated NPS should also reach out to SIES and Battery Gadsden for use of those spaces. Mr. Henderson and Police Chief Glenn Meadows confirmed there will likely be a need for more police presence, much like we already have for busy summer weekends and big Town events.

III. Format: Public Comments

- Bill Reeside – lives on Edisto Beach and is running for a seat in the US House of Representatives.
- Rochelle Rutledge, 1764 Atlantic Ave – in favor of banning gas-powered leaf-blowers and trimmers.
- Barbara Spell, 1702 Atlantic Ave – had questions about the FY2027 budget and the Director of Resilience position

IV. Council Action Items:

A. Approval of Minutes:

- February 17, 2026 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Councilmember Burkhold, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, to approve the February 17, 2026 Regular Council Meeting Minutes, passed unanimously.

- February 20, 2026, Administration Committee Meeting Minutes (Committee Members Only)

Approval was deferred to next Administration Committee meeting.

- February 23, 2026, Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes (Committee Members Only)

Motion was made by Councilmember Schroeder, seconded by Councilmember Hubbard, to approve the February 23, 2026 Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes, passed unanimously.

- March 9, 2026, Public Facilities Meeting Minutes (Members Only)

Motion was made by Councilmember Hubbard, seconded by Councilmember Higgins, to approve the March 9, 2026 Public Facilities Meeting Minutes, passed unanimously.

- B. Approval of construction drawings for an awarded FEMA grant (HMGP 4492) to improve stormwater outfalls at Station 18.5 and 25

Motion was made by Councilmember Schroeder, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, to approve the construction drawings for an awarded FEMA grant (HMGP 4492) to improve stormwater outfalls at Station 18.5 and 25, passed unanimously.

Seamon and Whiteside gave a presentation on the proposed stormwater outfall improvements at the March 2, 2026 Town Council Workshop. Approving these plans will allow staff to move forward with bidding the project out and selecting a contractor to move forward with construction. The plans include finalized drawings for the reconstruction of outfalls at Station 18 ½ and 25 and are included in the Council packet. The construction at Station 25 will be largely funded by the SCIIP grant.

Motion was made by Councilmember Schroeder, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, to approve the construction drawings as described and displayed, passed unanimously.

- C. Approval of NPS use of parking lot for SC250

Motion was made by Councilmember Schroeder, seconded by Councilmember Burkhold, to approve the parking for SC250 in those designated areas, passed unanimously.

Administrator Joe Henderson clarified that the request is for the use of parking lots behind Town Hall, Battery Thompson and Battery Gadsden. This would total around 150 spaces.

- D. Selection of committee recommendation, contractor IPW for Station 24 boardwalk repairs

Director of Resilience and Natural Resources Rebecca Fanning stated there were four submissions as bids for the project and explained the selection process. Having the highest score, IPW was selected for the project. This motion will approve the decision to use IPW to start construction at Station 24 with plans that have already been created and approved by the Public Facilities Committee.

Motion was made by Councilmember Hubbard, seconded by Councilmember Burkhold, to have Joe work with IPW for the Station 24 boardwalk repairs to come up with contract terms, passed unanimously.

- E. Discussion and recommendation regarding gas powered leaf blowers and weed trimmers transition

Motion was made by Councilmember Schroeder, seconded by Councilmember Latham, to ask staff to develop an ordinance for us to review at the next meeting, passed unanimously.

Public Safety member Schroeder explained the reasoning behind this ordinance change, stating the Committee felt two years was sufficient time for both contractors and residents to transition to electric leaf blowers and weed trimmers. They also have plans to have a campaign encouraging people not to use blowers at all and allow their leaves to stay. Mayor O'Neil and Mr. Henderson took questions from Council. This motion would direct staff to begin drafting an ordinance regarding the two-year transition. The changes would go through three readings, and the two-years would not begin if/when the new ordinance is codified. This suggestion is based on

recommendations from an Ad-Hoc Committee that was formed, an Island-wide survey that was taken, and finally from the Public Safety Committee. Rebecca Fanning stated presentations at the last Public Safety meeting was very informative and answered a lot of questions for commercial landscapers. Mayor Pro-Tem Novak suggested having two separate drafts, one for commercial, the other for residents.

F. Consideration of the 2026 Arbor Day Proclamation and approval of the budget

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Schroeder, to approve the Town of Sullivan's Island Arbor Day Proclamation as presented in the packet, passed unanimously.

Arbor Day will be Friday, April 24.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Burkhold, to approve the program as presented, along with the budget, on the condition that the Tree Commission provides the funds promised, passed unanimously.

Ms. Fanning stated that the Town has been recognized as a Tree City USA for the tenth year, a designation that comes from the National Arbor Day Foundation. They have requested \$10,000 from the Tree Commission for this tenth anniversary Arbor Day event. There will be food trucks, and they will be giving away 140 trees and 300 flowers to attendees. The event plan will be presented at the next Tree Commission meeting, where they will decide whether or not to award the \$10,000.

G. Approval to restore the footpath at Station 32 access point and add \$50,000 to the FY2027 budget

Motion was made by Councilmember Schroeder, seconded by Councilmember Hubbard, to proceed as Joe described, passed unanimously.

Mr. Henderson stated this recommendation comes from the March 9 Public Facilities meeting after reviewing several options on how to re-establish public access at Station 32 beach path. It was decided to first attempt to repair the existing path by digging out the path that leads to beach, at little to no cost to the Town. If the first attempt fails, the second option is to construct a walkover, at an estimated expense of \$50,000. This option has been presented to the Finance Committee to be included in the FY2027 budget.

H. A Resolution authorizing the execution of a license agreement with SC250 Charleston, Inc. for the construction and operation of a temporary Palmetto Log Fort Replica (to be taken up in executive session)

Motion was made by Councilmember Hubbard, seconded by Councilmember Burkhold, to move item H to the end of the agenda after our Executive Session so that we can come back to it, passed unanimously.

I. Reports and Communication:

A. Mayor's Report: Be aware of scams asking for money to be paid to the Town for various fees ,as well as receiving fake jury summons.

B. February Correspondence:

- Mike Walsh, Battery Gadsden Cultural Center - Email requesting funds to be in the FY2027 budget to celebrate SC250
- Sonja Schuman, Sullivan's Island Baptist Church – Email requesting maintenance to the historical cannons at Station 18
- Bryan Crabtree – Email to share article and links regarding the Pacaso ruling
- Bill Killough, 1813 Back St – concerned with gas-powered lawn equipment
- Peter Alexander, 3203 Middle St – Email opposing the request to ban gas-powered equipment
- Norman Khour, 1728 I'On Ave – Email with support to remove invasive plants
- Mike Walsh, Battery Gadsden Cultural Center – SC250 meeting report and information
- Tharin Walker, 265 Bayview Dr – Letter supporting the Palmetto Fort replica
- Brent Havens, 1746 Thompson Ave – Email in favor of the zero-based budget idea
- Sumter Debrux, 1903 Back St – Email with concerns about the Island debt
- Barbara Spell, 1702 Atlantic Ave – Email regarding the FY2027 budget
- Adele Deas Tobin, 1689 Middle St – Email with concerns before the summer season begins

C. Administrator's Report:

1. As of yesterday (Monday, March 16), the third major road closure relating to the stormwater improvements has begun at Middle Street and Station 28 ½ . All residents have been alerted in multiple ways.
2. The intersection at Station 31 and I'On Ave has also been closed.
3. Naval equipment exercises are taking place from March 16-19 at various places around the Island.

Personnel anniversaries:

- Matt Jensen, 2 years – Administration Department
- Chuck Hill, 3 years – Police Department (BSO)
- Collin Livingston, 3 years - Police Department (BSO)
- Matt Williamson, 6 years – Water & Sewer Department
- Drew Levay, 24 years – Fire Department

Special Events:

- A viewing of “The Battle of Sullivan's Island” – Thursday, March 19 5:30-6:30 p.m. and Tuesday, April 17 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- Coffee with Council –March 20, 2026 from 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. at Town Hall.

D. Attorney's Report: Town Attorney John Linton – nothing to report

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation in the country. It is noted that the economy is still in a state of stagnation and that the government has failed to implement the necessary reforms. The report also mentions that the population is growing rapidly and that there is a serious shortage of food and other basic necessities.

2. The second part of the report discusses the political situation. It is noted that the government is corrupt and that there is a widespread feeling of disillusionment among the people. The report also mentions that there are several opposition groups that are active in the country.

3. The third part of the report deals with the social situation. It is noted that there is a high level of unemployment and that the living standards are very low. The report also mentions that there is a serious problem of ill health and that the health services are inadequate.

4. The fourth part of the report discusses the international situation. It is noted that the country is isolated and that it has few friends in the international community. The report also mentions that the country is a target of international terrorism.

Recommendations

1. The government should implement the necessary reforms in order to stimulate the economy and to create jobs. It should also take steps to improve the living standards of the people.

2. The government should take steps to improve the political situation. It should be more open to criticism and should take steps to reduce corruption.

3. The government should take steps to improve the social situation. It should create more jobs and should improve the health services.

4. The government should take steps to improve the international situation. It should seek to establish better relations with other countries and should take steps to reduce international terrorism.

Conclusion

The report concludes that the country is in a state of crisis and that the government is failing to meet the needs of the people. It is recommended that the government should take immediate steps to address these problems.

Appendix

The appendix contains a list of the names of the members of the committee that prepared the report. It also contains a list of the names of the people who provided information for the 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

V. Committee Reports – Discussion Items:

- A. Finance Committee – Work on the FY2027 budget has begun and there will be updates forthcoming. Chair Latham stated the next Finance Committee meeting to review the budget will likely be Monday, March 30 at 10:00 a.m. Comptroller Jason Blanton provided the financial report for February 2026 as well as some updates regarding the SCIIP and SRO grants.
- B. Public Facilities Committee – Station 32 and Station 24 beach path improvements were discussed at the last meeting. There was also discussion about the SC 250 commemorative banner images and decisions will be made at the next meeting. restarting the Ad Hoc They asked staff to draft an invoice regarding storage of boats and trailers on public property for future discussion. There will be an Ad-Hoc Committee meeting to discuss the Old Town Hall on Wednesday, March 25 at 10:00 a.m.
- C. Land Use and Natural Resources Committee – There has been discussion about a pilot project to remove some of the invasive species on Town property, possibly starting with Battery Thompson.
- D. Administration Committee – The next meeting will be on Friday, March 20, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. Agenda items are updating the sexual harassment policy, organization and training within the Fire Department, and increasing public engagement.
- E. Water & Sewer Committee – They have continued discussing the FY2027 budget. The next meeting is to be determined.
- F. Public Safety Committee – Police Chief Meadows stated one coyote has been trapped at the Old Dump. He also reviewed incidents that occurred during the St. Patrick’s Day event on Saturday, March 14.
- G. Recreation Committee – The Committee decided using concrete pipes as the drainage solution for Stith Park and also approved using landscape berms. RFPs are being submitted for both projects. Golf-cart parking for Stith Park was also discussed and decisions about ADA parking are still being discussed. There was also discussion about adding gravel to the road and the kayak launch at the Old Dump. The next meeting is Thursday, March 19 at 10:00 a.m. The ribbon cutting for the Tot Lot will be Tuesday, March 24 at 3:00 p.m. Mr. Henderson stated he has received one bid proposal for work at the Old Dump and is hoping for three more in the coming weeks.

VI. Executive Session

Motion was made by Councilmember Higgins, seconded by Councilmember Burkhold, to go into Executive Session at 7:42 p.m., passed unanimously.

Items Discussed:

1. **Legal:** Advice on Pacaso case (J. Clement)
2. **Legal:** Advice on Bluestein case (J. Clement)
3. **Legal:** Review of SC250 Charleston, Inc. license agreement to permit Palmetto Log fort replica (J. Clement)

4. **Legal:** Review current Ordinances to ensure compliance with Section 23-31-510 among other SC State Laws (J. Dodds)

Motion was made by Councilmember Latham, seconded by Councilmember Schroeder to return from Executive Session at 8:16 p.m., passed unanimously.

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

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

Motion was made by Councilmember Schroeder, seconded by Councilmember Burkhold, to request Council or our attorneys to amend ordinance 150.38 removing the prohibition of fire arms, passed unanimously.

Mayor Pro-Tem Novak stated this change is to bring our current ordinances in compliance with a state law that passed subsequent to the ordinance that prior Town Council had passed.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Novak, seconded by Councilmember Higgins, to approve the Resolution authorizing the execution of a license agreement with SC250 Charleston, Inc for the construction and operation of a temporary palmetto log fort replica which was published in the packet for today's meeting so that the Mayor or Town Administrator are authorized to execute the license agreement on behalf of the Town, together with any minor modifications that may be approved by the Town attorney, passed unanimously.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion was made by Councilmember Higgins, seconded by Councilmember Schroeder, to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m., passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Bridget Welch