

TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND
Town Council Emergency Meeting of April 22, 2020

MINUTES

Mayor Gregg called the Emergency Town Council meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Councilmembers Crane, Finke, Fox and Goldstein, Town Administrator Cronin and Town Clerk Allbritton attended the meeting. The Town Clerk verified that the meeting was advertised according to the SC Freedom of Information Act. Because of COVID-19 requirements, the public could dial in and listen by telephone.

Mayor Gregg stated that the agenda for the meeting is one item, which is consideration of amendments to Emergency Ordinance 2020-01 that was passed by Town Council on April 1, 2020. The Mayor began by pointing out the WHEREAS clauses that had been added in the proposed amended Ordinance 2020-01 as a result of Executive Orders issued by the Mayor and the Governor.

The Mayor remarked that the first amendments to the body of the Emergency Ordinance are in Section 3 concerning the sunset date of April 30, 2020, pertaining to short-term rentals. The Mayor moved for consideration of the sunset date for Section 3(a)(1) pertaining to rental guest check-ins. Councilman Crane seconded the motion. Councilman Crane suggested that the sunset date for rental guest check-ins be changed from April 30, 2020, to May 15, 2020. Councilman Crane, Councilman Goldstein and Councilwoman Finke voted in favor of the amendment. Mayor Gregg and Councilwoman Fox voted against the amendment. The motion to approve the amendment passed by a vote of 3-2.

The Mayor moved for consideration of the sunset date for Section 3(a)(3) that pertains to accepting new short-term rental reservations. Councilman Crane seconded the motion. Councilman Crane suggested that the sunset date for Section 3(a)(3) be changed from April 30, 2020, to May 15, 2020. Councilman Crane, Councilman Goldstein and Councilwoman Finke voted in favor of the amendment. Mayor Gregg and Councilwoman Fox voted against the amendment. The motion to approve the amendment passed 3-2.

Mayor Gregg moved for consideration of the sunset dates contained in Section 3(a)(4) that relates to advertising short-term rental units and the status of the online booking calendars for such units. Councilman Crane seconded the motion. Councilman Crane suggested changing both sunset dates from April 30, 2020, to May 15, 2020. Councilman Crane, Councilman Goldstein and Councilwoman Finke voted in favor of the amendment. Mayor Gregg and Councilwoman Fox voted against the amendment. The motion to approve the amendment passed 3-2.

The Mayor stated that the next sunset date to be decided was in Section 4(a) pertaining to Town meetings which had previously been cancelled through April 30, 2020. Mayor Gregg moved for consideration of the sunset date in Section 4(a). Councilman Crane seconded the motion. The Town Administrator commented that, if the number of individuals allowed to attend Town meetings were based on 20% of maximum capacity determined by the Fire Department, only 15 people could be in the meeting room. If Council, the Town Administrator and the Town Clerk were excluded, that would only leave 6 additional people that could attend. Social distancing would also be difficult. Mayor Gregg commented that his inclination was not to change the date but to use the remaining time to develop an alternative means of conducting Town meetings. Most of these meetings would not require large crowds and probably could be accommodated by using Zoom, or some such method, rather than trying to fit people into the meeting room area. Mayor Gregg made a motion to leave the sunset date for the cancellation of Town meetings as April 30, 2020 and undertake to develop alternative ways to conduct the meetings that would have otherwise been cancelled by extending this date. Councilwoman Finke seconded the motion and the vote to approve was unanimous.

Mayor Gregg moved for approval of the amendments to Emergency Ordinance 2020-01 and Councilman Crane seconded the motion. Mayor Gregg, Councilman Crane, Councilman Goldstein and Councilwoman Finke voted in favor of the amendments. Councilwoman Fox voted against the amendments. The motion to approve the amended Emergency Ordinance 2020-01 passed by a vote of 4-1.

Councilman Crane recommended Council have a budget workshop to determine if the effects of COVID-19 will have a significant impact on the Town's 2020 budget. Mayor Gregg suggested instead that the Town Administrator look into whether there will be a significant impact on the Town's finances that would require a need to take any type of action and to advise Council accordingly within the next month to six weeks.

Councilman Goldstein suggested that the Town hold a workshop, along with SIPOA and the Club, on how to responsibly open the island once people begin visiting after the ban on short-term rentals is lifted. Mayor Gregg stated that beach access is up to SIPOA. The Mayor stated that he does not see the Town taking the lead on or mandating any restriction on the use of the beach or beach access. He remarked that the Club has already undertaken to put restrictions on the tennis courts and golf courses. If there needs to be more stringent restrictions, that will be left to the Club, not the Town. The Marina has removed tables and chairs from the patio, which could deter people from congregating there. Harris Teeter, which is part of Kiawah Island, has undertaken helpful restrictions in what could be a pinch point at Freshfields Village. Beyond that, the Mayor said he did not see a role for the Town as it pertains to those establishments.

Town Administrator Cronin stated that Code Enforcement had issued 8 Ordinance Summons through Friday, April 17, for properties that have been advertised for rent, had individuals checking in or extending their visit or that had been rented without having a business license and would be in violation of Emergency Ordinance 2020-01. There are currently 14 pending and 11 that the Town is actively investigating.

The Mayor added that he had failed to mention that State law enforcement has the authority to disperse crowds of three or more, by virtue of the Governor's Executive Order and under State Statute, if they feel that the group poses a threat or a risk to public health. If, at any time, crowds are congregating, the Charleston County Sheriff's Department can be called.

Councilwoman Finke asked if the Town could entertain the idea of issuing an Executive Order requiring that a face mask be worn since the CDC recommends wearing a face mask in public when you cannot social distance and since the Mayor has issued an Executive Order on social distancing. Mayor Gregg said that, until the use of a mask is mandated by another authority, he is not in favor of mandating the use of a face mask, but we can advertise that the Town encourages their use.

Having no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Date: May 26, 2020



Town Clerk