

**TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND**  
**Town Council Meeting of September 23, 2014**

**MINUTES**

After the pledge of allegiance, Mayor Ahearn called the September 23, 2014, Town Council meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. Councilmen Ciancio, Gregg and Romano, Town Administrator Pierce, Town Clerk Allbritton and several guests attended the meeting. The meeting was properly posted and the requirements of the SC Freedom of Information Act were met.

**Minutes** – The minutes of the Town Council meeting of August 26, 2014, were unanimously approved.

**Financials** – Mayor Ahearn reported that revenues for the month of August are approximately \$28,500 more than budgeted and revenues for the year to date are in excess of budget by almost \$100,000. Expenditures for August are in line with the budget and expenditures for the year to date are below budget by approximately \$47,500. The excess of revenues over expenditures for the year to date is \$144,000.

**Citizens/Guests Presentations, Comments:** None

**Reports of Standing Committees, Commissions, Boards:**  
**Governments Relations** – No Report

**Community Relations** – Councilman Romano reported that the Property Owners Association’s Planning Committee met on September 9 and the primary topic of discussion during the meeting was recovery planning in the aftermath of a major disaster. Redevelopment planning will be the next step to be examined. The need to address what happens over the long term in rebuilding Seabrook Island and enabling homeowners to rebuild their properties is a major concern. A suitable Seabrook Island recovery plan is a critical issue requiring further work and definition by the Planning Committee.

The Gateway Committee is spending most of its efforts on the entrance to Seabrook Island and the task force is focused on improving the access to Seabrook Island experience for all stakeholders, particularly rental guests. A plan is being explored that would allow rental guests to pick up a bar coded gate pass at the amenities office so that the guest would not have to stop at the security gate. The system used by all other individuals who access the gate will remain the same. The Property Owners Association Board will look at the plans to rebuild the gatehouse toward the middle of 2015; and, if the plans are approved, construction will probably begin in 2016.

**Community Relations** – Councilman Gregg reported that the Club’s Long Range Planning Committee did not meet in September but will meet in October. Councilman Gregg is one of the two designated members from the Long Range Planning Committee that is serving on the Property Owners Association’s Data Gathering & Analysis Subcommittee. This subcommittee has developed a proposed protocol for conducting focus groups as an alternative to doing surveys. The subcommittee also was involved with the deer population survey and The Property Owners Association’s Environmental Committee has issued its final report based on the survey results.

**Communications/Planning Commission** – No Report

**Planning & Development** – Councilman Ciancio reported that the Town continues to work with Obviouslee Marketing on promotion of the Town. During the past month, the Town continued the remarketing campaign utilizing both the Google platform and Google exchanges focusing on those geographical areas from which we get the most interest – Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Ohio. This campaign features ads that were part of the “Make Seabrook Uniquely Yours” campaign and has resulted in about 9,000 visits to our website for the year to date.

Work has begun on the 2015 budget and an Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for October 1. At this meeting, the Town’s marketing strategy will be reviewed and a budget will be proposed for 2015. The two alternative strategies that are being considered are: (1) a “Make It Uniquely Yours” Sweepstakes or (2) a landing page on the Town website where visitors can utilize various social media – Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest – to log in their unique experience at Seabrook Island. In the latter alternative, potential visitors to Seabrook Island could access the logs to read about previous visitor’s experiences. After the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee meeting next week, a full recommendation will be presented to Council on the marketing strategy and the budget for next year. It is possible

that the budget for Advertising & Promotion may be increased by about 20%. Helen Hill, who is the Executive Director of the Charleston Area Convention & Visitor's Bureau, has asked to meet with Town Council during the month of October. Various tourism issues can be discussed with Ms. Hill and her staff at this time.

Councilman Ciancio reported that work on the Town website continues. A meeting was held with Obviouslee Marketing on September 8, which most of the Councilmen attended, to discuss what they wanted the webpage to look like. The next meeting is scheduled for October 8.

The Town Attorney has been asked to look into whether telephone attendance is permitted for Town Council meetings and Councilman Ciancio has received a copy of an opinion of the SC Attorney General that indicates it would be possible to attend by telephone if certain conditions were met. All the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act must be met. The member attending by telephone must be able to hear all comments made at the meeting and Council, staff and guests must also be able to hear the teleconferencing member. Councilman Ciancio proposed that the Town Attorney be instructed to prepare an ordinance to allow participation in Town Council meetings by telephone and Council agreed.

Councilman Ciancio stated that he had circulated a revision to the Town's beach ordinances that addresses the following issues:

1. Using vehicles on the beach
2. Strengthening the anti-littering provision
3. Adding a provision precluding the storage of beach chairs, tents, etc., on the beach or in dunes

The Mayor suggested having a Ways & Means meeting next week to discuss this item along with other things.

**Public Safety** – Councilman Gregg reported that the Public Safety Committee met on September 8 and discussed the upcoming Disaster Recovery Council meeting on October 13 that will be held to consider issues that were raised in Scott Cave's final report on the disaster exercise that was held in June.

Councilman Gregg stated that the Public Safety Committee has come up with material for the Town's website emergency preparedness section and the material has been circulated in order to obtain comments and suggestions from Council. This material will be turned over to Obviouslee Marketing and they will be able to design around that content.

Councilman Gregg reported that he and Town Administrator Pierce had attended a COVAR meeting on September 13 and had participated in a panel discussion that related to safety and security matters, particular pertaining to the beach. One of the issues that came up was improving the Property Owners Association's signage for beachgoers. The discussion also brought out the point that, if there is an incident on the beach that requires immediate attention; the best response is to call 911.

Councilman Gregg has received comments from Counsel on the contract with the property owner of the site that is to be used for the Town's temporary debris storage and reduction site and has responded to the property owner's attorney. Hopefully, the Town will be able to finalize the text and move forward with the contract soon.

**Ways & Means** – No Report

**Planning Commission** – Mayor Ahearn stated that Bill Nelson has received comments from Councilmen Romano and Turner but there are other things that have to be worked out from the other three councilmen and a Ways & Means meeting will probably be held on Monday, September 29, for that purpose. Chairman John Wells reported that Bill Nelson has done a great job working on the Beach Management Plan and the Planning Commission should receive the final draft on Wednesday. The Planning Commission will then vote on the Beach Management Plan on October 8 and the document will be turned over to Town Council with a list of issues and it will be left up to Council as to whether the issues will be addressed in the Beach Management Plan or through other means. Bill Nelson stated that he received comments from OCRM this morning and has incorporated the comments into the plan except for a map that will have to be reprinted. Mr. Nelson commented that he does not expect significant changes from the Planning Commission in October since they have already reviewed the plan. The updated version should be presented to Council in plenty of time for review before the October Town Council meeting. For the public comment period, Mr. Nelson suggested that the

document be put on the Town's website, if possible. Mayor Ahearn suggested having some hard copies of the completed document for interested parties at Town Hall.

**Board of Zoning Appeals – No Report**

**Reports of Ad Hoc Committees:**

**Accommodations Tax Advisory –No Report**

**Reports of Town Officers:**

**Mayor** – Mayor Ahearn reported that a consultant had attended a Property Owners Association meeting recently and had mentioned the possibility of the POA collecting cable franchise fees. Upon doing research, Mayor Ahearn found that, years ago, the Property Owners Association did collect a franchise fee from the cable company; but, in February of 1999, the Town entered into an agreement with US Cable for a 10 year franchise agreement with a 5 year renewal period if both parties agreed. In May of 1999, an Assignment Agreement was signed by the Town of Seabrook Island, US Cable and the Property Owners Association (POA) in which the POA signed its rights to cable franchise fees over to the Town. Legislation that was adopted in 2006 required cable companies to obtain franchises from the State when their current franchise agreements expired. In March of 2009, the Town received correspondence stating that Comcast Cable, the current cable provider, had received a State-Issued Certificate of Franchise Authority. Mayor Ahearn has passed this information along to the POA President and their legal representative.

Mayor Ahearn stated that the Club Board has issued the ALS water challenge to Town Council.

**Town Administrator** – Town Administrator Pierce reported that he attended a meeting of the Beach Advocates of South Carolina on September 19, 2014. The purpose of this meeting was mainly to adopt bylaws and make decisions toward taking steps to make the group official and prepare for incorporation. Dues for municipalities would be \$500 per year with one participant. Town Administrator Pierce feels that even though most of the other participants are primarily interested in beach renourishment by means by dredging sand onto the beaches, unlike the Town of Seabrook Island, the group is still beneficial. Councilman Ciancio stated that, while the immediate objectives of all the communities are not the same, their overall objectives are the same; and it is advantageous to have an organized structure in place when the Town has issues that do affect beachfront communities. Councilman Ciancio moved for the Town to spend \$500 for yearly dues to join the Beach Advocates of South Carolina. Councilman Romano seconded the motion and the vote to approve was unanimous.

**Town Council Members** – See Above

**Utility Commission** – Commissioner Bannwart reported that the elevated tank will be taken out of service the first week of October for 4 to 6 weeks in order to blast and recoat the interior of the tank and to paint the exterior. The Utility Commission approved a rate increase on consumption only at their last meeting. The rate for 1,000 gallons of water will increase from \$3.30 to 3.76. There will be no change in the base rate for water or sewer. In the future, as the Utility Commission has a rate increase from Charleston Water, the increase will be passed along to the consumer.

**Petitions Received, Referred or Disposed of:** None

**Ordinances for First Reading:**

- **Ordinance 2014-02**, An Ordinance to Adopt the 2015 Budget for the Town of Seabrook Island - Mayor Ahearn reported that the Town Administrator has budgeted total revenues for 2015 to be \$1,030,550 and total expenditures to be \$757,630 leaving about \$273,000 in excess funds. Councilman Ciancio stated that he would have a figure, after meeting with the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee, for the Advertising & Promotion account (#8210). There may be other slight changes to the budget before second reading but nothing significant. Councilman Ciancio moved to accept Ordinance 2014-02, an ordinance to adopt the 2015 budget, in the form presented. Councilman Romano seconded the motion and the vote to approve was unanimous.

**Ordinances for Second Reading:**

- **Ordinance 2014-01**, An Ordinance to Amend the Town Code Relating to Town Council Meetings – Councilman Ciancio moved to adopt Ordinance 2014-01 on second reading. Councilman Romano seconded the motion and the vote to approve was unanimous.

**Miscellaneous Business:** None

**Citizens Comments:**

Fire Commissioner, Sue Holloman, reported that the St. Johns Fire Department put out an \$8,000,000 bond 3 years ago to build a new headquarters building, a new station, to rehab some other buildings and to buy new equipment. After years of planning, all these projects are coming to an end. Station 3 at Wadmalaw Island is having its official grand opening on October 13 at 6 p.m. and Commissioner Holloman invited everyone to attend.

Commissioner Holloman remarked that she would like to see the Town publicize Town Council meeting dates more because she feels there might be more participation.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Approved: October 28, 2014

Faye Allbritton, Clerk/Treasurer