

Town Council Regular Meeting

October 25, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

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Seabrook Island Town Hall, Council Chambers
2001 Seabrook Island Road
Seabrook Island, SC 29455



MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Weis called the meeting to order at 10:14 am.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present: Gordon Weis, Chairman; Mark Andrews, Dean Moor, Fred Demler (Virtual)

Town Staff Present: Joe Cronin (Town Administrator), Tyler Newman (Zoning Administrator), and Peter Wiggins (Town Clerk).

FOIA STATEMENT

The Town Clerk confirmed that the meeting was advertised in compliance with the requirements of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. Agendas were furnished to local news media and to all persons requesting notification.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 20, 2024

Environment & Wildlife Regular Meeting

Mr. Andrews made a motion to approve the minutes from June 20, 2024, seconded by Mr. Moor.

The motion was approved UNANIMOUSLY.

September 12, 2024

Environment & Wildlife Regular Meeting

Mr. Andrews made a motion to approve the minutes of September 12, 2024, seconded by Mr. Demler.

Mr. Andrews noted a correction was needed to denote his recusal from a grant request at the September 12 meeting. The Town Clerk said that recusal would be noted.

The motion was approved UNANIMOUSLY.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

Review of Environment & Wildlife Conservation Grant Request

- The Avian Conservation Center - \$2,500.00

Mr. Weis questioned how awarding the grant would benefit Seabrook Island. Based on his reservations he motioned to deny the grant request.

Mr. Moor stated he was in favor of the request.

Mr. Demler stated he was in favor of denying the request.

Mr. Andrews wished for the committee to establish guidelines related to what entities are eligible for grant funding through the Town.

Mr. Cronin recommended that the committee send the application to the full council with no recommendation due to the committee being split, two in favor of the application, and two against.

Mr. Weis motioned to send the application to the full council with no recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Moor.

The motion was approved UNANIMOUSLY.

Marshfront Management Plan

Dr. Elko provided an update to the committee on the Marshfront Management Plan.

She stated the goals of the plan are to engage the public, monitor changes to the marsh, protect the marsh by adopting marshfront management regulation, restoring vulnerable areas, and increase Marshfront resiliency.

Nick Plaisted of the SCDNR gave a presentation on the SCDNR's South Carolina's Oyster Recycling Enhancement program (SCORE). Mr. Plaisted presented on the manner in which SCORE can help maintain a healthy marshfront on Seabrook Island.

E. V. Bell from the SC Sea Grant Consortium presented to the committee on her agency's efforts to replant spartina grass in marsh areas.

Morgan Treon, of the SC Sea Grant Consortium, presented on how South Carolina teachers and students help the SC Sea Grant Consortium plant spartina grass in an effort to restore marshfront areas.

Lexi Watson presented on the feasibility of "thin layer placement" in marshfront areas. She stated that the practice involves the spraying of a slurry of water, sand, and silt over the marsh, usually transported by barge or pipeline.

Lee Bundrick of the Kiawah Conservancy presented on how his agency will assist Elko Coastal Consulting in creating and implementing the Marshfront Management Plan.

Dr. Elko stated to the committee that her staff and partners will take what they have learned from the community and the existing knowledge base and hold public input sessions before the full council meeting in November.

Mr. Moor asked if there was any coordination between these agencies and the Seabrook Island Property Owners Association (SIPOA). Mr. Cronin stated that after the initial planning stage was complete, the Town and these agencies would engage SIPOA.

There was a question from the public related to the marshfront encroaching on residents' property. Mr. Cronin asked Dr. Elko if individuals could lay an ownership claim to the marsh. Dr. Elko stated that they could, although individuals "can't really do anything."

Discussions were had amongst the public and the committee about strategies that individuals could employ on their own property to restore and/or maintain a healthy marsh. Mr. Cronin said that strategies will be included in the management plan. He hoped that the plan would be adopted by the full council sometime in early 2025.

Beachfront Management Plan

Mr. Cronin gave an update on changes to the Beachfront Management Plan since the last meeting. The changes that were made were informational updates recommended by Coastal Science and Engineering. He stated that since the plan was last updated in 2019, the Town had adopted a new Development Standards Ordinance. This required the changing of zoning designations in the new plan, among other informational updates.

Mr. Cronin said he would have a final draft ready for the next committee meeting.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Mr. Moor asked about beach rules signage. He said some of the signage was showing its age.

Mr. Cronin said the FY 2025 budget includes \$25,000 to install new signage. He hoped that new signage would be installed in 2025.

Mr. Andrews stated he wished some of the wording on the signs could be improved to include things that are allowed on the beach rather than things or activities that aren't allowed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, Chairman Weis declared the meeting adjourned at 11:55 am.

Peter D. Wiggins II
Town Clerk