

**TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND**  
**Town Council Emergency Meeting of March 17, 2020**

**MINUTES**

Mayor Gregg called the Emergency Town Council meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Councilmembers Crane, Finke and Goldstein, Town Administer Cronin and Town Clerk Allbritton attended the meeting. The requirements of the SC Freedom of Information Act were met; and, due to COVID-19 requirements, interested individuals could join the meeting by telephone.

Mayor Gregg stated that this meeting had been called so that Council could review the calendar of meetings and events and decide whether they should be postponed or cancelled as well as considering how the operations of Town Hall should be altered. The Mayor turned the meeting over to Town Administrator Cronin for updates.

• **Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19)**

- **Update on the Town's Response to COVID-19** – The Town Administrator reported that the Town has been participating in regular conference calls with Charleston County Emergency Management Division and he has issued four public information statements that are available on the Town website. To date, the Town has not issued a Declaration of Emergency and has not changed its Op Con status.
- **Status of Town Operations** – The Town Hall has been conducting business as usual. Contractors come in daily to obtain permits and renew or update business licenses. Some jurisdictions around us have moved to virtual operations, including the SIPOA administration building.
- **Status of Upcoming Meetings and Events** – A list of meetings and Town events that were to take place in March and April were included in the meeting packet. Access to the beach is unchanged and Beach Patrol will be available to begin April 1. The Town Administrator stated that a Temporary Use Permit had already been issued to Bohicket Marina for the Dolphin Slam, which is scheduled to take place on April 25. The Town has also just received an application from the Sea Island Chamber of Commerce for the art sale to be held at NV Realty on April 10. To date, the Town has not taken any position on cancelling or postponing events.

The Town Administrator recommended to Council that the Town Hall transition to a virtual work environment where business licensing and permits could be done by phone and email and phone calls could be forwarded to the employees' cell phones or home phones. If the building were to remain open, he recommended restricting traffic for the safety of the employees and the public.

Annie Smith-Jones, chair of the Utility Commission, stated that their March 18 and April 15 meetings are still on their schedule but that could change depending on the results of this meeting. She stated that only about six people usually attend their meetings.

**Upcoming Meetings and Town Events:**

Due to the President's recent announcement that restricts meetings with more than ten people, Council decided the following:

- Mayor Gregg indicated that he preferred to cancel the March 24 Public Hearing and Town Council meeting rather than postpone. He stated that it would be difficult to conduct the Public Hearing effectively by conference call.
- Town Administrator Cronin remarked that he did not have anything urgent to come before the Planning Commission and recommended that their April 8 meeting be cancelled.
- There will be no meetings scheduled for the DSO Advisory Group during the next 8 weeks.
- Town Administrator Cronin stated that the registered letters announcing the dates for the Board of Zoning Appeals meetings, scheduled for April 10 and 27, had not been sent so there should be no problem pushing the date back into May.

- Councilman Crane, Chairman, stated that the April 13 Public Safety meeting would be cancelled.
- The Mayor recommended cancelling the April 14 Ways & Means Committee meeting as well as the Town Council meeting scheduled for April 28.
- The court session scheduled for April 15 will be cancelled and another court date will be scheduled.
- Annie Smith-Jones stated that the Utility Commission would probably do a virtual meeting in March and April.
- The Mayor stated that Shred 360 has cancelled the April 24 spring shred event, but he would like it rescheduled for May or June.

Councilwoman Finke asked for guidance about advertising the training session for the Dolphin Education Program volunteers that is currently scheduled for May 4 at SIPOA's Oyster Catcher facility. Mayor Gregg recommended advertising the event with the possibility that it might be cancelled.

### **Town Operations:**

Mayor Gregg stated that he recommends that employees remain at the Town Hall, at least for the remainder of this week, to give staff time to prepare for working remotely. Town Administrator Cronin remarked that it would be difficult to keep people out of Town Hall because of the work that is being done to the door; but, if that is the wish of Council, he can provide the number to call and email address for Town Hall in his next public information statement. It was decided that the public would not be allowed inside the Town Hall for the remainder of the week, but employees would remain and begin working from their homes the following week. The Town Administrator added that an employee will come to the Town Hall periodically to get the mail, sort and scan to the appropriate person. Beach Patrol and Code Enforcement will be working as long as it is safe to do so. Mayor Gregg stated that Council will reconsider plans that are being made at this meeting in the fourth or fifth week of the six-week period that has been addressed.

### **Upcoming Events:**

The Town Administrator asked Council to address two Temporary Use Permits - the Dolphin Slam (April 25) and the Art Walk at NV Realty. He inquired if the Town wanted to approve the permits and let the applicants use their discretion as to whether they should hold the events or does Council want to take a proactive approach and restrict approvals of Temporary Use Permits. Town Administrator Cronin added that the Marina also has the Billfish Tournament (May 6-9, 2020), which was to be on the agenda for the March Town Council meeting. If the Billfish Tournament were to be held as scheduled, Town Council would have to meet to approve the permit, but this event does fall within the 8-week window being addressed. Council decided not to approve any Temporary Use Permits falling within this window. The Dolphin Slam had already been approved by the Town Administrator, but Council would prefer that the Marina reconsider holding the event. Bo Anderson, from Bohicket Marina, joined the meeting by phone and stated that the Marina had been looking into rescheduling the Dolphin Slam for August. Mayor Gregg responded that the permit is tied to the date of the event; and, if the date changes, the Marina would have to apply for another permit but the Town Administrator could approve the application since it is a one-day event. Mr. Anderson said the Marina was also working on getting the Billfish Tournament postponed and he would let the Town Administrator know when he had further information.

### **Declaration of State of Emergency:**

Mayor Gregg stated that Council should have been provided with a copy of the Declaration of State of Emergency for the Town. Closing the Town Hall, cancelling public meetings and events, etc., are all things that the Mayor believes would require extraordinary authority for the Mayor to issue orders to have such things go into effect. This Declaration of State of Emergency provides the Mayor that extraordinary authority to preserve and protect the well-being of the citizens of the community. The Mayor moved to approve the Declaration of State of Emergency as presented. Councilman Crane seconded the motion. The

Declaration will go into effect at 12:00 p.m. Tuesday, March 17, 2020 and will be in place until rescinded by the Mayor or a majority of Council. The vote to approve was unanimous.

**Request to Reappoint Dennis E. O'Neill as Municipal Judge** – The reappointment of Dennis E. O'Neill as Municipal Judge would be for a four-year term ending on March 31, 2024, and the salary for the Municipal Judge would remain at \$350 per month. Councilwoman Finke made a motion to reappoint Dennis E. O'Neill as Municipal Judge for the Town of Seabrook Island for a four-year term to end on March 31, 2024. Councilman Crane seconded the motion and the vote to approve was unanimous.

**Resolutions 2020-02 through 2020-13** – The Town Administrator explained that these resolutions appoint and commission Ian Butler, Grace Christoph, Jed Christoph, Kristen Douglass, Robert Edgerton, Alexander Huss, Maxwell Kastenzholz, Nicholas Larson, Andrew Mappus, Michael Sosnowski, Malek Varner and Alex Wall as Code Enforcement Officers for the Town effective April 1, 2020 and ending September 30, 2021. These individuals are employees of our beach patrol contractor, Island Beach Services. One of the Code Enforcement Officers must be on the beach anytime beach patrol is present. Councilwoman Finke moved to approve Resolutions 2020-02 through 2020-13 to allow employees of Island Beach Services to be appointed as Code Enforcement Officers. Councilman Crane seconded the motion and the vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

**Questions from Staff and Callers:**

The Town Administrator asked for clarification from Council on answers for some frequently asked questions. He stated that people are still free to enter and leave the island and there is currently no restriction on using the beach except that people should not congregate in groups of more than ten. The Mayor stated that is correct. Currently, there are no restrictions on coming to Seabrook Island, nor on the use of the beach, but people should use good hygiene, such as washing their hands frequently and practicing social distancing, because of the potential of spreading the virus.

The Town Administrator stated that people are also asking questions about restrictions on rentals. The Mayor stated that property owners or property managers, who rent properties on the island, should take appropriate measures to ensure that adequate cleaning has been done after each rental to prevent the contact transmission of the virus.

The Town Administrator stated that a lot of areas have required the closure or have restricted operations of restaurants, bars, etc. The Mayor expressed the view that Council was not prepared to mandate closure of businesses, but it appears that these establishments seem to be moving on their own to limit dining-in trade and doing carryout meals.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions from those participating on the conference call. One resident asked about contractors coming onto the Seabrook Island. Mayor Gregg stated that he knew of no restrictions on contractors by SIPOA. The Town Administrator commented that the Town would still be issuing business licenses and permits even though, beginning the next day, March 18, all applications would have to be submitted electronically to the office staff. Anything on the exterior of a residence and requiring SIPOA approval, would still have to apply to the Architectural Review Committee and have that approval before getting a Town permit,

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Date: May 26, 2020



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Town Clerk