

**TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND
WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE MEETING
April 13, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

The April 13, 2021 Ways and Means Committee meeting was conducted as a video conference using Zoom and was simultaneously made available to the public via YouTube live stream and by conference call, all in keeping with practices adopted to address the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Mayor Gregg, Councilmembers Crane, Finke, Fox and Goldstein, Town Clerk Allbritton and Town Administrator Cronin participated in the meeting. Mayor Gregg confirmed with the Town Clerk that notice of the meeting was properly posted, and the requirements of the SC Freedom of Information Act were met.

Mayor John Gregg

- **Councilman Crane's Resignation** – Mayor Gregg reported that, due to Councilman Crane's pending resignation, it is possible that a special election might have to be held. The Mayor quoted State law regarding the specifics for when a special election would be necessary. Members of Council had been given a summary of contemplated roles that would require resumption by continuing members of Council until the swearing-in of a fourth member of Council, whether following a special election or following the 2021 general election. Mayor Gregg polled Council to express their views on whether to continue with a vacancy through the 2021 general election or whether a special election should be held. If a special election were held, there would be costs incurred for poll workers and running the ad in the newspaper, which was about \$1,700 for the last municipal election. Due to the pandemic, bringing people together in a closed space to vote was also a concern. Councilwoman Finke inquired as to the number of Members necessary, with a vacancy, to make up a super majority. Town Administrator Cronin found that a super majority would require the vote of 2/3 of the Members of Council present. The consensus of Council was that they were comfortable with continuing the vacancy until the swearing-in following the 2021 general election.
- **July Fireworks Event** – Mayor Gregg stated that a discussion with representatives of the Seabrook Island Club and the Seabrook Island Property Owners Association (SIPOA) was held on April 13 to share thoughts concerning a possible July fireworks event. Councilman Crane shared that, at its April meeting, the Public Safety Committee had agreed on recommendations for moving forward with the event, i.e., have no extra entertainment, no food/beverage services, no shuttle service. The Mayor stated that the Club management and Board favor holding an event; but, if the Public Safety Committee's recommendations were required, the Club would need to reconsider. SIPOA's Board expressed their support for having a fireworks event with appropriate protocols to address the ongoing pandemic. If the event were postponed to Labor Day, the Club would have to consider whether it could host the event at that time. Mayor Gregg asked Council to express their preference for the Town to proceed with the July fireworks display, bearing in mind that the Town's vendor would require notice to proceed by April 15.

- Councilman Crane expressed his preference for going ahead with the event but adhering to the recommendations of the Public Safety Committee. The Mayor reminded Councilman Crane that the Club might not be willing to host if those protocols were followed.
- Councilwoman Finke stated that strict protocols would need to be in place, but she could see proceeding with the event although it would have to be different than in previous years. She acknowledged that the Club would need to make money at the event, and she thought food and drinks could be served in a safe manner. She stated that she thought Council should proceed cautiously and make sure people know that the event will be different than in past years. She stated that, if the vendor is forcing us to decide, she was willing to risk the deposit. She added that we really will not know if there is a surge and a huge threat until June. There would have to be very strict and well worked through protocols. The Club has not ruled out a Labor Day event but there would have to be further discussion if the July event is postponed.
- Councilwoman Fox stated that the fireworks event is not mandatory. Those people who thought it was not safe to attend, did not have to go and there might not be as many people there as in the past. She feels the Town should move forward cautiously and order the fireworks.
- Councilman Goldstein asked if the vendor will still hold the Town's deposit for a future date if the event is not held in July. The Town Administrator stated that he has sent an email to get more information from the vendor. Councilman Goldstein stated that he did not feel the Town should put people in harm's way whether it is their choice or not. Since the Town has insisted that other groups follow certain protocols and rules to be able to hold events, he questioned who would enforce protocols at a fireworks event. Councilman Goldstein stated that he looks at the event as a public safety issue and cannot see the Town moving forward with the event unless the Public Safety Committee protocols are followed and enforced. If the Town can save their deposit until a future time, he sees that as a more prudent approach. Councilman Goldstein asked if other municipalities were holding such events. Town Administrator Cronin stated that he had put an inquiry on a listserve, and most replies indicated that they were holding events, but they were modified versions of past events. The Town Administrator added that Isle of Palms has cancelled their fireworks display.
- Mayor Gregg stated that he supports giving notice to proceed to the vendor.

The Mayor stated that the majority favored giving the vendor the notice to proceed with the July fireworks. Town Administrator Cronin has emailed the vendor to determine what options the Town would have if Council decided, after giving the notice to proceed, to postpone or cancel the event.

- **Charleston County Greenbelt Program** – Mayor Gregg stated that the Town's current allocation under Charleston County's Greenbelt Program is \$136,173. Funding administered under that Program is set aside from the County's half-cent sales tax originally approved in 2004 and extended in 2016. In 2014, the Town was granted approval to have \$70,000 of the Town's then current allocation applied to acquisition of interests in land in the vicinity of the Angel Oak on Johns Island to prevent development on the property. The Town worked with the Lowcountry Land Trust in connection with that application for Greenbelt funding. Mayor

Gregg stated that he had contacted a representative of the Lowcountry Land Trust to get information about projects they are pursuing that may be of interest to the Town.

- **Charleston County Rural Vaccination Program** – No Update
- **Johns Island Task Force Update** – Mayor Gregg reported that three items of possible interest to Council were mentioned at the Johns Island Task Force meeting on April 7:
 - Approval of funding for a new elementary school on Johns Island
 - Undertaking of development of the Johns Island Restoration Plan
 - Proposed improvements for conserved property at the Angel Oak site

Materials relating to the items were provided to Council for information only and no action was required of Council.

Town Councilmembers:

Skip Crane –

Public Safety Committee – Councilman Crane stated that the Public Safety Committee met on Monday, April 12, at 10:00 a.m. The Committee discussed the pending change making Councilman Goldstein chairman of the Public Safety Committee. The Committee continued to review the Comprehensive Emergency Plan updates and the status of the DRC Action Plans from the January exercise. At the meeting, the Town Administrator discussed (a) the Debris Monitoring Services contract status; (b) plans for Disaster Awareness Day; (c) update on beach patrol contract; (d) update on 2021 PGA Championship. The next meeting of the Public Safety Committee is set for May 10, 2021.

DSO Advisory Committee – Councilman Crane reported that the Development Standards Ordinance Advisory Committee will be ending its work with the expected public roll out of the proposed, revised Development Standards Ordinance shortly. A date has not been set for a meeting of that Committee.

Jeri Finke –

Community Promotion Grants- Councilwoman Finke stated that the applications for Community Promotion Grants will be reviewed starting April 15 and a meeting with the ad hoc committee has been set up on Monday, April 19, at 1:00 p.m.

Registration for Dogs – Councilwoman Finke stated that the subject of registration of dogs by the Town has surfaced several times in the past. Recently, the Town received a comment from Martha Goldstein, on behalf of the SEADOGS, supporting registration of dogs and offering their help. Councilwoman Finke added that she felt the item should be discussed so that a response could be sent to SEADOGS. She stated that perhaps the Town could begin with a voluntary approach where residents could go to the web page and fill out an application. Councilman Goldstein added his support saying that registration would be beneficial for the island and the dog owners in the case of lost dogs, educating dog owners and making sure dogs are vaccinated. When the Mayor polled Council, Councilman Crane had no comment. Councilwoman Fox stated that she was not for this if it would put any more work on the Town staff. She said she did not mind exploring what could be done to put the information into something that could be searchable but was hesitant to put more work on the four Town employees. Councilman Goldstein added that it would be beneficial if the Town gave out a tag that would be worn by the dog and the number on the tag could easily identify the dog. Councilwoman Finke was asked to

go back to the SEADOGS group and see what they had in mind that would be beneficial and determine how they were willing to help.

Patricia Fox –

- **Communication** – Councilwoman Fox reported on the Town’s recent communications efforts which included an article in The Seabrooker by Councilman Goldstein about dogs on the beach. She reported that topics included in publications on Tidelines included:
 - Rules about dogs on the beach
 - The newly adopted Emergency Ordinance
 - The closing of Town Hall for a week
 - Information about the Ways & Means Committee meeting
 - Community Promotion Grants reminder and
 - The last TOSI Clip had 519 views, which was more than a 500% increase in views over last year.
- **E-Bikes** – Councilwoman Fox stated that she and a member of the Town’s Beach Patrol had seen a type of e-bike being operated on the beach that did not require the rider to pedal and she asked if this kind of bike was allowed on the beach. The Town Administrator stated that the bikes would be considered a motorized vehicle and would not be allowed on the beach and that he would notify Beach Patrol.

Barry Goldstein – Councilman Goldstein stated that he and the Town Administrator had not had a chance to review the Pavement Elevation Evaluation and had not sent comments or questions to ESP Associates, Inc. He added that the most important question to be addressed is what elevation we want for Seabrook Island Road when it is repaved and this needs to be determined before MUSC starts any road work that will be needed for their new facility. As far as the In-Bound Path, Council needs to decide if they want to keep it in service, upgrade or remove it. For the Out-Bound Path, a decision needs to be made as to what to do about the sections of the pathway that floods and whether to add any of the suggested improvements to the crosswalk and pathway.

When Council was asked for their input, Councilwoman Finke said she would like for ESP to brief Council on the proposals, but she would especially like to take care of the flooding on the Out-Bound Path, the installation of lighting and crosswalk upgrades. Councilwoman Finke also questioned how many people used the In-Bound Path. Councilwoman Fox suggested that a survey could be done and have people respond as they do when they have a comment for a Town Council meeting. The survey could be explained and advertised through posts on Tidelines and in The Seabrooker.

Mayor Gregg commented that, if the Out-Bound Path is ADA compliant, he did not know that it was necessary to bring the In-Bound Path up to ADA standards. Mayor Gregg added that he did not think taking away the In-Bound Path serves the public good; and, if the only issue is flooding, it can be used when it is not flooded. If there are surface issues, repairs could be made to the surface. Town Administrator Cronin stated that the pathway is a liability to the Town because it has flooding and surface issues. For \$267,000 it can be made usable and that would include being ADA compliant. Adding a few feet to the width of the path would not add a lot to the cost. To remove the path, the cost would be \$148,500. The Town Administrator added that,

if Council chose to remove the In-Bound Path, the difference in the cost could be put toward making improvements to the crosswalks and the Out-Bound Path which is much more heavily used.

The Town Administrator explained that, for the Out-Bound Path, there are two areas that flood:

- For Area 1 (near the Marina), there are two options: (1) raising the elevation of the path and installation of underdrains for a cost of \$140,000 and (2) grading work to create a 2' swale at a cost of \$13,300. The Town Administrator said he would recommend going with the grading option, but the work would go outside the existing right-of-way and the Town would have to work with the neighboring property owner on whatever easements or permission would be needed.
- For Area 2 (closer to Town Hall), the primary recommendation is raising the elevation, putting in underdrains and resurfacing at a cost of \$69,000.

Mayor Gregg agreed that Council should invite public comments to get a feel for how many people use the In-Bound Path and Councilwoman Fox will work with the Town Administrator to get public comments back by the May 11 Ways & Means Committee meeting.

Town Administrator Joe Cronin

Action Items for Second Reading:

- Ordinance 2021-01: An ordinance amending the Town Code for the Town of Seabrook Island, South Carolina; Chapter 18, Offenses and Miscellaneous Provisions; Article II, Offenses Against Public Safety; so as to add a new section requiring the restraint of domestic household animals/pets upon public property or upon the property of another. Town Administrator Cronin reported that Ordinance 2021-01 will have second reading at the April Town Council meeting. This ordinance will require restraint of household animals/pets upon public property or on the property of another but will not affect public property that is subject to the provisions of Section 32-44, which is the beach rules for pets ordinance. The ordinance has been changed slightly to incorporate a change that was requested by the Mayor at first reading.

Action Items for First Reading:

- Ordinance 2021-02: An ordinance amending the Zoning Map of the Town of Seabrook Island so as to change the zoning designation for Charleston County Tax Map Number 147-02-00-045, containing approximately 0.58 +/- acres located at 2344 Andell Way, from the SR Single-Family Residential District to the AGC Agricultural-Conservation District
- Ordinance 2021-03: An ordinance amending the Zoning Map of the Town of Seabrook Island so as to change the zoning designation for Charleston County Tax Map Number 149-06-00-030, containing approximately 0.29 +/- acres located at 2905 Seabrook Island Road, from the SR Single-Family Residential District to the AGC Agricultural-Conservation District

The Town Administrator stated that Ordinance 2021-02 and Ordinance 2021-03 will have first reading at the April Town Council meeting. Both properties, 2344 Andell Way and 2905 Seabrook Island Road, have been acquired by Green Space and transferred to the Seabrook Island Property Owners Association. The applications for rezoning, from SR

Single-Family Residential District to the AGC Agricultural-Conservation District, will go before the Planning Commission for their recommendation at their April 14 meeting.

Items for Information/Discussion

- **Enforcement of Emergency Ordinance 2021-02** – Town Administrator Cronin stated that, due to complaints and comments, he had a Code Enforcement Officer call on most of the businesses and restaurants in Seabrook Island over the weekend to observe and remind owners that the mask ordinance was still in effect on Seabrook Island. Email reminders were also sent out to restaurants and bars. Confusion resulted when the Governor eliminated mask requirements for restaurants/bars statewide but left in the provision that local governments could adopt and implement their own local ordinances.
- **Short-Term Rental Permit Update** – The Town Administrator reported that 320 Short-Term Rental Permits have been issued and he still has a stack to be processed. Last year, there were between 420 and 450 rental business licenses. The deadline has passed for applying for a Short-Term Rental Permit unless it is for a new rental unit. If an owner has not applied for the Short-Term Rental Permit, the unit should not be advertised for rent. In the coming months, random inspections will begin. It was decided that, since there is nothing in the rate schedule that specifically applies to a late fee for the Short-Term Rental Permits, the Town Administrator will amend the rate schedule to state a late fee making it retroactive to April 1, 2021, but there will be no penalties issued until after first reading of the ordinance at the April Town Council meeting.
- **Beach Patrol Contract Update** – Town Administrator Cronin reported that he has gotten the signed contract back from Island Beach Services and has held an orientation meeting for their appointees as Code Enforcement Officers. Beach Patrol began on April 1 with one person/one vehicle from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. One citation has already been issued for a repeat offense by a person being in the dunes.
- **Miscellaneous** – Councilwoman Finke commented that the sign at the traffic circle looks much better painted the darker color and asked if the posts for other signs were going to be painted the dark gray color. Town Administrator Cronin stated that he thinks it would probably be easier to replace all the posts since so many of them are damaged and they are not all a uniform size. He also commented that the fence along the Out-Bound Path will also need to be replaced soon.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:24 p.m.

Date: April 27, 2021



Town Clerk