

**TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND  
WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MEETING  
May 12, 2020, at 1:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

Mayor Gregg called the Ways & Means Committee meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and confirmed with the Town Clerk that the requirements of the SC Freedom of Information Act had been met. Councilmembers Crane, Finke, Fox and Goldstein, Town Clerk Allbritton and Town Administrator Cronin attended the meeting. Due to COVID-19 requirements, guests could dial in to hear the meeting.

**Mayor John Gregg:**

- **Adoption of SC Code 56-5-3520, regulating “electric-assist bicycles” and “bicycles with helper motors”, obviating proposed Town Ordinance 2020-05** – Mayor Gregg stated that, at the Ways & Means meeting of February 11, the Town Administrator reported that the Seabrook Island Property Owners Association Board of Directors had approved use of Class 1 pedal-assist bicycles within the Seabrook Island development. He noted that it is likely the users would want to operate them on the Town’s pedestrian/bicycle path. By virtue of the Town’s adoption of the State Uniform Traffic Code, he indicated that it would be necessary for the Town to amend its ordinance to allow the use of such bicycles on the Town’s path. At the Town Council meeting of February 25, Ordinance 2020-05, which expressly addressed Class 1 pedal-assist bicycles, was approved on first reading. The Ordinance was scheduled for a Public Hearing and second reading at the April Town Council meeting. Due to the cancellation of all meetings for the month of April, second reading was not held. The Town Administrator has reported that the State Legislature has passed an act providing for operation of Class 1 pedal-assist bicycles under the State’s Uniform Traffic Code. By virtue of this legislation being adopted, there is no need to pursue the Public Hearing and second reading of Ordinance 2020-05 and the Town Administrator has recommended that further consideration of Ordinance 2020-05 be tabled. It is expected that an appropriate motion will be made at the May 26 Town Council meeting.
- **Upcoming expiration of regulation of “short-term rental unit” bookings and “check-ins” under Amended Emergency Ordinance 2020-01** – Mayor Gregg commented that, at the Emergency Town Council meeting on April 22, Council amended the previously adopted Emergency Ordinance 2020-01 and revised the sunset dates for prohibitions relating to rental of and reservations for rental of short-term rental units that would be rented for periods of 28 days or less. The effective dates were uniformly changed to May 15, 2020. The Mayor explained that, if Council prefers to continue the restrictions as written or continue the restrictions with modifications, it would be necessary to convene an Emergency Town Council meeting to take up further amendment of the Amended Emergency Ordinance 2020-01. If Council would like the current short-term rental restrictions to lapse without modification, it would not be necessary to hold a meeting. Mayor Gregg asked for opinions from Councilmembers and Councilmembers seemed to indicate they would prefer to allow the restrictions to lapse but would like for the Town to continue to encourage social distancing and for best practices to be followed for cleaning the rental units. Councilmember

Goldstein expressed a concern for contact tracing with so many visitors coming to the island. Councilwoman Finke commented that she had spoken with numerous rental companies and they are doing research and initiating stringent cleaning protocols, providing handouts for their renters and warning renters to bring their own supplies because Freshfields will be very crowded. Mayor Gregg commented that the objective of trying to strike a balance needs to be satisfied and the right thing to do is let the restrictions lapse.

- **Notice from Charleston County of expected budgetary changes resulting in cessation of distribution of Charleston County A-Tax funds for current fiscal year and for fiscal year 2021** – The Mayor reported that he had received notice from County Councilwoman Jenny Honeycutt on May 6 that, due to budgetary constraints, the Charleston County Administrator would be issuing a proposed budget eliminating Charleston County Accommodations Tax distributions to municipalities for the remainder of Charleston County’s fiscal year 2020, which runs from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020, and the entirety of fiscal year 2021, which runs from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. The Town had budgeted a total of \$50,000 for this calendar year for County A-Tax and the money was to be used for Beach Patrol. With the loss of this revenue, it will be necessary to make adjustments to continue to fund the remainder of the beach patrol contract for 2020.
- **Receipt of payment on the Town’s Request for Public Assistance in consequence of Hurricane Dorian** – Mayor Gregg reported that the Town received \$4,797.56 on March 19 for FEMA’s share for Category A costs (debris removal) for Hurricane Dorian. It is unknown, at this time, if the State Legislature will fund the 25% State share of hurricane expenses.

### **Town Councilmembers:**

#### **Skip Crane –**

**Public Safety** – Councilman Crane reported that NOAA and the National Hurricane Service are predicting a very active hurricane season with 18 named storms, 9 of which are expected to reach hurricane strength and 4 predicted to hit on the Gulf or East coast. Councilman Crane asked Council and staff to review their specific responsibilities under the Town’s Comprehensive Emergency Plan so that they will be prepared for hurricane season. Mayor Gregg recommended having an evacuation plan in mind ahead of time since the pandemic might make evacuating more difficult.

#### **Jeri Finke – No Report**

**Patricia Fox** – Councilwoman Fox commented that many residents thought the Town had done a good job communicating what has been happening during the last few months and feel that they have gotten information in a timely manner. Mayor Gregg thanked the Town Administrator for taking the lead and doing an excellent job on the Town’s Public Information Statements. Councilwoman Fox stated that some residents are concerned about the pools reopening but it is not up to the Town to decide when they will open. Mayor Gregg stated that the Governor had lifted certain restrictions regarding close contact businesses, which will begin opening on Monday, May 18, and pools will also be allowed to reopen. Once we have the Executive Order from the Governor about what will be taking place on May 18, the Town will be following that with whatever is appropriate to get the word out. The Mayor remarked that the last State of

Emergency Declaration from the Governor expires today, May 12, and the Governor should be issuing a new State of Emergency either today or tomorrow.

**Barry Goldstein** – Councilman Goldstein reported that several people had made comments to him about flooding on the outbound bike path and he responded that the Town was addressing the flooding but he was not certain if the Town would have the funds to eliminate the problem at this time.

### **Town Administrator Cronin:**

Town Administrator Cronin stated that the Town Hall staff started working from the office on Monday, May 11, at noon but the Town Hall will be closed to the public until next Monday, May 18. A protective screen has been installed at the front desk and other precautions will be taken to try to minimize contact between staff and others who come into the office. Hand sanitizer, masks and gloves will be provided for employees. Employees will still encourage others to do business with the Town Hall electronically and a drop box is located just outside the door that can be utilized. If someone needs to enter the Town Hall, only two people will be allowed to enter the lobby at once.

### **Items for Information/Discussion:**

- **Budgetary Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic** – Town Administrator Cronin stated that he has put together some projections of what the Town might see as far as the budgetary impact of COVID-19. Some of the projections include:
  - Charleston County Accommodations Tax – The Town will not receive any County A-Tax this calendar year and that would be a loss of about \$50,000
  - State Accommodations Tax – Since there were no short-term rentals for about a six week period, it is expected that there could be a 46% loss or \$67,000. The Town Administrator commented that a good many of the events and activities, which are designed to draw people to the community and promote tourism, will not be held this year because of the pandemic.
  - Alcohol Tax – A couple of restaurants have closed and are not expected to reopen and it is estimated that Alcohol Tax will be down about \$2,000 or 40%.
  - General Fund – Most General Fund line items are expected to go down.
    - About 90-95% of the Town's Business License revenue has already been collected this year and is expected to be close to budget or a little over but revenue for 2021 should be significantly less because most businesses pay on the previous year's revenue.
    - Municipal Association of SC (Telecommunications & Insurance Tax Collection Program) – We do not expect these figures to be influenced very much by the pandemic but, in 2019, the Broker's Tax was significantly less than the previous year so we are estimating that we might receive about \$45,000 less than budgeted.
    - Local Option Sales Tax – We projected \$250,000 this year but the impact could be about a 20% decrease or about \$50,000.
    - Planning/Zoning type fees will probably decrease slightly by 10 to 15%.

In all, the impact on the General Fund revenue is expected to be around a \$141,000 reduction from what was budgeted. When you combine all funds, we are projecting a loss of \$260,750

or 17% of our total combined budgeted revenues for this year. The Town Administrator recommended that Town Council have a separate work session to discuss how these losses will be addressed. Town Administrator Cronin stated that Beach Patrol is primarily funded from State and County Accommodations Tax and these will have the biggest impact from COVID-19. Councilwoman Finke remarked that she thought Beach Patrol was very important, especially this summer when we need to be vigilant with social distancing, and we should not think about cutting back on that. Mayor Gregg stated that we would not be looking at increasing revenue to make up the shortfall but would be looking at dipping into funds that we are not spending to cover what we need. The Mayor also agreed with Councilwoman Finke about not decreasing the presence of Beach Patrol on the beach.

- **Bike Path Update** – The Town Administrator reported that all bike path repairs have been completed.
- **Insurance Claim Update** – Town Administrator Cronin stated that, before repairs were made, a fall on the bike path had required medical attention and the individual had asked the Town to pick up the out of pocket medical cost. He reported that he had received word on May 5 that a settlement had been reached for the out of pocket expenses.
- **Disaster Awareness Day Update** – The Town Administrator commented that Disaster Awareness Day had been scheduled for June at Kiawah Island, but it has been cancelled for 2020.
- **Fourth of July Fireworks Update** – The Town Administrator stated that the Town had budgeted \$20,000 of State Accommodations Tax to pay for July fireworks and related costs. Due to issues involved with fitting 2,000 people into the space, food being served, the restroom situation, etc., the Town Administrator commented that, if the Town were weighing the cost against the benefit, the amount spent for fireworks, which is for a short period of time, might better be used toward beach patrol over their 2020 season. There is language in the fireworks contract that provides for cancellation, but the Town would have to cover any costs incurred by the contractor. The consensus of Councilmembers was that fireworks should be cancelled for 2020 and Mayor Gregg directed the Town Administrator to notify the vendor and find out what the cancellation charge would be for the Town.
- **Discussion of Pending Ordinances & Public Hearings**
  - **Ordinance 2020-03:** 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 147-10-00-003, containing approximately 0.51 +/- acres located at 2561 High Hammock Road, from the SR Single-Family Residential District to the AGC Agricultural-Conservation District
  - **Ordinance 2020-04:** 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 147-12-00-023, containing approximately 0.74 +/- acres located at 3062 Seabrook Island Road, from the SR Single-Family Residential District to the AGC Agricultural-Conservation District
  - **Ordinance 2020-05:** An ordinance amending the Town Code for the Town of Seabrook Island, South Carolina; Chapter 28, Traffic and Motor Vehicles; Article 1, In General; so as to add a new section relating to the use of electric pedal-assist bicycles on bicycle pathways within the Town of Seabrook Island

Town Administrator Cronin stated that three ordinances were to be on the April Town Council agenda for second reading and were scheduled for a Public Hearing immediately prior to that meeting but all Town meetings for April were cancelled due to COVID-19. The Town Administrator commented that the Mayor had addressed Ordinance 2020-05 previously in this meeting. Ordinance 2020-05 will be on the May Town Council agenda, but Council will vote to table. The Town Administrator explained that, due to advertising requirements, the other two, which are rezoning ordinances, will be on the June Town Council agenda for second reading and a Public Hearing will be held immediately prior. The Town Administrator recommended that comments on the rezoning ordinances be made in writing either on the website, by email or by mail. When the Public Hearing is held, each comment can be read into the record. Councilman Crane brought up comments that had been made about landscaping falling over or hanging over the Town's pathway and asked if the landscaper would be able to take care of that. The Town Administrator commented that the Town could not remove or trim the landscaping around the pump station or on any property located in Freshfields Village.

**Action Items for May 26, 2020 Meeting:**

- **Request to approve traffic calming options for intersection of Seabrook Island Road and Landfall Way** – At the March Ways & Means Committee meeting, Council had looked at options to improve the safety for the crosswalk on Seabrook Island Road near the intersection of Landfall Way and Council discussed the Level 1 improvements which included:
  - re-applying crosswalk paint,
  - installing an inroad yield sign,
  - adding tape marking and signage in the street,
  - relocating the 15 mph sign approximately 150 feet east of the Town Hall driveway,
  - adding a “reduce speed ahead” sign approximately 450 feet east of Town Hall driveway.

The Town Administrator stated that he will be asking Council for permission to move forward with making those improvements at the May Town Council meeting.

Since there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Date: May 27, 2020



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Town Clerk