

Town of Seabrook Island
Ways and Means Committee Meeting
October 15, 2019
2:30 P.M.

After the pledge of allegiance, Mayor Ciancio called the meeting to order and confirmed that the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act had been met. Council members Gregg, Crane, Finke and Wells, Town Clerk Allbritton and Town Administrator Cronin attended the meeting.

The Mayor reviewed the final report of Dutch Dialogues Charleston which had been issued in September. He noted that the report examined flooding issues in five “focus areas” in the City of Charleston and Johns Island and identified specific risks to Johns Island, including (a) watershed functionality has been impaired by an increase in newer residential developments with the wide spread use of fill for elevation and drainage, (b) natural water infiltration and storage capacity has been reduced as a result of removal of top soil, coastal forest and trees and (c) storm water management issues such as ponding, pooling, infiltration and drainage has been negatively affected by mean sea level which increased by 6” between 1990 and 2016 in Charleston Harbor. The report also made specific recommendations for Johns Island which include (a) preservation of existing marsh, wetland and coastal forest features through revision of land use planning and protocols, (b) the need to update storm water management practices and zoning regulations to reflect projected mean and high water levels which are expected to increase, (c) the creation, by the City and County of Charleston, of a near term plan to elevate evacuation routes and protect current critical facilities and infrastructure, and (d) development by the City and County of Charleston of an island wide watershed masterplan from River Road and Maybank to Seabrook and Kiawah.

The Mayor noted a number of political risks to implementation of the recommendations in the report and urged council to schedule meetings with appropriate city and county personnel to promote implementation of the identified recommendations for Johns Island.

The Mayor said that, in conjunction with the opening of Mary Whyte’s latest project at the City Gallery later this month, John Reynolds and other Seabrook Island residents are hosting an event for Mary at the Seabrook Island Club on November 1st. He stated that Ms. Whyte had been a long-time resident of Seabrook Island and had been very generous in donating her work to support a number of low country charitable efforts, most particularly in our case, the Green Space Conservancy. In recognition of her contributions to our community and to the low country the Mayor suggested that at its next regularly scheduled meeting council declare November 1st to be Mary Whyte Day.

The Mayor reported that the Town of Kiawah Island introduced an amendment to its short-term rental ordinance which would impose “caps” or limits on the number of homes zoned R-1 (single family residential) which may be licensed for short-term rentals. He noted that the ordinance already had substantive health and safety requirements for short-term rentals. He suggested council keep abreast with Kiawah’s implementation and experience with the proposed amendment and that it begin to collect data on the number of single-family residences on Seabrook Island being used for short term rentals and relevant trends in that regard.

Councilman Crane explained that he had attended a municipal court session and noted that a default had been entered with respect to a property owner who had failed to obtain a business license for his rental property. Councilman Crane suggested that it was unlikely that the resident would either pay the fine or obtain a license and questioned what recourse was available to the Town. The Mayor noted the statutory provisions regarding conversion of the fine into a civil judgment and the various alternatives for enforcing the judgment.

Councilwoman Finke suggested that the Town provide notice of the recently adopted plastics ban. She noted that articles had been placed in the Seabrooker and Tidelines. After discussion, it was suggested that we send separate letters to affected merchants rather than include the notice along with the business license renewals. Councilwoman Finke volunteered to assist with preparation of a letter for consideration by the Mayor. Councilwoman Finke discussed a revised brochure from the Seabrook Island Birder Group that had been provided to members of Council, noting the presentation of the areas of the beach with dog restrictions in accordance with the Town’s recently approved ordinance. She indicated that it had been suggested that a greater quantity of brochures be printed to be available for distribution to incoming guests by SIPOA security and agreed to bring a definite cost estimate to Council for that quantity.

Councilman Wells reported on his September article in the Seabrooker and reiterated his position that the Town’s primary flooding threat is associated with storm surge.

Councilman Gregg reported that an application had been submitted for Public Assistance in connection with expenses incurred in the Town’s preparation for and response to Hurricane Dorian. He also reported that, pursuant to the Town’s request for public assistance in connection with Hurricane Florence, the Town had received a \$7,147.98 check from the State of South Carolina. Of this amount, \$3,241.01 would be paid to the Seabrook Island Utility Commission for its costs incurred as a result of Hurricane Florence. This amount is in addition to \$21,423.96 received from FEMA in January with respect to Hurricane Florence.

Town Administrator Cronin reported that he is waiting on the receipt of quotes to replace signage buoys damaged as a result of Hurricane Dorian. He stated that he has obtained decals outlining the new dog rules which are to be placed over existing signs. These decals will be put up on October 24th.

The Town Administrator noted that the Town's consultant had prepared first drafts of suggested changes to a number of chapters of the Development Standards Ordinance and will meet with the DSO Advisory Committee on October 16th and 17th. He indicated that the principal conceptual change in the DSO is the movement away from Planned Unit Developments to so-called "straight" zoning.

The Town Administrator reported on the request for proposal for auditing services and noted that he had received five proposals. Council representatives and representative of the SIUC will meet on October 18th to review the proposals and select three firms for which interviews will be scheduled.

Representatives of ESP reported on their examination of the "ponding" issues in the immediate area of town hall. They presented three alternative proposals which they indicated would not avoid the issue altogether but would result in the water dissipating in a matter of days rather than weeks. The proposals consisted of creating a retention pond, either at the back of or on the side of the parcel on which town hall is located, and installation of a pipe which would be adjacent and parallel to Seabrook Island Road and would connect to a pipe which would run under Seabrook Island Road and connect to an existing culvert which would run into the marsh. As a consequence of a restriction in the deed which conveyed the property to the Town, each of the alternatives would require the consent of the adjacent property owner. ESP should have cost estimates on each of the three alternatives by the November meeting.

The Town Administrator indicated that the project to replace the front door has been delayed and that accordingly the timing on the proposed exterior repainting would be delayed as well. He also said that because of the frequency of the Comcast service disruptions, the town was looking at obtaining backup cellular internet service. He noted that Verizon has what appears to be a seamless LTE backup which would allow the Town to send and receive emails and issue business licenses in the event of disruption of Comcast service. Councilman Gregg suggested that the Town Administrator get both the upfront costs and the monthly service charges before the matter is brought to council.

At the request of the Mayor, a motion was made and seconded to go into executive session to discuss legal issues relating to the regulation of low speed vehicles. Council met in executive session during which no decisions were made. A

motion was made and seconded to resume the regular session of the Ways and Means meeting.

The Mayor noted that this would be his last meeting before the election, and thanked members of council for their service.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Date: October 22, 2019



Town Clerk