

**TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND**  
**Planning Commission**  
**Minutes of the April 18, 2018 – 3:00 p.m. Meeting**  
**Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers**

Commissioners Present: Chairman Alex Brown, Vice Chairman Peter Kristian, Glenn Stanford, Todd Theodore, Bryan Hughes, Barry Taylor, Judd Carstens, Lavon Stevens

Commissioners Excused: Caroline McVitty

Town Council Present: Tom Lennox

Town Staff Present: Shawn Colin, Deputy Director of Community Development; Charles Cousins, Director of Community Development; Teri Lewis, LMO Official; Jennifer Ray, Planning & Special Projects Manager; Anne Cyran, Senior Planner; Teresa Haley, Senior Administrative Assistant

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**1. Call to Order**

**2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**

**3. Roll Call**

**4. Freedom of Information Act Compliance**

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

**5. Approval of Agenda**

The Planning Commission approved the agenda as submitted by general consent.

**6. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of April 4, 2018**

Commissioner Stanford moved to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2018 meeting as corrected. Vice Chairman Kristian seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 7-0-0.

**7. Appearance by Citizens on Items Unrelated to Today's Agenda – None**

**8. Unfinished Business – None**

**9. New Business – None**

**10. Commission Business – None**

**11. Chairman's Report – None**

**12. Committee Report – None**

**13. Staff Report**

*(Note: Staff Report 13b was presented prior to 13a.)*

a. Update on Affordable Housing Initiative

Mr. Colin presented the background of this Town Council priority. In early fall of 2017, the Public Planning Committee (PPC) made recommendations to Town Council regarding workforce availability and workforce housing. Town Council supported those recommendations and discussed them at the workshop as they developed their priorities for 2018. Town Council supported moving forward on an initiative to take a deeper dive on workforce availability and workforce housing issues.

Staff developed a list of workforce housing best practices, including programs, funding sources, and management structures, based on eighteen different communities across the country. The PPC held a series of workshops with various groups in the community, and with experts from five other communities that have affordable/workforce housing programs. Staff also created a twenty question survey on the need for housing regionally and locally, on whether a solution should be regional or local, and on the types of housing that should be built in early stages of the project and long term.

Using the information from the workshops and the survey responses, Staff developed a scope of work and an RFP to engage a consultant to develop an Affordable Workforce Housing Strategic Plan. The RFP was released on March 1<sup>st</sup> with a three week deadline. Only one, non-responsive (incomplete) RFP was received. Staff sought input from the other communities that attended the workshop to modify the RFP to get better results and to get recommendations for high quality consultants that might be interested in the work. The RFP was then modified and reposted. Nine packages were received on April 17<sup>th</sup> and eight of those were responsive. Staff will evaluate those over the next few weeks.

The consultant's objective is to provide insight and direction on the policy matrix to tailor a program for Hilton Head Island. Staff thinks considering workforce housing in a regional context will be important. The County has hired a consultant to perform a county wide housing needs assessment. The Town consultant will review the results of that assessment and validate the assumptions and recommendations. The consultant's timeframe to complete the work as outlined in the scope of work is six to nine months. PPC will meet next week to discuss further details around this effort.

The Commission made various inquiries and comments regarding the following: the consultant's scope of work; the cost parameters for affordable housing; the existing inventory of homes that fall within the affordable housing parameter; this initiative targets workforce availability, which has two components: workforce housing and transportation; all property options will be considered by staff for new workforce housing; some information from the consultant's findings is projected to be available in time for Town Council's December workshop; staff does not want to commit to target demographics until the consultant presents their findings; the consultant will work with local businesses and key stakeholders to identify the targets; staff contacted local employers to find out what their employees earn; changes were made to the initial RFP because it was too rigid, the marketplace component was too specific, and the solicitation window was too short; programs will be looked into to supplement payments for homes, including down payment

assistance; legislation to allow South Carolina municipalities to use inclusionary zoning died on the House floor last week, so tax credits for developers building affordable housing will not be available to the Town; other municipalities use negotiated developer fees as part of development agreements; the Low Income Housing Tax Credit requirements and impacts; agencies that qualify individuals into affordable housing programs and continue to verify that qualifications are met; affordable housing inventory from the 2010 Census; and the County needs assessment will be an accurate and reliable source for sales price and rental rates.

Chairman Brown expressed the importance of this effort being in direct communication with the Gullah-Geechee Task Force. The Task Force is trying to preserve the land and keep it in Gullah folks' ownership, so there needs to be opportunities for those folks to develop affordable housing. The Commission commended Mr. Colin and staff for their work.

Chairman Brown asked for public comment. Eric Somerville presented statements regarding the perceptions of residents', his unsolicited proposal to the Town for affordable workforce housing strategic plan, and his professional experience.

b. Update on the Gateway Corridor Project

Mr. Cousins presented the update regarding the Gateway Corridor project. There are four spans of the bridge, one of which has been classified as deficient by the DOT. Therefore, it has to be replaced. The DOT is taking this as an opportunity to replace all four spans at the same time. The DOT has \$40 million set aside to replace the deficient span. The estimate by the DOT to replace all four spans is approximately \$240 million. At this point, there's a referendum scheduled by the County in November to raise \$80 million. That leaves approximately \$120 million short of the \$240 million required. The County is looking to amend their current application to the State Infrastructure Bank to get that other \$120 million to cover the full cost of the bridge.

The County hired a consultant to put together the application to the State Infrastructure Bank. At yesterday's Town Council meeting, the Town Council agreed to help fund that consultant, and added two items to the consultant's objectives: 1) To have a couple of community meetings on Hilton Head Island to discuss this project and gain input from the community; and 2) To provide a few sketches of what the bridge might look like to educate the community and with the hope of gaining community support of the referendum.

The DOT has hired a consultant to perform an environmental assessment of the bridge replacement. The assessment includes community engagement, and the contract calls for numerous public meetings, which will be scheduled over the next two years.

Town Staff is continuing to keep plugged into this project with the County and DOT, as this is a vital effort and issue for the community.

The Commission made various inquiries and comments regarding: the scope of the project includes more than just the bridge replacement – it includes the area between Moss Creek and Squire Pope Road, and therefore should be referred to as a corridor redevelopment project; the Town needs to reach out to the property owners that will be affected in the corridor and work with them regarding any required land acquisition; whether public officials, including the Commission, could publicly endorse the project versus as a private citizen; recently approved road work in the Windmill Harbour area will proceed; and the County consultant is amending the County’s existing application to the State Infrastructure Bank. The Commission thanked Mr. Cousins.

Chairman Brown asked for public comment. Eric Somerville presented statements regarding the intersection at Pinckney Island and affordable housing.

c. Update on Trolley Service

Ms. Cyran presented the background regarding the Trolley Service. The 2010 US Census designated the Hilton Head/Bluffton region as a Small Urbanized Area. The change in designation made federal grant money available for urban transit service. Palmetto Breeze secured federal grants to buy equipment and make upgrades to their facilities. The Town has long partnered with Palmetto Breeze to provide rural service, which is primarily bringing workers from outlying counties to the island. Understanding the need to reduce the number of cars on the road, especially during tourist season, Town Council agreed to partner with Palmetto Breeze to fund an urban service. The immediate result will be a trolley that runs during the tourist season through the main commercial areas on the island.

Ms. Cyran presented a photograph of the standard trolley offered. The trolleys carry about 35 passengers. The three trolleys for this effort will be customized to meet the needs and character of Hilton Head Island. The color scheme has not yet been decided. The trolleys will have two doors for faster loading and unloading, a bike rack on the front, and Wi-Fi. They also have GPS for passengers to find and track the trolleys location.

Staff worked with Palmetto Breeze to develop a draft route for the initial year of service, which is scheduled to start in mid-July. Two trolleys will run on one route between the Coligny Area, Park Plaza, Shelter Cove Towne Centre and Shelter Cove Harbour. A third trolley will be available for the 2019 season, so Staff drafted possible routes for next season and the season of 2020.

Palmetto Breeze is continuing to work to secure property owners approval for the Park Plaza stop. The service will operate 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The fare is \$1.00, except for children under a certain height ride free. Payment will be by cash or through an app. The regular service season would be from March to October.

Palmetto Breeze just selected a marketing consultant. The consultant will work with Palmetto Breeze and the Town to create a marketing campaign to roll out the service.

Palmetto Breeze is also working with Sea Pines and Palmetto Dunes to connect the Sea Pines Trolley and the Dunes Buggy to the trolley stops. Palmetto Breeze is having an urban service study conducted and the results will be available in July. The study will make recommendations for urban services in the area of Hilton Head and greater Bluffton. Staff will review those recommendations to determine if the Town wants to fund something like commuter busses between Bluffton and Hilton Head.

The Commission made inquiries and comments regarding: Town Council is not going to start charging for parking at the Coligny Beach Park until sometime in the future; the success of having the second trolley route from Palmetto Bay Road to Pope Avenue would be contingent on having paid parking at Coligny Beach Park; the trolleys are custom-built so certain modifications can be made; the video on the Town's website promoting the Town beach parks; shelters and restrooms should be considered when the trolley service is fully implemented; shelters would require design and approval processes; concern for people driving directly to the beach versus to a trolley stop like Shelter Cove and leaving their vehicle; the trolley mostly connects to commercial areas, not reaching residential areas; workforce transit will need to be considered in the future; how to identify who uses the trolley and what they use it for; the Town has committed to funding a portion of the trolley through its partnership with Palmetto Breeze; the trolley schedule is available on the Palmetto Breeze website; and the current schedule doesn't serve certain work shifts in the community and that needs to be addressed. The Commission thanked Ms. Cyran for her presentation.

Chairman Brown asked for public comment. Eric Somerville made statements regarding the contracts for the trolley and housing.

**14. Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 4:11 p.m.

Submitted by: Teresa Haley, Secretary

Approved: May 16, 2018

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Alex Brown, Chairman