

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

Date: August 1, 2016

Time: 10:00 AM

Members Present: Marc A. Grant, *Chairman*; David Ames, *Council Member*

Members Absent: Bill Harkins, *Council Member*

Town Staff Present: Brian Hulbert, *Staff Attorney*; and Karen Knox, *Senior Administrative Assistant*

Others Present: Captain Joey Woodward and Kiera Morris, *Beaufort County Sheriff's Office*; various Hilton Head Island residents

Media Present: Teresa Moss, *The Island Packet*; Tori Simkovic, *WJCL-TV*

1. Call to Order

2. 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.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Public Safety Committee Meeting of July 11, 2016

Mr. Ames moved that Item 5 of the minutes be amended to read in part that “a recommendation be made to Town Council that the Mayor ask the Town Manager to direct Staff *with a Town Council representative* to work with Oceanwalk Board...” Chairman Grant seconded, and the motion to approve the minutes as amended was passed by a vote of 2-0.

4. Unfinished Business

None

5. New Business

a. 2nd Quarter 2016 Crime Statistics – Capt. Joey Woodward

Capt. Joey Woodward from the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) presented a brief PowerPoint outlining the detailed crime statistics for the 2nd quarter of 2016, as cited in the Uniform Crime Report, which is included in the agenda packet.

He reviewed the breakdown of the statistics for Crimes Against Persons, explaining that aggravated assaults are basically fights. He specifically noted the forcible rape cases that are being actively investigated appear to involve roommates, co-workers, family members, siblings, or were consensual in nature. He reported that Crimes Against Property are down significantly from the same quarter in 2015, with the largest number of larcenies occurring in the South Forest Beach area.

Capt. Woodward reviewed the number and breakdown of vehicles collisions, which were down compared to the same period last year, and the tickets issued for traffic, which are up by 300 tickets from last year at this time, and those issued for criminal, warnings, and by marine patrol.

In response to questions from Committee members, Capt. Woodward explained that criminal tickets are usually issued by investigators for cases such as larceny, and marine patrol tickets for open land trust checks are to determine that no littering or camping is occurring on County or Town properties designated for no development. He noted that 3 officers are assigned to marine patrol County-wide, with 2 specifically assigned to Hilton Head Island, and the frequency of the marine patrol checks.

Capt. Woodward noted the volunteer hours provided by reserve deputies and those volunteers working at the Hilton Head Island office.

Mr. Ames commended the BCSO for the statistics provided, noting the importance of Council's interpretation of the statistics to create policy to improve the situations. He and Capt. Woodward discussed the wide range of perpetrators of crimes in the South Forest Beach Area, the descriptors which are included in the crime reports, and the importance of disseminating that information to the public and the BCSO. Capt. Woodward explained the higher number of crimes against property in the South Forest Beach area, which includes the Sea Pines Circle area, result from increased population near the beach during summer months, and greater opportunities for unlocked cars. Despite the increased presence of cameras in the beach parking lots and other Town parks that have proved helpful in catching criminals, he noted these are not deterrents. Capt. Woodward also explained the higher number of crimes reported in the Shelter Cove area result from shoplifting in Kroger and Belk, and the high volume of people at the Community Park. He also noted the higher volume of vehicle collisions on the south corridor are a result of the presence of more cars and collisions on the north end corridor are a result of the traffic leaving Hilton Head Island.

Capt. Woodward pointed out that the 2nd quarter statistics on calls for service had increased greatly over the 1st quarter of 2016.

Chairman Grant questioned how many arrests were made in the South Forest Beach area during this quarter, which would cover the period during the RBC Heritage, and Capt. Woodward stated the statistics do not show this, but future reports could do so if requested by the Committee. Chairman Grant and Capt. Woodward discussed the proactive measures being taken for the remainder of the summer in those areas showing higher statistics of crime, which includes shifting the Special Enforcement Unit (SEU), the bar detail shifts, and adjusting extra resources accordingly.

Chairman Grant thanked Capt. Woodward for the Bring Teens to the Police Station program to explain to parents and kids the adverse effect of drugs, alcohol, peer pressure, and texting. Capt. Woodward stated this program would be repeated in the future and was available to any organization.

Capt. Woodward reported that 7 tickets were issued this quarter for texting while driving, and he explained the difficulty of detecting this activity.

In response to Mr. Ames' question as to what the Town could be doing that it is not doing with regards to crime and traffic, Capt. Woodward suggested increased flyers and materials from the Town and/or Chamber to rental companies during peak seasons to encourage citizens to report crimes, to lock doors, and be more conscious about leaving things unsecured.

Public comment was solicited. Eric Summerville questioned the police coverage inside gated communities, which Capt. Woodward indicated are private security, but he noted all investigative cases were handled through the BCSO and are included in the crime statistics. Mr. Summerville suggested better screening of renters through rental agencies.

Jack Daly with the Forest Beach Association expressed concern that more crime is occurring in the Forest Beach area that is not being documented, and the strong correlation between the sub-standard housing available there and the crime rate. He mentioned an assault that occurred on July 4th by a known criminal living in the Forest Beach area, and the lack of response from BCSO.

Chairman Grant noted this incident occurred in the 3rd quarter of 2016, so the statistics would not be included in today's report by the BCSO. Chairman Grant and Mr. Ames clarified details with Mr. Daly and asked that names of the known criminals be turned over to Capt. Woodward, who agreed to obtain further details about the incident. Mr. Daly noted that more police patrols are needed, reflecting the specific needs of the area, including foot, bicycle, golf cart, ATV, and car patrols.

Mary Lou Bolger expressed concerns about U-turns, un-signalized left turns, and lack of designated turning lanes. She expressed hope that better police presence and visibility would slow down speeders. She identified dangerous pedestrian crossings that should be removed on William Hilton Parkway near Fresh Market and other crossings where there is no signal light.

Rick Bolger noted that driving on Hilton Head Island is truly an adventure, and further noted that more law enforcement presence is needed. He also expressed concerns about the dangerous design and driving conditions between the Sea Pines Circle and the Sea Pines Greenwood Gate.

Chairman Grant thanked everyone for their comments.

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Ames and seconded by Chairman Grant. The motion was approved by a vote of 2-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:46 AM.

Respectfully submitted:

Lynn W. Buchman
Senior Administrative Assistant

Approved by:

/Approved September 12, 2016
Marc A. Grant, Chairman