

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND  
**INTERGOVERNMENTAL & PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Wednesday, October 17, 2018

Special Meeting

*Members Present:* Bill Harkins, *Chairman*, David Ames, *Council Member*, David Bennett, *Mayor and Committee Member*

*Members Absent:*

*Others Present:* Kim Likins, *Council Member*; Frank Babel, *Co-Chair of the Hilton Head Island Bicycle Advisory Committee*; Bruce Pitkin, *President of Yacht Cove POA*; Heather Rath; Terri Bennett; Bryan and Daisy Bobinchuck

*Staff Present:* Steve Riley, *Town Manager*; Josh Gruber, *Assistant Town Manager*; Brad Tadlock, *Fire Chief*; Scott Liggett, *Director of Public Projects & Facilities/ Chief Engineer*; Carolyn Grant, *Communications Director*; Jenn McEwen, *Director of Cultural Affairs*; Shawn Colin, *Deputy Director of Community Development*; Darrin Shoemaker, *Traffic & Transportation Engineer*; Jeff Buckalew, *Town Engineer*; Jayme Lopko, *Senior Planner*; Taylor Ladd, *Senior Planner- DRZ*; Phyllis Deiter, *Senior Administrative Assistant*;

*Media Present:* Eleanor Lightsey, *Lowcountry Inside Track*

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**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:06 PM by Chairman Harkins.

**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**

**4. Unfinished Business**

**A. Pathway Safety Enhancements – Un-signalized High-Speed Crosswalks**

Chairman Harkins began the meeting by recognizing Brian and Daisy Bobinchuck, extending Town Council's and the community's heartfelt sympathy to them for the terrible loss of their daughter, Charli.

Scott Liggett was called to the podium and introduced the outcome of the September 10, 2018 Intergovernmental & Public Safety Committee Meeting including the recommendations that were brought forward by Town Staff. The focus was on William Hilton Parkway with specific reference to the Yacht Cove un-signalized crosswalks, utilizing those as a template moving forward. These recommendations were endorsed by committee as well as a speed study between Squire Pope Road and Sea Pines Circle. In addition, Staff remains prepared to embark on a formal signal warrant study at the Yacht Cove intersection upon receipt of the accident investigation report from the Department of Public Safety. The recommended treatments to the crosswalks do not preclude nor prevent any additional treatments in the future.

Jeff Buckalew then started a PowerPoint presentation with a focus on the Yacht Cove intersection

and crosswalks. The first slide exhibited the existing conditions at the Yacht Cove intersection. Mr. Buckalew explained the current markings, signage and specific areas on the roadway. He continued on by explaining the Town's intent to implement consistent signage with the same color and "Walking Man" logo. These highly reflective signs will straddle the roadways at each crosswalk. To further heighten driver awareness, the Town would implement reflectors around the raised median islands in the center of the road. In addition, raised thermoplastic reflective pavement markers would be placed on the pavement right at the front of the crosswalk. The Town would place elongated words, "PED XING" in front of each crosswalk. Mr. Buckalew explained that thermoplastic is a hot-applied road marking compound for the creation of highly reflective stripings with long-term performance. The Town would like to employ these treatments at the (11) un-signalized crosswalks on US 278.

There was more discussion regarding the suggestion of utilizing blinking LED lights around the perimeter of the walking-man sign during the hours of dusk-through dawn. Ultimately, this was not a direction the Town decided to take.

The Committee asked for clarity regarding the proposed request for a speed limit study. The conversation focused on what area of US 278 would be studied as well as the criteria South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) uses to establish whether or not 45 MPH should be the posted speed. Darrin Shoemaker responded that the State generally starts by graphing the existing vehicle speeds, noting the average speed of the majority of motorists. Then SCDOT takes into account various other factors, such as: the amount of pedestrian and bicycle activity, the type and density of roadside development, lane curvatures and widths, and road geometrics.

Other public comments were solicited. Mr. Liggett was asked to explain to Bruce Pitkin, a board member of the Yacht Cove Homeowners Association, the treatment evolution of bicycle pathways over the years. Mr. Bobinchuck then spoke of the need for overhead lighting, or self-activated crosswalk lighting at the un-signalized crosswalks providing more protection to driver and pedestrian alike. Patsy Brison further noted her concerns, including the un-signalized crossings on South Forest Beach Drive. Frank Babel spoke about the mid-island corridor area where there is limited site distance because of the foliage, vehicle turning lanes and overall speed of the cars. Mr. Liggett clarified that any modifications to the US 278 right-of-way will require SCDOT approval. This includes any lighting treatment whatsoever. Town Staff does not have any opposition to lighting but the discussion will need to include some guidance, goals and objectives from Town Council. There was further discussion regarding the speed study, potential elimination of a crosswalk or addition of a traffic light. With any change, the Town will need to make sure is that there aren't any unintended consequences in regards to operational standards and capacity on the roadway. Town staff would have to specifically order that analysis to consider future changes within the US 278 corridor.

Council members continued to further comment on the Island brand that they are trying to protect and enhance with these priorities. Mr. Ames spoke of the three opportunities in front of Town Council: 1) Bridge corridor, 2) Pope Avenue lane widths and, 3) the crosswalk situation. All of these have safety implications but they also have aesthetic and social ramifications. This is the time to thoughtfully decide how we, as a community, want to move people on the Island as well as what we are trying to communicate to our visitors and residents to satisfy the safety and social requirements that are around our community. There was further discussion about creating inherent features in the area that indicates drivers should slow down.

The council members agreed of the need to converge with Town staff to form a plan including any policy changes that may or may not be needed. Mayor Bennett noted that there is a need to have Beaufort County Sheriff's officers enforce the speed laws because cars seem to driving substantially faster, seemingly without recourse. Until that component is built into the plan, this will continue to be part of the issue. Chairman Harkins noted that the committee's number #1 priority is public safety with the agreement of Council to move forward with some type of melded thought and address the situation immediately.

Additional public comments were solicited. Frank Babel spoke of a policy in many municipalities throughout the country called "Complete Streets". It's a policy that requires municipalities to treat every street and take account all the users: cars, trucks, bicycles and pedestrians. Tamara Becker spoke to the Town's focus should not be on capacity, bringing people onto the Island, and moving them around, but rather on the people who are walking and riding their bikes. Truitt Rabun spoke of the formation of Island's Pathways for Safety during the Town's inception. The Town has a responsibility to the public with regard to those areas that are commonly held to the joint benefit of the community as a whole. And pathways are part of that. In terms of lighting, Mr. Rabun suggested the Dark Skies organization. This organization works with communities to help bring lighting into communities without the lighting and without being detrimental to the community. Hilton Head Community is known for being able to see the stars with low impact lighting. Patsy Brison addressed the Committee members again. She volunteered to write a new policy, utilizing the informational suggestions made by citizens, creating a resolution with immediate action steps. Heather Rath spoke to the Committee, asking to have further explanation about what are the barriers to lighting the crosswalks and intersections on the Island. Josh Gruber answered by stating that there is nothing currently in the code that indicates what our standards are in regards to crosswalk lighting in the town. Town Staff, with the guidance and parameters from Town Council, can formulate a policy to incorporate lighting on US 278. There is a balance between the need for safety and the need for aesthetics with this project. Mr. Gruber went on to note that anything done within the right-of-way of US 278 would ultimately need the state's approval. The process is to submit a proposal to SCDOT and wait for their response as to whether or not they will allow the changes to be incorporated.

Mayor Bennett made a motion that the Intergovernmental & Public Safety Committee make a recommendation to Town Council that we approve the recommendations as set forth by Staff in their memo adding an element for lighting the crosswalk, utilizing the information that Truitt Rabun has supplied in the course of the meeting regarding Dark Sky principles and to remove the flashing lights element. It was seconded by Mr. Ames. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Mr. Harkins asked that at the next meeting (November 5, 2018) Town Staff have a time table on how the pathway safety enhancement project will move forward.

## **5. New Business**

A. None.

## **6. Adjournment**

With no further business items, the meeting was adjourned at 6:38 P.M.

Respectfully submitted:

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Phyllis Deiter  
Senior Administrative Assistant

Approved on: 11/05/2018

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Bill Harkins, Chairman