

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL & PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Monday, August 6, 2018
Regular Meeting

Members Present: Bill Harkins, *Chairman*, David Ames, *Council Member*, Marc Grant, *Council Member*

Members Absent: David Bennett, *Mayor and Committee Member*

Others Present: Senator Tom Davis, *South Carolina Senator*, Lt. Jason Covington, *Beaufort County Sheriff's Office*; Lt. Andres Florencio, *Beaufort County Sheriff's Office*; Kim Likins *Council Member*; Chet Williams, *Attorney*; Kiera Morris, *Beaufort County Sheriff's Office*

Staff Present: Joshua Gruber, *Assistant Town Manager*; Greg Deloach, *Assistant Town Manager*; Brian Hulbert, *Staff Attorney*; Carolyn Grant, *Communications Director*; Faidra Smith, *Administration Manager*, and Phyllis Deiter, *Senior Administrative Assistant*

Media Present: Eleanor Lightsey, *Lowcountry Inside Track*

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 AM 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

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 4, 2018 Intergovernmental and Public Safety Committee meeting was made by David Ames and seconded by Marc Grant. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

4. Unfinished Business

5. New Business

A. Jasper Port Ocean Terminal – Town Supportive Role – Senator Tom Davis

Mr. Harkins welcomed Senator Davis to the committee asking him to share his insights on the progress of the Jasper Port Terminal and how Hilton Head Island can help from a political standpoint. Senator Davis noted the importance to look at matters from a regional basis. The Southern Carolina Alliance, which includes the seven surrounding counties, discusses these regional issues collectively thereby accomplishing more together. Supporting the Jasper Port will benefit all the rural counties.

The Jasper Port site, 15 hundred acres, is owned jointly by the South Carolina State Ports Authority and the Georgia Ports Authority. Jasper Port schedule is to be operational for 2026/2027 based on the needed timelines: Georgia in 2028; South Carolina in 2035. The current ports in both Charleston and Savannah are geographically constrained for any further expansion. In addition, shipping companies are purchasing mega ships that carry upwards of 18-24,000 TEUs at one time. This is important because the port in Charleston and the port in Savannah are constrained, not by channel depth but by bridge height. A 14,000 TEU ship will not fit under the Cooper River Bridge in Charleston or under the Talmadge Bridge in Savannah.

There is a concern that the Port will not be ready in 2026/27 since Charleston's timeline isn't until 2035. Georgia is now openly considering other expansion alternatives; in particular, developing a piece of Hutchinson Island. Senator Davis has engaged discussions with the 15 legislators that reside in the 7 county area to demonstrate to Georgia that that facility will be ready when needed. They want to obtain the money for the necessary infrastructure, which includes a port access road extending from Rt. 17 towards the Talmadge Bridge and the railroad corridor with additional easements for spurs extending to the site. Putting money into the Jasper County Port Infrastructure Fund on a recurring basis is a concrete way to demonstrate to Georgia that they can realistically look to have the Port operational in 2026/27.

Senator Davis plans to collect resolutions from the various municipalities in Beaufort County in support of the Port. Davis will lobby the legislature to appropriate, on a recurring basis, sufficient funds to amortize the entire cost of the port infrastructure road over the next 8/9 years.

The committee asked Senator Davis various questions regarding the partnership between the two states. The Senator answered that currently each state equally contributes to the Port's permitting activities. As they move forward, the states will ensure that equities are maintained as capital in advance for this joint venture agreement. There were further discussions about the positive outcome of the tax generation benefit of both states, sparking economic activity in the whole area. The Port will create a variety of good outcomes, including better job opportunities, improved health care outcomes, and superior education availability. Bringing the 7 counties and elected officials together will demonstrate our combined support to Governor McMaster, renewing the commitment to make Jasper Port a reality.

The discussion changed as David Ames asked a question regarding the Housing Tax Credit. Senator Davis indicated the criteria the housing authority uses essentially freezes out areas like Hilton Head Island because of the various requirements. The credits are passed through the Federal Government to the Governor's office, who is charged with the making that criteria. Adjusting the criteria cannot be done legislatively. It must be done through the Governor's office.

B. 2nd Quarter 2018 Crime Statistics – Lt. Jason Covington, Beaufort County Sheriff's Office

Lt. Jason Covington began the presentation for the 2nd quarter crime statistics with the statistics for Crimes against Persons. He listed the numbers for each category and indicated the location of these from the highlighted map. The following category Crimes against Property highlighted a rise in the burglaries from this quarter last year. It was based on many of the vacant timeshare units and vacant homes had seen appliances and other items stolen.

Beaufort County Sheriff's Office made an arrest on a subject that was involved in several of those cases. Moving on, the statistics for the following categories, Vehicle Collisions, Traffic Citations, Marine Patrol, Volunteer Hours, and Calls for Service for the 2nd Quarter were noted. There were short conversations drilling down a few of the specific numbers in detail.

Chairman Harkins asked Lt. Covington about the vehicle tragedy where a girl was recently killed. Mr. Harkins asked for the Lieutenant's thoughts regarding areas on the Island where other pedestrians are injured and what could be done in these locations. Lt. Covington noted one area as the bicycle crossing at the Oaks and Hilton Head Gardens going over to Northridge Cinema. Through the last 10 years, it has had the most injuries. Mr. Harkins noted the new Dollar General to that area would create more people crossing over Rt. 278. The Lieutenant stated another critical location as the crosswalk from Palmetto Dunes to the Whole Foods strip mall. The third area would be the crosswalk by the Yacht Cove area. Mr. Harkins indicated bushes and trees along the road are potential areas that can obscure a person crossing the street. Lt. Covington noted that there isn't a traffic signal at these crossing areas. Mr. Harkins asked that BCSO work with the Town Engineers on this issue for ideas on making these areas safer. Mr. Harkins is looking to present these and other ideas to the South Carolina DOT.

Mr. Harkins asked for public comments. Kim Likins, Town Council Member, asked about the increase in crime in Northridge Plaza. What was BCSO doing to circumvent the crime in that area? Lt. Covington spoke of the bar in the Northridge Plaza. His office has assigned a task force to the area with an increased presence. Ms. Likins also indicated that she has heard that overall crime is increasing on the Island. Ms. Likins wanted to see the statistical breakdown from the past 5 years to have a complete picture. Mr. Ames asked that this be done with graphs rather than numerically.

Eleanor Lightsey asked what the BCSO Marine Patrol does with Open Land Trust, as noted on the statistics Marine Patrol page. The Lieutenant explained that Open Land Trust are Town and County properties that have been purchased to hold the land as a preserve. They have officers assigned to those areas to check for illegal dumping or damaging these areas.

6. Adjournment

With no further discussion items, there was a motion for adjournment by Mr. Ames and seconded by Mr. Grant. The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 A.M.

Respectfully submitted:

Phyllis Deiter
Senior Administrative Assistant

Approved on: 09/10/2018

Bill Harkins, Chairman