

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL & PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Monday, February 5, 2018

Regular Meeting

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Representative Jeffrey Bradley, Captain Joey Woodward, *Beaufort county Sheriff's Office*, Kiera Morris, *Beaufort County Sheriff's Office*, Stewart Rodman, *Beaufort County Council Member*, Eleanor Lightsey, *Lowcountry Inside Track*, and Various Members of the Public

Staff Present: Greg DeLoach, *Assistant Town Manager*, Faidra Smith, *Administration Manager*, Darrin Shoemaker, *Traffic & Transportation Engineer*, Teri Lewis, *LMO Official*, Taylor Ladd, *Senior Planner-DRZ*, Cindaia Ervin, *Finance Assistant*, Jeff Buckalew, *Town Engineer*, Phyllis Deiter, *Senior Administrative Assistant*

Media Present: None

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 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 December 4, 2017 Intergovernmental and Public Safety Committee meeting was made by David Ames and seconded by Mayor Bennett. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

4. Unfinished Business

None.

5. New Business

- a. Update on Legislative Items of Interest for the 2018 General Assembly Session – Representative Jeffrey Bradley

Representative Jeff Bradley was invited to share the legislative activity for the 2018 session that may directly or indirectly impact Hilton Head Island. He began speaking about Bill H.3529- plastic bag ban. He stated the members of the Beaufort Delegation are in support of the direction that Hilton Head Island has taken and the Legislative Delegation is against the bill that bans local governments from passing ordinances that

regulate plastic bags.

Rep. Bradley continued with Bill H.4683/ S.927 “Beachfront Management Reform Act.” It began when the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control [DHEC] laid down what South Carolinians could and could not do relative to beach nourishment and the ocean setback lines. As a result, the Governor asked DHEC to stay their limitations. A group in the House Delegation came together to lead the effort to produce this bill designed to slow DHEC’s activity. It will replace DHEC’s code and make it less burdensome on oceanfront properties.

Mr. Ames asked what was the difference between what was proposed and what is happening at the State. Rep. Bradley explained that the existing DHEC regulation, based on the law that was passed in late 2015, was one of the largest land seizures by the State. It essentially took a lot of the property value away from the oceanfront property owners. The regulation did not take into account any of the Town’s efforts to re-nourish the beach and push the danger zone forward towards the ocean. This bill looks to address this specific issue.

The House H4788 Resolution is in opposition of Offshore Drilling activities off South Carolina’s coast. It conveys that South Carolina is opposed to the potential danger.

In addition, Rep. Bradley explained why the Base Load Review Act H.4375, relating to the VC Summer Nuclear Power Plant, was repealed. The Act was initiated in 2007 creating an environment where Santee Cooper (45% partner) and SCANA (55% lead partner) felt comfortable and moved forward with the construction of a nuclear power plant. It allowed both companies to capture up front some of the amortized costs. Although the Nuclear Power Plant was abandoned, this Act obligated the rate payers to continue to pay an 18% premium for 40 years. Rep. Bradley further explained the Speaker of the House and the attorneys involved took the 18% premium rate to 0. The Base Load Review Act will proceed to the Senate, then to the Governor for his expected signature.

Mayor Bennett asked about a bill recently introduced which seeks the approval to place a referendum on the ballot in the summer providing the public the opportunity to weigh in on whether or not off shore drilling would be supported or rejected by the state of South Carolina.

b. Decision Making Matrix for Future Plans for Bridge/278 Potential Project

Representative Bradley spoke about a meeting with the Department of Transportation (DOT), the chief preconstruction engineer, and the chief engineer for the Low Country area. The bridge corridor is expected to be a \$240 million project with Beaufort County projecting a referendum in November as a way to generate some of that income. There would be \$120 million raised with approximately \$80 million set aside for construction costs. Rep. Bradley confirmed with Darrin Shoemaker that the US 278 eastbound lane over Mackay’s Creek was structurally deficient. Although safe, the bridge system is functionally obsolete because it does not have the ability carry the current traffic volume. When something is deemed structurally deficient, the overall timeline noted takes into account the time it takes for repairs or replacement. The ultimate design is an

expansion of three lanes in both directions targeted to being around 2021. The Federal Government will contribute approximately \$40 million leaving the state infrastructure bank to issue bonds for the remainder.

Mr. Harkins noted that the Town views itself as the client because this bridge and road system is a major artery to our homes and businesses. The Town is at the cusp of the largest capital outlay with one single project in the history on Hilton Head Island. Having multiple parties involved, including the Federal, State, and County, it is important for town staff and legislatures to fashion an artery solution that will be acceptable. Town Council expects to engage in the planning process and share ideas and features of an ultimate design, responding to the needs of Hilton Head Island citizens and businesses of the future. Mayor Bennett noted he has spoken with Steve Riley, Town Counsel and the County officials informally about concerns associated with the Moss Creek to Squire Pope Road corridor. The County plans to engage an engineering and design consultant whereby conceptual plans may be drawn up for those important design elements and attributes. This would be considered a springboard for the Beaufort County Legislative Delegation, and the Chamber to move forward and seek the necessary approvals that will be needed for funding. The Mayor asked Representative Bradley what would be his recommendation for the best way for our community to approach the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) board. Rep. Bradley indicated that when ready, he would facilitate a meeting and coordinate on a state level. He understands that there are a lot of factors, including a couple million people coming over that bridge creating a billion dollars' worth of tax revenue on an annual basis.

Public comments were solicited. Stewart Rodman was called upon and spoke of the work that the County has underway. A firm has been contracted to conduct an environmental assessment that looks at what will happen downstream. This firm will be able to transition to create the design element. Regarding the referendum, the County is going to contract with a firm to manage the education component. The Chamber and local realtors are gearing up to help promote that piece. It is absolutely critical because if unsuccessful with the referendum, this project will not happen. The County has also engaged a lobby firm to facilitate, from an engineering standpoint, conversations with the SIB.

c. 4th Quarter 2017 Crime Statistics – Capt. Joey Woodward

Captain Woodward started the PowerPoint presentation with the statistics regarding the crimes against persons. There have been 0 murders, 17 aggravated assaults, 2 robberies, and 3 forcible rapes. The total number is 22, down from 30.

Going on with the statistics for crimes against property. The numbers include: burglaries (29), larcenies (138), and auto thefts (9). The total of 176 is down from 233. Captain Woodward explained to Mr. Ames that the color coding on the map was indicative of the number of incidents in a certain geographic location.

Captain Woodward went on to speak about vehicle collisions. There were 41 collisions without injury, 169 collisions with injury, 15 hit and run without injury, 1 hit and run

with an injury, and 1 fatality which involved a motorcycle. Mr. Ames asked if the Captain had an opinion why the collisions with injury numbers increased this past quarter. The Captain noted that the numbers do not equate to any particular reason.

Ticket counts were noted as well as marine patrol total statistics and volunteer hours. Drug violations statistics were accounted for in different areas on the Island. Most drug violations are discovered during traffic stops.

The remaining statistics recited included calls for service and SEU calls for service.

Captain Woodward also noted the 5 incidents involving bicycles and vehicles in this quarter. There was 1 on Pope Avenue, 1 at Fish Haul, 1 at Palmetto Bay, 1 in Sea Pines and 1 on Bus Drive.

Mr. Harkins asked about the vehicle collision data and noted the top three locations: William Hilton Parkway #1, Pope Avenue #2, Squire Pope #3. The Chairman asked if this involves a function of volume, or design or a combination of both. He questioned if this was a trend and if there was anything that we can do better. The Captain noted that based on those numbers, his department will add signage boards to the roads and extra patrol. Other factors that caused the uptick include the rain and water patterns. The department is looking to add another radar trailer to facilitate further.

The Mayor asked about calls for service and how it compares to the previous years. He asked the Captain for those past year numbers as it would be helpful to gauge the trajectory in the future.

Mr. Ames commented how Town Council can help impact crime and accidents. Noting the burglary and larceny locations, Mr. Ames asked if there was an ordinance that requires security cameras for resorts and/or private properties. Greg DeLoach said that private owners are not required to put up security cameras. Mr. Ames surmised if it made sense for the Town to encourage resorts and commercial properties, on our web site and/or the Chamber, to speak about the need to lock car doors. Are there appropriate signs where people congregate to speak to that issue and prevent this from happening? Mr. Ames continued on saying, any time a guest is robbed, that person goes home, speaks about it, and subsequently it damages our reputation. Captain Woodward reiterated that there are signs in the parks, surveillance equipment and the recommendation to lock doors. He said that a lot of the larcenies noted are from unlocked vehicles. Education is the key to prevention. The BCSO has a nixle program that reminds people to lock their doors. Mayor asked for the delineation between the larceny numbers for those people that are local and those that live outside of our area. This number would help in knowing who to target with the education to the public. Mr. Harkins asked Captain Woodward to identify areas where additional cameras would be helpful.

Mr. Ames inquired about the recent event sponsored by the Lowcountry Alliance for Healthy Youth addressing the opioid epidemic in the Low Country. Captain Woodward said that Sheriff is focused on this. Mayor Bennett asked, if there was an overdose that does not result in a fatality, what steps are taken by the department. The Captain indicated that the Sheriff takes this very seriously and looks at all the evidence.

The Sheriff moves forward with the appropriate action needed.

d. Update on the Beaufort County Sheriff's Audit

Greg DeLoach spoke about the update for the Beaufort County Sheriff's audit. They hope to have the audit started in February with various community interviews being conducted by the vendor. This is expected to be a two month process from beginning to end with the final report being available before the budget's final deliberations. Mr. DeLoach noted that John Troyer is working with him and will be taking this to the end.

Public comments were solicited. Frank Babel began by noting the various mix of drivers on our road, from speeders to those not paying attention. Mr. Babel also noted that Captain Woodward's efforts have been successful in slowing down car drivers. However, in the past couple years, we have had 5 bicycle-related deaths on our roads including a large number of bikers being hit. Mr. Babel was optimistic with the notation of bicycle report on the BCSO 4th Quarter report. However, he hoped that bike safety could become a permanent agenda item a couple times a year and to speak about the challenges as we move forward. Mr. Harkins agreed of its importance but noted that it is a shared responsibility between the rider and the Town. Mr. Babel noted that there are programs in place looking to address some of the issues with the people on bikes. They also address the most dangerous areas and try to mitigate through changes in the infrastructure. Mr. Harkins asked Mr. Babel to come back to council and share a list of items where the municipality might do better. Mr. Ames asked if most accidents were from tourists rentals. Mr. Babel said that it was true that most accidents occur with rented bikes. It was noted that the rental companies may want to do more to educate their renters.

There were no further discussion items.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 AM.

Respectfully submitted:

Phyllis Deiter
Senior Administrative Assistant

Approved on: 03/05/2018

Bill Harkins, Chairman