



Town of Hilton Head Island  
**Community Services & Public Safety Committee**  
Monday, July 27, 2020 at 9:00 am  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Present From the Committee:** Marc Grant, Bill Harkins, Tom Lennox

**Present from Town Council:** Tamara Becker

**Present from Town Staff:** Joshua Gruber, Jeff Buckalew, Jayme Lopko, Jenn McEwan

**Others Present:** Curtis Coltrane, Esquire, Ahmad Ward, *Executive Director, Historical Mitchelville Freedom Park*, Madie Fischetti, *WLA Studio*

**Present from Media:** None

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**1. Call to Order**

**2. FOIA Compliance** - Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Hilton Head Island

**3. Roll Call** – All Committee Members were present.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

**a) January 27, 2020**

Councilman Harkins moved to approve the Minutes of January 27, 2020. Councilman Lennox seconded. The Minutes of January 27, 2020 were unanimously approved.

**b) July 13, 2020**

Councilman Harkins moved to approve the Minutes of July 13, 2020. Councilman Lennox seconded. The Minutes of July 13, 2020 were unanimously approved.

**5. Citizen Comments**

Public comments concerning this agenda item could be submitted electronically via the Town's Virtual Town Hall portal. Citizens could comment on agenda items by phone during the meeting by signing up with the Recording Secretary. The public comment closed at Noon on July 24, 2020. There were no comments by citizens and no requests from citizens to participate by phone.

**6. Unfinished Business**

**a) Dirt Road Update**

Curtis Coltrane said he had two things he wanted to give an update to the Committee. First the status of the end of Mitchelville Road that runs from the State road over to the Town's property on Port Royal Sound – sometimes also referred to as Mitchelville Lane and then Pinefield Road. As the Committee may remember, there was a question about what area existed between the lots that front along Mitchelville Lane. All of them had recorded surveys

but it was hard to tell from the recorded surveys what the gap or the hole that was left by the survey. We had that examined by a Surveyor and that Surveyor which is Sea Island Land Survey has delivered a survey based on that. It does show an area that is sufficient to create a 66 foot road right of way between the areas defined by the existing surveys. In fact it may be a bit larger than that. All that said, I understand from Engineering staff that has been working on this that there is general and by general I mean minus one agreement of the adjoining land owners to quit claim whatever interest they might have in this road area to the Town. There is one individual who is unwilling to do so and so in order to deal with that person's interest, you would have to condemn it out. There is also going to be a need for a condemnation under any set of circumstances here because the title of this particular road area is uncertain. As I explained to Town Council I think as a whole previously, this whole area comes out of a much larger tract that was 75 acres or so at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and over the years bits and pieces of it were conveyed out, none of which really addressed this area where Mitchelville lane sits now. A case would have to be commenced to deal with the potential for claims by unknowns. Typically the way that is handled of course is since you do not know who they are you publish the Summons in the newspaper and no one ever answers that. You will probably have to deal with the one individual who apparently is unwilling to quit claim whatever interest he might have in this area. Based on what is before us right now, I do not think that person has any actual interest in it because that person took title off of a plat that defines the boundary of this property. This is what would have to happen in order to completely clean up the title to the Mitchelville Lane area. As has been reported by staff as I understand it again all but one area willing to execute a Deed in favor of the Town for whatever interest they may have in this particular area and then we would have to on the back end clean up the interest of any unknown parties and the one person who doesn't want to do that if that is Council's decision to move forward that will require a condemnation of those interests.

The situation on Pinefield Road is much the same. You have differing views by the ownership along Pinefield Road. You have a mixture of interests along Pinefield Road and some are willing to Quit Claim their interest in a roadway area to the Town and some are not. It is more than one individual along there. The question for Council would be at that point do you want to go ahead and do that which is somewhat at odds with the stated policy with respect to this issue. That is where we are there.

Councilman Harkins asked if Mr. Coltrane knew why the person in Mitchelville is holding out. Mr. Coltrane said he did not – what I have heard is that the individual is just opposed to the improvement of the road and what that might bring with it. That is second hand info at best and maybe further than that. Councilman Harkins asked if we are dealing with a majority that is predisposed with working with us on both of these roads. Mr., Coltrane said certainly along Mitchelville Lane there is a majority based on the information that I have. Mr. Coltrane asked Mr. Buckalew on Pinefield Road what is the percentage of those willing to cooperate and quit claim an interest as opposed to those who are not. Mr. Buckalew said 8 of the 13 property owners on Pinefield submitted a Petition saying they are willing to participate in the program. Councilman Harkins asked the same question about Mitchelville. Mr. Buckalew answered there is only one holdout so 8 of 9 are in agreement. Councilman Harkins said as he recalls we were willing to proceed with developing these roads if we could resolve any legal issues with the people who were bordering these roads. Mr. Buckalew said yes, that was the direction which came out of last November's Committee meeting. Councilman Harkins said his thought would be if we are dealing with a clear majority and we are interested in proceeding before, then why don't we proceed and I would recommend that to Town Council.

Chairman Grant said he feels very comfortable with Mitchelville, but my question is about Pinefield. Do they have any specific concerns why they do not want to have it paved? Mr. Buckalew said he has not heard any specific concerns regarding Pinefield. I think it might just be out of state owners with rental properties who may just not be committed to responding. It was some time ago we sent those Petitions out. We can make another run at that and resend them.

Councilman Lennox said if there is a clear majority and with Mitchelville Lane there clearly is I think we should move forward. I would be interested as I was unaware there were rental units on Pinefield. Jeff could you please report back as to how many permanent residents out of the 13 we have vs. rentals. Mr. Buckalew said he would research that and report back.

Councilman Grant moved that we move forward with Mitchelville Road. Mr. Buckalew will do research regarding Pinefield Road. Councilman Harkins seconded. The motion unanimously passed.

## **7. New Business**

### **a. Recommendation to Approve Public Art Master Plan**

Jenn McEwan, Director of Cultural Affairs stated staff recommends the Community Services & Public Safety Committee approve the adoption of the Town's Public Art Masterplan and forward it to Town Council for approval.

This came about originally with the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry coming up with new additions to the approved sites where we would potentially have art. Historically Town Council has approved these sites. Expanding this list allows us to plan for site specific art as opposed to kind of what historically has been this plop art mentality of having a piece of art and trying to retroactively find a location for it. We pulled it together thinking that a better practice was not just to piecemeal give you sites, but to give you an overall picture of a plan for public art on the Island and put all of our policies and procedures in one space.

Additionally one change that has occurred this year is last fall the Community Foundation hired a consultant to come in and do an analysis of the Island and our public art collection and the interest and appetite for public art here. What sparked this was really just some kind of continued difficulties in raising money for the public art exhibit that was going on at the Coastal Discovery Museum every two to three years. After interviewing the Town Manager, some Council Members and other community members, the recommendation from the consultant was to transition the public art program from the Community Foundation to the Office of Cultural Affairs where we can use that same little bucket of money that has been going to the Community Foundation annually and instead of having a temporary exhibit every 2-3 years, it will allow us to have the temporary exhibit that will go in at the Shelter Cove connectivity path that was approved at Town Council a couple of weeks ago. We will have more art, more frequently for the same amount of money.

Those are the big pieces to point out here. What we are asking is for the Committee's approval of the sites most specifically, but the overall Plan and sending it to Town Council for approval.

Chairman Grant thanked Ms. McEwan for the great job and said he recognizes some of the challenges as we begin to move forward, especially with Covid-19. What are some of the things you will be looking at trying to do as we move forward with this from now on or do you see us taking a break until the situation is over and also in terms of funding.

Ms. McEwan said there are some grants that we are looking at that allows us particularly for that sculpture trail component to expand the financial bandwidth of the Town – there will be no arts increase funding wise at least through this next year at the Town. We can do everything we have been doing and more with what we have. I will say bicycling has been a socially distant activity for my family and a lot of people on this Island so having that space where we will have that pathway of art of the large scale sculpture should be a great asset here. Additionally on the other components, I believe I highlighted some mural painting and the lantern parade. The mural painting we have moved forward with two projects. We just took out the community engagement component to it. When students can go back to Hilton Head Middle School, there is a beautiful new mural that is complete honoring contemporary community change makers in our community. We want to keep the momentum and community spirit going with the Lantern Parade so we have shifted to what I am calling a Parading in Place Model. Obviously we cannot gather 4,000 people on the beach. We are still going to support the education components. We are going to do some zoom tutorials with artists. We will take three days – originally it was going to be November 7<sup>th</sup> – we will do the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> and we are going to encourage people to put their lanterns in their driveway and light up the night and then kind of mimicking the Santa and Sirens Model, we will put our large scale spectacle puppets in the back of trucks and parade them through areas with high participation. People will be able to register on a map that our GIS Department is creating on line, let us know they have lanterns out so people can see them, but also then we will take the big spectacle component of it on the road.

Councilman Harkins said well done and he is ready to move on.

Councilman Lennox said he wanted to acknowledge and thank you and your Public Art Committee for all the work that they put into this. I think your mission and your vision statements really capture the Hilton Head storm very effectively.

Ms. McEwan told the Committee that Michael Marks who is the Chair of the Public Art Committee for the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry has taken a seat on the Arts Council Committee to help assist in the kind of human support system of transitioning and growing this program.

Councilman Harkins moved to approve the adoption of the Town's Public Art Master Plan and forward it on to Town Council. Councilman Lennox seconded. The motion unanimously passed.

**b. Mitchelville Master Plan and Business Plan**

Jayne Lopko stated as you are aware we leased what used to be Fish Haul Creek Park to the Mitchelville organization in April 2017. As part of that lease, there was a requirement that they bring forward a Master Plan and Business Plan within four years. This is meeting that requirement. Staff recommends the Committee forward a recommendation to Town Council to approve the Master Plan and Business Plan for the Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park. There are a few things we need direction on and there are a couple of conflicts that we want to make sure get addressed. They are:

- 1) The lease currently requires that the land still remain a public park and it allows for them to close it for special events but during regular hours outside of special events, it still is to remain a public park. The Master Plan currently calls for it to be a gated entry where they charge admission fees to get in.

- 2) The only part of Fish Haul Creek Park that fronts on Beach City Road is a small narrow strip where the entrance is. In the Master Plan there is another piece of land that gives them more visibility on Beach City Road. That parcel is owned jointly by the Town and the County but it is currently not included within the Master Plan.

Ms. Lopko turned the presentation over to Ahmad Ward and Madie Fischetti. Mr. Ward and Ms. Fischetti proceeded to give a presentation.

Mr. Ward reviewed the numbers with the Committee. He said to do Phase 1, we are looking at \$5.7-5.8 million dollars. To do everything, we are talking about \$22.8 million dollars. We are actively looking for a campaign manager to help us raise funds. This is a national funding project and we are already looking at targets outside the area to help us get to this point. The only thing we are asking from the Town at this point is approval of the Plan. We are working on the Memorandum of Understanding which we are working with the Town Manager on which will take us to the conversation about public access.

Mr. Ward said that regarding public access we understand that part of the lease that was created in April, 2017 kept this as a public park. Our concern is feasibility and sustainability for the park going forward. If it stays a public area that would drastically shift what we do as far as admission and how we can maintain the park. Now the Town owns the property so we are going to do what the Town asks us to do, but that means we will adjust how we perform the implementation of this Plan. We would prefer to be able to control access as much as possible to make sure we are maintaining the things we are trying to put into the site to make sure it has the desired effect that we have poured into almost 18 months of planning here to make this Plan work. With the market research we have done, we think we have target audiences that can make sure this runs smoothly for years to come. The only hiccup that comes with that is if we have uncontrolled access that also creates a situation with more maintenance on our side. If the Town says you need to keep this public access open, then that will effect whether or not we create the full structures of those historic homes. We did want to do some interactive material there. If we cannot control who is coming in and out of the park, we would ill afford and not want to put \$700,000-800,000 into interpretation on those structures when anyone can come in without us being able to regulate and do damage. What we have discussed with the Town Manager if we have to keep public access in the park then we would ask in the Memorandum of Understanding going forward that the Town still assist with some maintenance. We are willing to work with the Town to make sure we can work this out in the best way possible.

Chairman Grant said all Town owned property is considered public. I do understand what you are talking about with the possibility of damage with such access. My question is when do you see yourself start moving forward with such structures and the possibility of damage because of access. If we decide to move to restricted access that both the Town and you will feel comfortable in terms of moving forward with the project. Mr. Ward said we are actively trying to fundraise now, but as soon as we have approval from the Town we will be able to push forward some of the funding that we have to do infrastructure on site. It really is based on how funding comes in and if some of these targets show positive to us early we will move almost immediately if we have the money.

Councilman Harkins said excellent report which is very well researched. You are well anchored in the past and at the same time bringing it forward to today's environment. That is very good. I think it will represent a very dynamic and well received educational opportunity for our area and the entire Country. I look forward to doing what we can to move this forward. I think you have made a good case from my perspective on the controlled

access. It makes sense to me. This is going to be a very special place and absent control could create unnecessary mischief and I think we should try and avoid that and at the same time reach out to the County to see if we could come up with some creative alternative for access.

Councilman Lennox said he spent some time with Mr. Ward earlier this year going over the Business Plan almost line by line. Mr. Ward really has an enormous understanding of what a Business Plan is all about and how to sell an idea and concept. I think this Business Plan does that. As to the access, I do not think that is something we have to deal with right now. I think that is something that can be dealt with as we get further into the Plan if it is open access I worry about the general public having access to gathering spaces and shelters that may be important to a programming standpoint for the Freedom Park itself and for the Mitchelville and native Islanders generally. I would defer to Steve Riley and Curtis Coltrane as it pertains to not granting public access to what is deemed to be a public park.

Chairman Grant asked Jayme Lopko is she had an understanding from us in terms of the language conflict in terms of what we would like to be done in terms of the future of the Lease. Ms. Lopko said neither one of them are imminent at this point because we are not developing anything and we have plenty of time to discuss that and I hear your comments. I didn't hear anything about the property boundary conflict. I know we own those properties jointly with the County, but is there any comments or questions about including those within the lease in the future? Chairman Grant said personally I do not have a problem if the County is willing to work with us so that Mitchelville can use the property and that can be part of the Lease. Councilman Harkins agreed with Chairman Grant and I think we should be advised on the tactics here by the Town Manager and Council. I would hope we could take this off the table as an issue. Councilman Lennox agreed also.

Chairman Grant thanked Mr. Ward and Ms. Fischetti for their time this morning and we look forward to working with you in the future and getting this thing moved forward.

Councilman Harkins moved that the Committee forward this to Town Council with a recommendation to approve the Master Plan and Business Plan for the Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park. Councilman Lennox seconded. The Motion was unanimously approved.

## **8. Adjournment**

Councilman Harkins moved to adjourn. Councilman Lennox seconded. The Meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

**Submitted by:**

**Karen D. Knox**

**Approved: August 24, 2020**