

## **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

9:00 a.m., Tuesday, June 14, 2016

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, June 14, 2016 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bergwerf and Carroll, Chair Bettelli, Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham, Police Chief Buckhannon, Assistant Administrator Fragoso and Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

1. Chair Bettelli called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and public had been duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

### **2. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes**

**MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of May 3, 2016 as submitted; Councilmember Carroll seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **3. Special Presentation to Bill Jenkins**

Chief Graham presented Mr. Jenkins with a plaque recognizing his thirty-five (35) years of service as a volunteer firefighter for the City of Isle of Palms; in addition, Engineer Meador and Firefighter Crisp presented Mr. Jenkins with a shadow box they built to hold his badge, department insignia and other personal items.

### **4. Citizens' Comments**

#### **Presentation related to the Zika virus – Ed Harne, Taxonomist, Charleston County Mosquito Control**

Mr. Harne briefly went through the literature he would leave with the City to reproduce and distribute to residents; he stated that the most up-to-date information can be found on the websites for the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC).

Mr. Harne stated that the Zika virus was first discovered in 1947 in Uganda, and the first human cases were detected in 1952. The Zika virus first presented itself in the Western Hemisphere in 2015 in Brazil; currently it is present in Central and South America, Mexico, the Caribbean, the Pacific islands and United States territories. Zika is a flavivirus in the same biologic family as Dengue fever, yellow fever, the West Nile virus and encephalitis; people are primarily infected by the bite of an infected mosquito, but it can be transmitted in humans from mother to fetus and through sexual contact, lab exposure and blood transfusions. Populations at the highest risk are those with potential exposure to infected mosquitoes.

Administrator Tucker asked if there was any kind of vaccination to protect humans from exposure, and Mr. Harne stated that there was not; he also confirmed that the mosquito becomes infected when it bites an infected human or ape or monkey population. He confirmed that a human can learn if he/she is a carrier of the disease through bloodwork.

According to Mr. Harne, as of June 3<sup>rd</sup>, the United States had six hundred sixty-seven (667) cases of Zika; one (1) case has been reported in South Carolina and no local or statewide transmissions have been reported to date. Mr. Harne reviewed the process that the Charleston County Mosquito Control would follow if the City were to have a reported case of Zika virus. Aerial spraying for aquatic stage mosquitoes is typically done before 9:00 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m.

Among the things suggested for residents to do to eliminate mosquitoes breeding around their home are:

- Flush out, flip over, clean up, throw out – anything in the yard that holds water; bird baths should be washed out weekly;
- Toys and buckets – empty anything that could hold water and keep it dry;
- Potted plant trays should be emptied at least weekly;
- Ornamental pools must be kept clean with water circulating, possibly add goldfish or discard all together;
- Boat covers where stagnant water could accumulate for the breeding of mosquitoes must be emptied and kept dry;
- Abandoned pools – Mosquito Control cannot go onto private property without the owner's approval unless there is an outbreak and the government steps in.

Responding to Chief Graham's question, the best and safest insect repellants for people, according to Mr. Harne, are repellants with the highest concentration of Deet that the person can tolerate; he added that repellants actually work by camouflaging the skin surface from the mosquito.

Mr. Harne reported that, between Sullivan's Island and the Isle of Palms, fifty to one hundred (50-100) mosquito counts are done each day to assess the mosquito population.

Administrator Tucker asked if there were other biting bugs, like ticks or horse flies, that carry Zika; Mr. Harne said that did not appear to be the case, but no one really knows at this time.

Joe Petro, owner of Coconut Joe's, appealed to the Committee as he had appealed to City Council at the end of May; he was asking the City to have the kiosks in the municipal parking lot changed from daily parking to hourly parking at 6:00 p.m. or free after 6:00 p.m.. He stated that he has lost business because of the cost to park; a customer may come to the island at 5:30 or 6:00 p.m. for dinner and, if a space is not available on Ocean Boulevard, must park in the municipal lot and pay ten dollars (\$10) to park for a couple of hours. With the renovations of the Palms Hotel, Front Beach restaurants have lost some one hundred fifty (150) customers each night, and they do not expect the hotel to re-open until the 2017 beach season. In 2013, Council reacted to unruly crowds on the beach by extending the kiosks and parking lot hours to 8:00 p.m., and, according to Mr. Petro, business owners on Front Beach were not consulted or notified of any kind of public safety issue. At the same time, business at Coconut Joe's was thriving with four hundred (400) customers in the evening on the weekends; he has since established a limit of two hundred fifty (250) people in the restaurant at any one (1) time. He added that he hears complaints every night and statements that some of his customers will not return due to the parking fees. He reported that his business is having the worst year since 2008 when the economy collapsed.

Gary Hart of the Banana Cabana said that, when the hotel does re-open, he is concerned about where everyone – hotel guests, restaurant patrons, Front Beach employees and beach-goers – will park, particularly employees who have purchased season parking passes. In the past, the smaller lot was limited to people who purchased passes while other island visitors parked in the larger lot. He suggested that the City produce a parking pass for Front Beach employees, visually different from the beach-goer passes; it would prevent those same employees from using their parking pass at any other time. He opined that, since people can no longer park on the side streets, more and more people are parking in the municipal lots and that next year will be worse with the hotel open.

Administrator Tucker reported that the City's stance is that, on holiday weekends, the small lot will be for pass holders only.

**MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to reorder the Agenda to take up item C under Old Business at this juncture in the meeting; Councilmember Carroll seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **5. Old Business**

### **C. Discussion of Parking Kiosks in City-owned Parking Lots**

Administrator Tucker said that Mr. Petro and Mr. Hart have voiced legitimate concerns and noted that residents who want to go to Front Beach around 4:30 p.m. or 5:00 p.m. for dinner have also complained about the parking charges in the municipal lots. The first issue to be addressed was whether the Committee wanted to have some mechanism other than the daily rates of eight and ten dollars (\$8-10) for the evening hours.

Councilmember Bergwerf asked Chief Buckhannon if the parking lot kiosks could be programmed to change to an hourly rate at some prescribed hour in the late afternoon; she then asked the Administrator and Chief if there was any reason why residents with properly credentialed vehicles could not park for free in the municipal lots at any time.

**MOTION: Councilmember Bergwerf moved to recommend to the Ways and Means Committee that residents in properly credentialed vehicles be allowed to park in the municipal lots at any time at no charge; Councilmember Carroll seconded amend the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Chief Buckhannon reported that the kiosks could be re-programmed to operate on an hourly basis at a certain hour of the day and that the re-programming fee would run three or four hundred dollars (\$300-400).

Councilmember Bergwerf did not like the idea of reverting to an hourly rate over the daily rate.

Councilmember Carroll expressed the opinion that, when City Council decided to extend the hours of the kiosks and the municipal lots in 2013, it should have done a better job of communicating the situation with the Front Beach businesses and should make it a priority in the future.

The Administrator reminded the Committee that the City had reacted to a call from a Front Beach business who reported that they had closed early because they were afraid of what might happen. She noted that the problem began with unsafe activities on the beach which had nothing to do with the businesses but slowly migrated to the business district.

**MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to recommend to the Ways and Means Committee to re-program the kiosks in the municipal parking lots to change to an hourly rate of \$1.50 at 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. each day; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded.**

Chief Buckhannon commented that the parking spaces on the street are the premium parking spots; there is no incentive for turnover on the street if the hourly rate in the parking lots and on the street are the same. He opined that the hourly rate in the parking lots should be less than the hourly rate on the street. The businesses want their customer close and for the parking spaces to turnover several times a day.

**AMENDMENT: Councilmember Carroll amended his motion for the hourly rate at the parking lot kiosks to change to one dollar at 4:00 p.m.; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded, and the AMENDMENT PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**VOTE ON AMENDED MOTION: The motion to recommend to the Ways and Means Committee to re-program the kiosks in the municipal parking lots to change to an hourly rate of \$1.00 at 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. each day PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Councilmember Bergwerf asked Chief Buckhannon how quickly the kiosks could be programmed assuming Council approved the change.

Noting that Council meets on June 28<sup>th</sup>, Chief Buckhannon stated that he could schedule the re-programming for June 29<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Petro commented that, if the changes were not in effect before July 1<sup>st</sup>, their season would be half over.

Administrator Tucker said that if this item of business was placed on the Ways and Means Committee agenda for its meeting on July 21<sup>st</sup>, staff would have a strong indication of how the vote would go at the Council meeting the following week and could proceed with the action.

#### **A. Discussion of Encroachments on Rights-of-way**

Responding to Chair Bettelli's question about further communications with DOT, Chief Buckhannon reported that he has looked at a couple of properties with DOT, but the issue was just being piecemealed when accompanied by them. The impression the Chief has gotten is that the City has a parking plan and it needs to make the plan work, meaning whatever the City has to do to make it work.

Councilmember Carroll related receiving a call from someone who goes to the 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue beach access informing him about a deep rut in the right-of-way; the Councilmember indicated that the right-of-way belonged to DOT and was not the City's responsibility.

Administrator Tucker remarked that the City had recently accepted a delivery of a load of sand shell in order to address some of the rights-of-way with deep drop-offs.

As the discussion returned to the right-of-way encroachments, the Administrator reminded the members that the City has an inventory of the encroachments on the island and where they are; the City also has an inventory that classifies some of them as safety hazards.

To clarify the situation, Councilmember Bergwerf interpreted SCDOT to be saying that, if the City has to do things to implement its parking plan, it should do it. She, therefore, suggested targeting the encroachments in the areas designated for parking.

Councilmember Carroll cautioned that he has been led to believe that all of the island's encroachments must be addressed, not just a few; to do otherwise would open the City to lawsuits.

Administrator Tucker recalled that, at last month's meeting, the Committee discussed the need for public education. She stated that she like to think that some property owners do not know that they have done something they should not have done and that, once they were informed, they would voluntarily remove their encroachments. She noted that *The Island Eye* and *The Moultrie News* that service the island appear to be pursuing the story, and she notified SCDOT that someone might contact them on the issue. In addition, public education would put people on notice that what they were doing was not allowable without an encroachment permit from SCDOT.

In the Administrator's opinion, the most important piece to the encroachment issue should be unanimous and steadfast Council support because, once efforts to remove things from the rights-of-way begin, Councilmembers will be the first to hear from disgruntled residents.

## **B. Updates Related to Coyotes**

Chief Buckhannon reported that only ten (10) coyote sightings were reported in May and no coyotes have been caught in traps; Sullivan's Island is having the same results.

The Administrator commented that coyotes are not just meat-eaters, and she further surmised that they have a sufficient food supply without making human or pet contact.

## **6. New Business**

### **A. Consideration of Automatic Aid Agreement with Sullivan's Island**

Administrator Tucker explained that the City currently has mutual aid agreements with Sullivan's Island and Mount Pleasant, meaning that, when the IOP crews are dispatched to a fire, personnel can request, through consolidated dispatch, the assistance of a neighboring fire department. With automatic aid, when the call taker takes a call of a certain type, the IOP and Sullivan's Island Fire

Departments would be dispatched simultaneously; if is determined en route or on scene that the assistance is not needed, the dispatch center is told to have the other department stand down. Additionally, the automatic assistance agreement gives the agencies more points in an Insurance Services Organization Review (ISO), the agency that establishes insurance ratings.

Chief Graham stated that one (1) reason the City has pursued this agreement is for the higher ISO score; the City is a partner in the County-wide and statewide mutual aid agreements for a very long time. This agreement does not apply to water or medical calls.

Councilmember Bergwerf voiced concern about crews and apparatus being off-island on a busy holiday weekend.

Chief Graham assured the Committee that the City has the right to cancel the automatic aid agreement at any time if it is not working as intended.

**MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to recommend approval of the Automatic Aid Agreement with Sullivan's Island to City Council; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**B. Discussion of Licensing Requirements for Off-island Dogs**

Councilmember Carroll stated that Sullivan's Island requires that all off-island dogs have a Sullivan's Island dog license while, here on the Isle of Palms, people bring their dogs to run on the beach or visit the doggie park without an IOP dog license. The Councilmember thought that the City should change its policy to insure that dog owners know the City's rules and regulations for acceptable dog behavior on the island and to do so by requiring all off-island dogs to have an IOP dog license. He also suggested duplicating Sullivan's Island hours for dogs to be allowed on the beach on or off leash.

Councilmember Bergwerf recalled that this subject had come up before and had been soundly rejected.

**MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to mimic Sullivan's Island's fees and policies for licensing off-island dogs. The motion FAILED for lack of a second.**

Administrator Tucker encouraged Councilmembers who were not on Council when this subject was considered in the past to take the time to read the historical minutes of Council meetings. She recalled that the meetings drew the largest crowds, both citizens and non-citizens, and Council received some of the most impassioned emails in which they were battered and brutalized at the discussion of following in Sullivan's Island's actions by requiring all dogs going there to be licensed by the town.

Chair Bettelli remarked that the City was in its first year of the parking plan that was meant to reduce the number of people coming to the beach and this could be construed as another action to discourage people with dogs from coming to the island to enjoy the beach.

The Administrator asked Chief Buckhannon to step up enforcement with animal control at Breach Inlet which is the source of the complaint.

The Chief noted that enforcement has stepped up there, especially in the hours after dogs must be on a leash.

Administrator Tucker announced that a portion of road has collapsed at Palm Boulevard and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue, a detour has been setup and SCDOT is on the way; she noted that this was one (1) of the areas identified as damaged by Joaquin. In addition, a suspicious package has been reported at the shopping center.

## **7. Highlights of Departmental Reports**

### Fire Department – Chief Graham

On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, personnel responded to a report of a lightning strike in Wild Dunes that was at a shed near the tennis courts; investigation found damage to the shed's electrical system; power to the shed was secured and SCE&G was notified. On May 8<sup>th</sup>, personnel responded to a structure fire at the Citadel Beach House; when crews arrived, they found fire showing from three (3) sides and initiated an exterior attack. Once the fire was under control, crews conducted salvage and overhaul operations; crews from Mount Pleasant and Sullivan's Island assisted with controlling and extinguishing of the fire. On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, personnel responded to a structure fire at the Seaside Inn where a visitor had lit a Chinese lantern that fell onto the roof of a nearby building; members of the crew laddered the adjoining building, found the debris from the lantern that had self-extinguished with no damage or extension of the fire.

Chief Graham added that there has been some discussion about adopting an ordinance that would make these Chinese lanterns illegal on the island. The Administrator commented that they are not only a fire hazard, but also people who see ones that have landed in the water think they are seeing an emergency flare, and the City must respond with emergency personnel to investigate.

Councilmember Bergwerf opined that this was something that deserves additional discussion; she acknowledged that often people release them with the best intentions, i.e. to celebrate a wedding or to memorialize someone, not thinking about the possible harm they could cause.

Chief Graham reported that, when the lanterns land in the ocean, they create a hazard for the sea turtles because a metal ring is a part of each one.

In the month of May, personnel responded to one hundred fourteen (114) calls of which forty-eight (48) were for EMS. During the month, twenty (20) pre-incident surveys were completed. OSHA mandated training completed in May included SCBA fit tests, fire prevention and public education, forcible entry, hazard communication, prevention of discrimination in the workplace, intersection safety for vehicle operators and the dangers of speeding for emergency vehicle operations. Medical in-service training covered trauma overview, bleeding and soft-tissue injuries.

The most expensive items under vehicle maintenance were a preventative maintenance and replacement of the water pump and balancer assembly on Boat 1020 at approximately thirteen hundred fifty dollars (\$1,350), half (½) of the cost of the service agreement on the elevators that exceeded three thousand dollars (\$3,000) and the addition of mounting brackets to the new rescue truck at approximately eighteen hundred dollars (\$1,800).

Travis Stafford was introduced to the Committee as the new Fire Inspector; he was the Inspector for the City of Inman previously.

During the month, personnel conducted several static displays of equipment and demonstrations of jet-ski operations for residents and visitors alike; Captain Eagle assisted with deck repairs for an elderly island resident using donated materials. With the beach season well underway, personnel conducted many station tours.

#### Police Department – Chief Buckhannon

Of particular interest in May was the uptick in burglaries and larcenies targeting construction sites on the island; there were seven (7) burglaries during the month and year-to-date the total is sixteen (16). On May 6<sup>th</sup>, tools valued at approximately twenty-six hundred dollars were stolen from a construction site in the 800 block of Ocean Boulevard.

Pfc. James Couche was awarded Officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2016 from the South Carolina Law Enforcement Network for his efforts in education and enforcement during traffic stops to educate the citizens in an effort to reduce future violations and encourage safe driving. On May 19<sup>th</sup>, Pfc. Louise Hardy and Pfc. James Taylor participated in the last Lunch Buddies of the school year with students at Sullivan's Island Elementary School; the Chief stated that the Department will pick up this activity again in the fall because good interaction had occurred between officers and the island's students.

Over the course of the month, dispatchers responded to six thousand two hundred eighty-four (6,284) total calls with five thousand one hundred thirty-six (5,136) being for the IOP Police Department. Officers made two hundred fifty-two (252) traffic stops and issued fifty-six (56) citations; in addition, one thousand six hundred seventy-nine (1,679) parking citations were generated in the month. Officers made forty-one (41) arrests in May; of that number, twenty-five (25) were alcohol violations. The Animal Control Officer wrote twenty (20) citations and twenty-four (24) warnings. Forty-four (44) complaints of noise violations were reported in May; eleven (11) citations were written and eighteen (18) warnings were issued.

#### **8. Miscellaneous Business**

Next Meeting Date: 9:00 a.m., Thursday, August 4, 2016 in the Conference Room

#### **9. Executive Session – not needed**

**10. Adjournment**

**MOTION: Councilmember Carroll moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 a.m.; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded, and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland  
City Clerk