

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**  
3:00 p.m., Thursday, January 12, 2012

The regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 3:00 p.m., Thursday, January 12, 2012 in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Attending the meeting were Councilmembers Bergwerf and Bettelli, Mayor Cronin, Administrator Tucker, Chief Graham, Captain Caldwell, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban, City Clerk Copeland; a quorum was present to conduct business.

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

**2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Councilmember Bergwerf nominated Councilmember Bettelli as Chair for 2012; Mayor Cronin seconded and the vote was unanimous in support of Councilmember Bettelli.

Mayor Cronin nominated Councilmember Bergwerf as Vice Chair; Chair Bettelli seconded and the vote was unanimous in support of Councilmember Bergwerf.

**MOTION: Chair Bettelli moved to re-order the agenda to place Item 5B next and Mayor Cronin moved to add an item to New Business, Modifications on the Connector; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motions PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**5.B. Old Business/Discussion of Amenities Offered at Connector Run**

Administrator Tucker explained that discussion had taken place at a recent Connector Run committee meeting and feedback from participants indicated that people were becoming bored with the event, so the committee membership had suggested offering a beer garden at the end of the event. Kristin Powers and Jeff Lansink were attending the meeting today to get a feel from this committee about the possibilities of making the idea a reality. In the Administrator's opinion, areas of concern were competing with island businesses and the proximity of alcohol to children that are participating; she did indicate that this type of activity is commonplace for this type of event.

Mr. Lansink stated that the impetus for the beer garden is to increase the number of participants in the event; participation has decreased by fifty percent (50%) over the last four (4) years. He indicated that many sponsors were eager to sign on, but their involvement is based on participation. According to Mr. Lansink, many runners participate as a form of entertainment rather than a competition; they come for the amenities or the celebration after the event and the beauty of the course. Kristin Powers is the Director of Development for Windwood Farm Home for Children and is on Race Board; she was brought on last year to determine the cause for the steady decline when most regional races were experiencing increases in participation. Ms. Powers indicated that she has been talking with sponsors to determine what their needs are to be included in the event, as well as a board member who has been talking with local businesses about what they want to see from the event. For additional input, she has talked with participants and with officials of other local events to determine what components are different; those components varied from amenities, contest elements, cash prizes and a more exciting celebration at the end of the event.

In the Strategic Plan developed by the board, the race wants to draw one thousand (1,000) participants in 2012 and three thousand (3,000) participants in 2014. Local businesses were very much on-board with increased visitors to the island.

Mr. Lansink related that they had spoken with the Windjammer about partnering in the event; a beer garden will not interfere with their business since they do not open until the event is over. The board member who spoke with the Acme Cantina and The Sea Biscuit Café related that these businesses thought that more participants in the race would mean more traffic for their restaurants.

In Mr. Lansink's opinion, the fenced parking in the small City lot adjacent to the Public Safety Building was a perfect location that lends itself to compliance with several of the rules and regulations of serving alcohol.

Councilmember Bergwerf asked what the hours of the beer garden would be; Ms. Powers responded that it would begin when the race is over, around 9 a.m. and run until 11 a.m.

Ms. Powers commented that, in addition to the fenced location, the race committee would install "snow" fencing to camouflage the area where alcohol is served, and they would hire trained servers to work behind the bar and a private security firm to be responsible for identification checks. The security firm would carry all of the insurance and liability.

Ms. Powers interprets the beer garden as bridging the gap between the race event and lunch, making it more realistic that participants will go to island restaurants for a meal.

When asked by the Mayor who would be dispensing the beer, Ms. Powers said that tip-trained volunteers would be brought in for that purpose. She anticipates having the beer donated, but including the cost of the beer garden in the event registration fee.

Ms. Powers has experience with acquiring liquor licenses and explained the process to the Public Safety Committee members. She related sitting before a committee detailing the security for the event, the type of barriers being used, the number of restrooms, etc. Once this group is comfortable with the plan, the application would be submitted to the state for the permit. The race, as a 501(c)3 entity, will hold the permit, the board of the race would be liable and the background checks will be done on all of the board members for the race. Ms. Powers stated that, in the two (2) years she has been in Charleston, she has been responsible for some twelve (12) events.

Mr. Lansink stated that the entertainment for the event will also be amped up to create more excitement. Since this is the twentieth year of the Connector Run, the celebration should be bigger.

Chair Bettelli noted that the City's ordinances do not allow for the consumption of alcohol on City property except the marina and Morgan Creek Grill.

Chief Graham stated that streets have been closed in the past to eliminate using City-owned property.

Councilmember Bergwerf said that she would like to see the island's bars and restaurants drawn in as sponsors or hosts of the event. Mr. Lansink voiced concern that the Windjammer was too far from the end of the race, but the Mayor envisioned their setting up a tent thereby eliminating the need for participants to go to their location.

Ms. Powers indicated that, if the restaurants were going to participate, the race committee needed to know sooner rather than later. With the goal of increasing participation, an eight (8) month advertising campaign was planned, and they needed to know what they were marketing.

Mayor Cronin endorsed holding the after-race beer garden on J.C. Long Boulevard as long as local businesses were involved and is much easier for the City. For licensing purposes, Ms. Powers stated that official barricades would have to be created on J.C. Long with "snow fencing."

Councilmember Bergwerf thought that the local businesses would be "thrilled" to participate since the event is October 6<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Powers summarized the report to the race board as the beer garden has been approved for J.C. Long Boulevard; Councilmember Bergwerf stated that the approval was based on the involvement of the island's businesses.

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

**MOTION:** Councilmember Bergwerf moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of November 10, 2011 as submitted; Chair Bettelli seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### **4. Citizens' Comments – None**

### **5. Old Business**

#### **A. Report on Status of Mutual Aid Agreements between IOP and Sullivan's Island and Mount Pleasant**

Captain Caldwell reported that the rewritten versions had been forwarded to Sullivan's Island and Mount Pleasant to go before their Public Safety Committees and Councils.

#### **B. Discussed earlier**

#### **C. Discussion of Changes to the Rental Placard for 911 Calls**

Chair Bettelli stated that this discussion centers on the placard that must be displayed in short-term rental properties and the prominence of the property's address. Chief Graham related a tragic event that prompted this request where a visitor to the island had an emergency and was unable to provide the 911 operator with the address. The Committee agreed to an administrative change to enlarge the print for the address and to print in a contrasting color to draw the renter's attention. A copy of the existing placard is attached to the meeting minutes.

The discussion transitioned to how many residences on the island do not have house numbers or numbers on mailboxes and how many of the markers on the beach have been buried by the changing coastline or are not visible from the beach. Mayor Cronin suggested a campaign in the spring to get numbers of houses; Chief Graham reported that the Fire Department personnel are tasked every spring to ensure that the street markers are in place on the beach. An alert to residents about house numbers could be included in the City's website, the Wild Dunes Community Association newsletter, the rental company newsletters and on water bills.

The Committee agreed to keep this subject on the agenda for the near future.

**D. Award of Contracts in Excess of \$10,000 – None**

**6. New Business**

**Modifications on the Connector**

Administrator Tucker explained that the City had alerted Charleston County and the biking community that the addition of barrier between the walking and biking public, similar to that of the Ravenel Bridge, would be a good change. Councilman Schweers agreed that it was a worthwhile project and pushed for County funding for a study; the results of that study were presented in a meeting the previous afternoon with Mayor Cronin, Captain Caldwell, Councilman Schweers, Curt Taylor, Charleston County Deputy Administrator, Jim Armstrong of the Charleston County Transportation Sales Tax and CTC Programs and Administrator Tucker. The study generated three (3) alternatives and they are depicted on the drawings that have been distributed. (A set of illustrations are attached to the historical record of this meeting.)

Alternate 1 – This is the option that has the solid barrier which the City staff prefers on the Breach Inlet side. To accomplish this walking/bike path, the bridge is reconfigured with two twelve (12) foot vehicle lanes, a seven (7) foot center lane and a ten (10) foot breakdown lane on the marina side of the Connector. A study to determine whether the bridge could support the additional weight has not been done. The Administrator reported that to designate an area for bike and pedestrian traffic requires that the outside rail be raised. The construction cost for this option is \$3,476,153.15

Alternate 2 – In this alternate, each side has a five (5) foot shoulder, a four (4) foot bike lane, three (3) foot buffer, twelve (12) foot vehicular lanes and a six (6) foot center lane. Naming the five (5) foot lanes as shoulders, rather than pedestrian paths, eliminates the requirement for raised side rails. The group considered this option affordable and do-able; the cost of this option is \$150,424.88. The problem with this alternate is that the bike path ends beside Public Works, and bikers would have to share the road as they do now. At this point, the Mayor questioned that the City could afford this project in terms of both real estate and money.

Alternate 3 – This illustration shows eight (8) foot multi-use paths on each side of the bridge, five (5) foot breakdown lanes, twelve (12) foot vehicular lanes and a four (4) foot center lane. This option requires the raised side rails. To have the multi-use path on one (1) side of the bridge would cost \$2,229,497.81; to have the multi-use path on both sides of the bridge would cost \$4,220,492.81.

Further modifications to the Connector have not been discussed previously in this Committee, by City Council or with the community. The question is does this Committee want to pursue any of the alternates presented.

Chair Bettelli asked whether the existence of a designated bike lane mean that bikers are required to be in that lane. Captain Caldwell responded that use of the lane is not required by state law.

Mayor Cronin commented that more bikers and pedestrians will want to traverse the Connector; a designated bike lane keeps the walkers out of the way, but also tells the walkers to stay in the shoulder.

Administrator Tucker noted that the tragedy on the James Island Connector was discussed at the alternates meeting and it is being closed to bikers and pedestrians. Since the James Island Connector is considered a limited access interstate highway, those restrictions can be imposed; the IOP Connector has a different designation that allows for bikers and walkers. The Mayor indicated that the IOP Connector was constructed with the wide shoulders to accommodate bikers.

Another topic that seemed to surprise the County attendees is that the speed limit on the Connector is fifty-five (55) miles per hour; it was agreed that bikers and pedestrians would feel safer if the speed limit were to be lowered.

Referencing Alternate 2, Chief Graham asked if the five (5) foot shoulder was a minimum width; she expressed concern in having a center lane less than ten (10) feet wide. She noted that sometimes the center lane is the only way an emergency vehicle can get through, and, if the shoulder could be reduced to three (3) feet on each side, the center lane could be kept at ten (10) feet.

Administrator Tucker recalled that a regulation about the width of the shoulder determines whether the increased height of the rail is required; the regulation concerns the width of the buffer between the bikers and the bridge rail. The shoulder would not be designated, but its purpose would be a walking lane. According to the Administrator, the lanes would be delineated by a surface referred to as "profile thermo," which produces a rumbling noise to a driver when passed over.

Captain Caldwell related that, if the shoulder were to be designated as a pedestrian walking area, the rail must be raised and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines must also be followed.

Captain Caldwell confirmed Chair Bettelli's statement that a new addition to state law will not allow a bike path on one (1) side only.

Mayor Cronin indicated agreement that maintaining the ten (10) foot center lane was more important than getting the correct widths on the biking or pedestrian paths/shoulder.

Summarizing the discussion, Administrator Tucker stated that, if the ten (10) foot center lane could not be maintained and the side rails had to be heightened, the City was not interested in modifying the Connector. The Administrator assured the Committee that she would get a resolution to those two (2) concerns.

The discussion continued with problems associated with bikers being dumped into vehicular traffic as they leave the Connector and travel toward the intersection with Palm Boulevard. Mayor Cronin suggested a turn into Memory Park so that bikers could avoid the intersection completely. For bikers going onto the Connector, the state would need to build a bike path; Administrator Tucker said she had been led to believe that the right-of-way is very narrow accessing the Connector.

Mayor Cronin remarked that he had related the fact at the meeting with County representatives that, last year, the City responded to twenty-five (25) accidents on the Connector and one hundred nine-teen (119) traffic stops with tickets being issued.

Chair Bettelli recommended delaying any further discussion until the Administrator has gotten the answers to the questions the Committee posed.

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

### **Fire Department – Chief Graham**

November 2011 – During the months, the Department responded to several potentially serious fires; in each case, the incidents were quickly controlled by the resident or crew. Personnel responded to forty-three (43) total calls, twenty-seven (27) of which were EMS calls. A total of twelve (12) fire inspections were performed, and no violations were found to exist. Primary expenses for vehicle maintenance were a starter replacement and rear brakes replacement. The new radio tower on 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue was placed in service in November, personnel immediately noticed improved coverage. Chief Graham foreshadowed an increase in the radio user fee to thirty-eight dollars (\$38) per month in January 2013.

December 2011 – During the month, personnel responded to forty-one (41) calls; twenty-five (25) were EMS calls. The Fire Department responded to nine hundred seventy-seven (977) total calls in 2011, which is up nine (9) from 2010. Five (5) fire inspections were performed in December, and one (1) violation was found. The most significant vehicle maintenance expense was the replacement of the on-board battery charger to the 1999 rescue truck.

Chair Bettelli asked that the percentage of budget expended to-date for vehicle maintenance report be added to future reports; the Chief indicated that the Department is saving on fuel and staff hours by having repairs made by a certified technician on-island.

### **Police Department – Captain Caldwell**

November 2011 – Captain Caldwell reported on an incident of November 29<sup>th</sup> that led to locating a quantity of handguns with live ammunition and other items of suspicion; the City notified the local Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) office to assist with determining the legality

of the seized weapons. A coordination of efforts between the IOP Police Department, ATF Charleston, the West Virginia State Patrol, ATF West Virginia and federal prosecutors resulted in the subject being extradited to West Virginia for federal prosecution.

Mayor Cronin asked why the person would have been on the island; Captain Caldwell indicated that he had said he was here to recruit, and the wife had a homemade badge similar by those worn by members of the "sovereign citizen" movement. This group is reported to have been involved in the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City.

Continuing with the report, dispatchers answered thirty-four hundred eleven (3,411) calls in the month; twenty-seven hundred eighty-seven (2,787) were for the Police Department. Officers made three hundred four (304) traffic stops and issued ninety-seven (97) tickets. During the month, thirteen (13) noise complaints were filed with one (1) citation being issued.

December 2011 – Dispatchers responded to thirty-four hundred twenty-seven (3,427) calls; twenty-seven hundred seventy-five (2,775) were for the Police Department. Three hundred two (302) traffic stops yielded seventy-nine (79) tickets.

Mayor Cronin referred to page 9 and noted that arrests in 2011 were just shy of four hundred (400), but, in 2010, arrests totaled four hundred seventy-eight (478). He reported going back several years and noted that arrests were down significantly – in one (1) year, arrests exceeded six hundred (600). He questioned whether, statistically, offenses were being accounted for in the same manner as six or eight (6 or 8) ago; Captain Caldwell said there had been no change.

Chair Bettelli queried whether the island's trend reflected a national trend, and the Captain responded that crimes against persons were down nationally, but property crimes remain relatively steady with some spikes based on the state of the economy. The Captain explained that the City has more community service in place, as well as crime prevention programs, and City has established a reputation as having zero-tolerance for underage possession of alcohol.

Councilmember Bergwerf asked whether a call initiated under one (1) classification (noise), but the results in another classification (underage drinking), is listed under both classifications or only the resulting problem. Captain Caldwell replied that the call is listed in both categories.

**8. Executive Session** – not needed

**9. Miscellaneous Business**

Chief Graham commented that, in the wake of Fire Inspector Anderson's resignation, she had reviewed the job description for the position and found that a class indicated as a requirement has been replaced by another. She asked whether the correction could be administrative or the corrected job description had to be approved by this Committee then Personnel; the consensus of the Committee was for an administrative correction.

**Next Meeting Date: 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 7, 2012.**

Chair Bettelli reminded the Committee of the MS Challenge Walk on Sunday, March 4.

**10. Adjourn**

**MOTION: Mayor Cronin moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:47 p.m.; Councilmember Bergwerf seconded and the motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted:

Marie Copeland  
City Clerk