



## ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

4:00pm, Wednesday, February 21, 2024

1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC

and broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>

### MINUTES

#### 1. Call to order

Present: Sandra Brotherton, Mary Pringle, Belvin Olasov, Todd Murphy, Laura Lovins, Doug Hatler, Dane Buckout, Lucia Spiotta

Absent: Jordan Burrell

Staff Present: Director Kerr, Zoning Administrator Simms, Council Member Miars

#### 2. Citizen's Comments -- none

#### 3. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

**MOTION: Mr. Murphy made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2024 meeting, and Ms. Lovins seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Dr. Brotherton asked the new members, Laura Lovins, Dane Buckout, Todd Murphy, and Lucia Spiotta, to introduce themselves to the Committee members.

#### 4. Old Business

##### A. Wildlife

Ms. Pringle said a purple martin house has been put on the property at 7<sup>th</sup> and Palm. The site preparation for the garden will be February 29 and the planting will be on March 14.

Dr. Brotherton corrected the date for Sharlene Johnson's class on Gardening with Native Plants for Butterflies at the Recreation Center to Tuesday, February 27.

Director Kerr shared that the Water & Sewer Commission approved of the Committee's plan to install a native plants and grasses garden on their property at 7<sup>th</sup> and Palm. He is waiting on their attorney to send the licensing agreement.

Zoning Director Simms said the grant to help pay for the plants in the garden at 7<sup>th</sup> and Palm and for Sharlene Johnson's classes at the Recreation Center has been submitted.

##### B. Litter

Dr. Brotherton reported that she and Susan Smith spoke with Dennis at the Harris Teeter about offering higher quality belly boards instead of the ones that are made of Styrofoam. He was

receptive to not stocking the lower quality belly boards, but he needs to sell the ones that have already been sold (about 2-3 weeks' worth). Ms. Smith has been in contact with the beach shop on the Connector to speak with them about the same issue.

**C. Water Quality**

Mr. Hatler reviewed the efforts and current goals of the Water Quality Subcommittee for the benefit of the new members. Referencing the proposal he sent to Committee members, he proposes requesting City Council for the funds for one round of water quality testing to establish a baseline of the chemicals found in the island's stormwater runoff. Based on the outcome of that testing, he would like to speak with DHEC about how to manage those outcomes that may indicate higher levels of some chemicals. He believes the \$8,000 cost is minimal to understand the water quality coming off the island. He asked Committee members for their feedback on the proposal. He will make any necessary edits and present the final proposal to the Committee next month for their recommendation to City Council.

Discussion ensued about septic tanks and the long-term plan to sewer the entire island. Ms. Lovins and Mr. Hatler shared they had each spoken with Chris Jordan of the Water & Sewer Commission about the Commission's current work and future plans and could craft a presentation to share with the Committee.

**D. Climate Action**

Zoning Administrator Simms said he should hear about the solar panels grant in about 3 months. Committee members discussed the Solid Waste Grants being offered by DHEC. Zoning Administrator Simms will reach out to Katie McKain for some clarity on the grant. The deadline is April 5, 2024.

Ms. Pringle said more educational outreach is needed about the City's glass recycling and food composting programs. She suggested additional training sessions and home composting bins for food composting.

Ms. Lee said the City will host a Shred Day on April 23. Charleston County will no longer send a truck for hazardous waste recycling, but residents can drive those materials to the recycling center in Awendaw.

Mr. Hatler suggested that perhaps the Solid Waste Grant could be used to hire someone with a truck to collect and properly dispose of the hazardous wastes.

Ms. Pringle asked what the Committee is intending to do as part of Sullivans Island's Earth Day celebration on April 27. Dr. Brotherton asked Committee members to review the 2023 Accomplishments List and send her any revisions or additions. This document can be part of what is handed out at the Earth Day celebration. Ms. Lovins said she will be there with information about the shorebirds. Director Kerr said he will contact Sullivans Island about securing a table for the Committee.

**E. Update on Sea Level Rise Adaptation RFP**

Director Kerr said there is no update on this plan.

**F. Breach Inlet Update**

Director Kerr said City Council enacted a 60-day emergency ordinance last night allowing hard erosion control structures 20' from a home. He explained the ordinance was done as an emergency ordinance so that relief could be provided to homeowners immediately without having to go through the longer process of approving a zoning ordinance. He expects that there will be a discussion in the future about a permanent change to that part of the City code.

Mr. Olasov expressed concern about the worsened erosion conditions for those that do not put up a seawall. Council Member Miars said the City does not want seawalls along the beach either, but they also don't want homes in the ocean.

Director Kerr shared the beach monitoring efforts of the City that have been ongoing for many years. He also said the newly formed Beach Ad Hoc Committee is discussing the City's future needs regarding beach preservation and how to fund such efforts. He also explained that homeowners who opt to install a seawall must get a permit and have OCRM come mark their property before any work is done. He said that anyone who builds a seawall is no longer able to request emergency sand scraping or sand placement in front of their home.

**5. New Business**

**6. Miscellaneous Business**

Dr. Brotherton asked about the creation of a repository-type space on the City's website that can house information created and shared by the Committee. Director Kerr suggested reaching out to the City's PR Officer directly about that webpage.

Ms. Pringle said Cyndy Ewing would like to make a presentation at next month's meeting.

Ms. Lovins shared information about a talk the Sierra Club is giving next month on septic conflicts in the Lowcountry.

**7. Adjournment**

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Committee is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 4pm.

Mr. Hatler made a motion to adjourn, and Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane  
City Clerk