



Public Safety Committee Meeting
11:00am, Tuesday, May 7, 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: Council members Ward, Anderson, Bogosian

Staff Present: Administrator Fragoso, Director Kerr, Chief Oliverius, Chief Cornett

2. Citizen's Comments

Terri Haack, speaking on behalf of the Wild Dunes Resort and their owners, expressed concern about the proposed restrictive decibel level limit for the resort. She asked that the City not discount the revenues the resort provides. She said they would like to see a 75 decibel level limit for a 6-month trial period. She is willing to provide a list of events to surrounding neighbors 45 days in advance.

Maryann Chalmers, 2404 Palm Boulevard, said residents need an anonymous way to report coyote attacks. She also said the trashcans on the beach need to be lidded to discourage the coyotes from digging for food. She would like to see ultrasonic noise devices used at the beach walkover.

3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – April 2, 2024

MOTION: Council Member Anderson made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 2, 2024 meeting. Council Member Bogosian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Council Member Bogosian made a motion to suspend the rules of order and change the order of the agenda to allow for the discussion of coyote management first. Council Member Anderson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. New Business

A. Discussion of coyote management

Chief Cornett reported that there have been 8 reports of coyote attacks filed this year. He is aware of more attacks that have not been reported. He reviewed department efforts, including use of the drone to spot den locations, speaking with the Director of DNR about hunting and trapping, the use of specialized foods to sterilize coyotes, and deployment of traps.

The City must follow all DNR laws regarding hunting and trapping. The City is not permitted to hunt coyotes and they are not permitted to put out food that sterilizes the coyotes. The City is only permitted to put traps on public property. Traps have been deployed at places of attacks. If the City traps a coyote, it euthanizes the animal.

Chief Cornett encouraged citizens to report all sightings and attacks so they can be tracked. Personal information does not need to be shared when calling in an attack or sighting. He also shared DNR's recommendations for coyote management including the installation of fencing including PVC piping that spins at the top of the fence line, cease feeding small outdoor animals, keep pets on a leash and within your sight at all times, and keep lids on trashcans. He also shared some "frightening" devices but noted those are short-term solutions.

Chief Cornett reported that the City has 6 traps deployed and he knows of 9-12 traps deployed by residents in a 3-4 block area. The City is using the same trapper they have in the past, and he has yet to catch a coyote this season. He will speak to him about switching out the bait.

The Chief said DNR expects a drop in this aggressive behavior by mid-summer, adding the coyotes are migratory.

Council Member Bogosian expressed great concern for the public safety with the coyotes present. Chief Cornett will speak with DNR about other options. The City Attorney is working on a liability waiver that would allow the City to deploy traps on private property. Council Member Bogosian asked if someone from DNR could come speak to City Council next week. He would like to discuss some "out of the box" ideas with regards to dealing with the coyotes.

Administrator Fragoso encouraged citizens to call the non-emergency number (843-886-6522) to report sightings and to read about coyote management on the City's website. Changes to human behavior could help with these efforts. She also said they have erected coyote-specific signage at the beach accesses warning visitors to the beach.

Regarding the liability waiver, Administrator Fragoso said, "I do have a draft of the liability waiver that our legal team has put together for us to consider. When the City approved the coyote management plan back in 2018, it was an intentional decision to not pursue that option and really encouraged individual property owners to place traps if they believe that their property has a den or has seen some coyotes just because of the risk that this would fall on the City if we were starting to place traps on private property. But again, we are challenging ourselves to look at every option and understand the risk and will present that to Council, and we can make a determination. So while we have the avenue to do it, I don't think that it absolves the City of every risk just by having the authority to or the approval of the property owner."

She also said the City does not have funding for coyote trapping in the FY24 budget. It costs \$1700 to set 3 traps for two weeks.

Council Member Ward said this is not a new issue and is discussed almost annually. He believes the City is doing all it can following the State laws. He is concerned about the unintended consequences of additional efforts.

5. Old Business

A. Discussion and consideration of changes to the noise ordinance

Council Member Bogosian reviewed the changes to the proposed noise ordinance. He recommends using a “slow reading” when recording noise levels and then taking an average of those readings over 30 seconds. Noise level recommendations include 65 decibels during daytime hours for residential areas and 70 decibels for GC1, GC3, LC, and PDD. He would like to see the nighttime levels set at 55 decibels.

Administrator Fragoso noted for the record, “I do want to clarify for the record the version of this ordinance that we presented at the last workshop had that mistake in that the decibel limit for nighttime for all different areas should have been 50, which is equivalent to the original draft. I think that with all these red lines and trying to move it away from uses into a zoning district that got squared away during the process. So that was my mistake, and I just want to apologize for any confusion that may have generated. But this version that you are working on has that corrected, so it should be 50.”

Council Member Bogosian said the recommended nighttime level is 55 decibels for GC2 and an “excessive noise” parameter for daytime levels. He would also like to install noise monitoring devices at the Front Beach area for six months to gather more data about the noise in that area. He would like language added that creates a 6-month trial period for this ordinance. He referenced the “whereas” statements in the ordinance as to the reason why the City is implementing a new noise ordinance.

Council Member Anderson said, “In the minutes of the previous meeting, I had asked that we specify that sound be defined as speech and amplified sound, and that was taken out. I asked that it be put back so

Council Member Bogosian said he had it removed. “I think it causes more confusion for, and the Chief, I think, had mentioned last time trying to determine that I think it’s easier for an officer to go out and measure. They are only going to be measuring it if there is a complaint of noise or music, and so it is easier for them to go out and just take a measurement as opposed to trying to determine all that. That is why I reverted back to the original because I think we were getting confusion from the community thinking that cicadas or the surf or all those other things going on, somebody’s faulty air conditioner might be something that all we really are interested in is the loud noise from parties, a lot of people speaking, or amplified music.”

Regarding the section of the ordinance addressing permits for exemption to the noise ordinance, Council Member Bogosian said, “I think the intent was for a specific event, and you should maybe put that, maybe we clarify that as far as an event.”

Administrator Fragoso added, “I think that the event would need to be proven to be supportive of the public good, infrastructure, and resources of the City.”

Chief Cornett said that less than 20 noise violations tickets have been issued this year. Businesses, residents, and short-term rentals have all received tickets and 15 have resulted in convictions.

MOTION: Council Member Bogosian made a motion to approve this version of the noise ordinance with the addition of a 6-month sunset date and send it to City Council for discussion. Council Member Anderson seconded the motion. A vote was taken as follows:

Ayes: Anderson, Bogosian

Nays: Ward

The motion passed 2-1.

6. New Business

B. Presentation of proposal for 48/96-hour shift rotation for Fire Department

Administrator Fragoso would like to consider this option as it may help with recruitment, employee retention, and employee satisfaction.

Chief Oliverius would like to test pilot the program for one year beginning in January 2025. He said nearly 84% of the department supports the idea. He said it will not lead to changes in the budget or operational policies. He said he has been asked about it in interviews, so it is something people are interested in. He believes it will enhance continuity and improve work-life balance for the staff. He also explained how staff fatigue can be managed in this new schedule.

Administrator Fragoso said she will remain cognizant of the overtime budget but said departments who use this sort of schedule have seen fewer callouts.

7. Miscellaneous Business

The next meeting of the Public Safety Committee will be Wednesday, June 12, 2024 at 11:00am.

8. Adjournment

Council Member Bogosian made a motion to adjourn, and Council Member Ward seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 12:17pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk