

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Isle of Palms, South Carolina

March 13, 2007

A regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 13, 2007 in Council Chambers, City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Present were Chairman John Marino, Committee Member Mayor Sottile and Councilman Taylor, City Administrator Tucker, Fire Chief Graham and Police Chief Buckhannon.

1. Call to Order and Welcome Chairman Marino called the meeting to order and stated that members of the press and the public had been duly notified in accordance with State Law.

2. Approval of Minutes: February 13, 2007 meeting

MOTION: Mayor Sottile made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 13, 2007 Public Safety meeting, as presented; seconded by Councilman Taylor; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

3. Citizen Comments

Clay Cable, 116 Palm Boulevard – Mr. Cable cited incidents with the Police Officers that concerned him. The police calls involved vehicles blocking the bike paths and construction material in the street. He stated these calls were not appropriately handled in his view. He inquired why it was the Building Department's responsibility to keep the streets clear. Administrator Tucker noted that code enforcement is one of the responsibilities of the Building Department, and has been for years. Mr. Cable also stated that when his son was visiting from Atlanta, he was stopped by an officer who was both professional and courteous. Mr. Cable stated there are fine people on the police force, however, he inquired of the Committee if there is a policy that treats tourists differently than residents. Mayor Sottile asked Chief Buckhannon to respond to Mr. Cable's comments regarding the bike paths. Police Chief Buckhannon stated that the officers vigorously enforce this law and routinely ticket cars. Chairman Marino asked Chief Buckhannon to research these situations.

4. Old Business

A. Island-wide parking study – RFP (Status)

Administrator Tucker stated that the RFP draft is complete. The Attorney is currently reviewing it to develop a contract. She stated there was consideration of a possible future parking garage in the RFP, but it has now been removed.

B. Public Safety

Cole + Russell Architects would like to plan a trip to meet with the Committee concerning the future of the Public Safety building and the City's other projects. The Committee stated the best times would be the week after Easter or at the regular April or May meeting. Chairman Marino stated he would like a new Council Chamber to be considered in the new Public Safety complex. He noted the City building would probably not be a sturdy building in a hurricane; the current Council Chamber could be converted into office space; and a new secure room in the new Public Safety complex could function as an Emergency Operation Center for the City. Mayor Sottile stated it was a good idea to plan and agrees the current Council Chambers would be good office space. Councilman Taylor noted this goes back to his goal of long range planning. Councilman Taylor questioned how the debt service would be managed. The parking situation also needs to be reviewed to make sure there is adequate parking.

C. Fire Station 2 Construction Update

Administrator Tucker reported that good progress is being made on Fire Station #2. The last progress schedule showed the progress was eight days behind. Another site had to be found for the construction storage trailer. Administrator Tucker presented photographs of the storage trailer and demolition of the marina site. Mayor Sottile noted that the target completion date is September.

D. Update on City Wireless Net

Chief Buckhannon stated they are looking at a third party vendor to handle this. The reasons are (a) consulting firm expertise is needed to instruct how to write the RFP; (b) use internet company and offer service free to the City, but would charge the citizens; and (c) State initiative is to go wireless across the entire state; however, details of the plan are not known. Chief Buckhannon states he would recommend WICarolina out of Walterboro, which would charge approximately \$9,000 to do the study and write the RFP; or the company in Georgia that has written many RFP's. It was determined to review how WICarolina's on-line project goes, as it will be completed in April.

E. Livability Matters (Status): Court, Officer and Hotline

Chairman Marino asked Chief Buckhannon to report on the Livability Officer status. Chief Buckhannon stated the deadline for applications is Friday, March 16, 2007. An oral interview will be conducted, followed by verifying credentials, various checks on the candidate, and a second more formal interview. The hours of this position are rotating as needs and seasons change. The livability calls will be tracked. A special phone number will be assigned to the Livability Office, and will transfer to dispatch if the officer is not available. The first court date is April 5, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. Administrator Tucker stated that Sergeant Ricchio with the City of Charleston has agreed to help with the transition.

F. Summer Season 2007 Preparedness: Additional emergency accesses to beach and temporary fencing (Status)

Chief Graham reported that the temp trail would cost almost \$500,000 if completed as planned, so the plans are scaled back considerably. One of the items of the project was to identify and locate the surveys, which they have finished. The surveyor is going to help them with the paths that have been identified for emergencies which are 5th Avenue, 9th Avenue, 25th Avenue and 53nd Avenue. Those are the existing paths that would be widened, along with 42nd Avenue, if possible. Beach access from the restrooms will be added to the permit, as one OCRM permit covers all work. Chief Graham noted that it takes up to 180 days to get a permit approved. She talked with OCRM and told them that Public Safety doesn't necessarily need new paths; they need to get the people off of the emergency accesses. In order to do that safely it is necessary to make them wider. If they could, at a minimum, put the temp trail on the walk half; because the drive half is very sturdy and they usually do not have any problems except on rare occasions. It would be temp trail and then sand shell; blend those two together and put some signs on one side; and possibly adding a handicap portion on the path that is going down 42nd Avenue. Posts with rope on them might be used instead of laying down the very expensive mat so it will look nice down at the front beach. Administrator Tucker noted that if OCRM gives approval for this permit, some vegetation such as myrtles will be lost at 42nd Avenue. Chief Graham noted that the sea oats will be relocated. She also stated that the 40 year setback is the critical area where a permit is needed. They will do the work up to that point until the permit is issued. Councilman Taylor thanked Chief Graham for her efforts toward safer beach access.

(5) New Business

A. Consideration to begin purchasing replacement 800 MHZ radios in FY06-07

Administrator Tucker reported that Chief Buckhannon and Chief Graham had presented purchase orders requesting radio replacement as Motorola is offering incentives only good through March 15, 2007. This item has been budgeted a few years, however, it was not yet budgeted to spend. There are funds currently available for this expense. December 2008 is the date for the digital switchover. The radios would cost \$4,500 each. If the order is placed now, it would take approximately 7 days to 1-1/2 months to receive the radios. The new radios would be placed in service; some of the old radios will be kept; some will be sold. Mayor Sottile noted that because the incentive offer expires in two days, we should proceed immediately with this purchase.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile made a motion to recommend to the Ways & Means Committee to approve the purchase of 60 radios at \$4,500 each out of reserve funds, and try to sell the old radios as soon as possible; seconded by Councilman Taylor; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

B. Review of Operating Budget for FY2007-2008

Administrator Tucker reviewed Fire and Police department expenses that increased from last fiscal year. Some of the increases of the Police budget are due to the new Livability Officer. Regarding the CALEA meetings and seminars, Administrator Tucker stated she would review to determine if the administrator, mayor and council members' fees for this are in the Administration or Police budget. Police Chief Buckhannon noted that there are increases in the Parking Meter Department budget. These increases are due to a new Rover system which automatically sends out collection letters for tickets if they are not paid in 15-20 days. This has increased collection rates. Councilman Marino stated that there is an increase in maintenance due to the new console. Chief Buckhannon stated that the new console can be transitioned. The existing console probably cannot go into the new facility, especially with cabinets around it. Councilman Taylor noted that the island has between 5,000 and 50,000 people on the island, especially on peak weekends. He suggested contacting other agencies to help with parking and vehicle management. Chief Buckhannon noted that help was especially needed on the other side of the Connector, along Rifle Range Road, Hungry Neck Boulevard, and Highway 17. Chief Buckhannon has spoken to the Sheriff and will continue to pursue. When asked who actually controls the traffic lights at Rifle Range Road, Hungry Neck Boulevard, etc. and if Mount Pleasant can manipulate them, Chief Buckhannon said that Mount Pleasant has an agreement with the City of Charleston for the timing of the lights. The widening project scheduled for the Connector and Hungry Neck Boulevard will help the situation, but it is delayed due to funding issues.

6. Highlights of Department Reports

A. Fire Department Monthly Report. Fire Chief Graham gave a brief summary of the February 2007 report (**Exhibit A**) and noted she was available to answers questions.

B. Police Department Monthly Report. Police Chief Buckhannon gave a brief summary of the February 2007 report (**Exhibit B**) and noted he was available to answer questions. Chief Buckhannon stated the meters are being serviced next week; they will be operational the first weekend in April, and businesses are being notified the meters will be operational at that time.

7. Miscellaneous

Councilman Taylor inquired on the status of the raised striping on the Connector. The current striping on the Connector is fading. Raised striping is needed separating the bicycle and vehicle lanes, as well as striping and reflectors in the middle of the Connector. Administrator Tucker stated she will request an update from South Carolina Department of Transportation.

Chief Buckhannon presented the pedestrian yield signs that will be placed at peak times at 25th Avenue, 28th Avenue and 24th Avenue crosswalks. South Carolina Department of Transportation has agreed to these signs during peak times only. Chief Buckhannon

stated these would be used beginning Easter weekend, and they are rated at 35 mph to not damage vehicles. The call boxes will be installed this weekend or beginning of next week depending on the schedule of the utility service.

Chairman Marino reported to Chief Buckhannon that a resident had expressed concern to him about speeding vehicles on Cameron Avenue between 37th Avenue and 40th Avenue. Chief Buckhannon will monitor the situation. There was also a complaint about speeding on Back Bay Drive.

MOTION: Mayor Sottile made a motion to recommend to the Ways & Means Committee to purchase a \$2500 to \$2700 traffic counter out of Municipal Accommodations Tax funds; seconded by Councilman Taylor; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 11th at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
John Marino, Chairman