

**Town of Sullivan's Island**  
**Public Facilities Committee Minutes**  
2050-B Middle Street  
July 23, 2015  
8:30 a.m.

The Public Facilities Committee met on July 23, 2015 at 8:30 a.m., all Freedom of Information Act requirements being met. In attendance were Committee members Bachman Smith (Chair), Chauncey Clark, and Mark Howard. Staff in attendance were Andy Benke, Jason Blanton, Greg Gress, Ellen Miller, Randy Robinson and Anthony Stith. There were nine members of the public in the audience, including Councilmembers Sarah Church, Rita Langley, and Susan Middaugh.

Chairman Bachman Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting, and proceeded with the first item on the agenda.

**1. Station 17 Water Plant**

Two residents have requested that the fence around the Station 17 Water Plant be replaced with a privacy fence. Currently there is a six foot cyclone fence with barbed wire along the top. Estimates have been received for a 6 foot and 8 foot shadowbox wood fence.

Mr. Smith stated it needs to be determined if the fence will be replaced, and if so, what height fence, what time frame, and using what funding. He added that the Town should consider spending funds on cleaning up the different public facilities areas on the island. He would like to pursue building the fence; and believed a six foot fence would keep with neighborhood compatibility.

Mark Howard stated there is no safety concern with the current fence, but the requested fence is worthy for future consideration in the budget.

Chauncey Clark expressed he did not know the site lines yet, and questioned what was the priority of this project in comparison to others.

Comptroller Jason Blanton stated funds would be available in the water reserve fund, but perhaps wait until after next month's FY15 audit to see the cash flow of the water fund. Water & Sewer Manager Greg Gress commented that the main purpose for the water reserve fund was for water line replacement. There is another budget line item for systems repairs and maintenance for general items such as this, but it would not cover the cost of the fence this fiscal year. He preferred that if this fence was approved, that it be included in next year's budget. Mr. Gress did talk with the adjacent property owner regarding the fence and believed they have come to a consensus.

Mr. Blanton noted there were enough reserves in the water reserve fund that are not related to the water line project. Mr. Clark commented that he agreed with Mr. Smith, and believed that a budget line item should be added next year for clean-up of public facilities and historic structures.

Mark Howard suggested maintenance on the current fence vegetation, but Mr. Gress noted the current vegetation on the fence does provide screening.

This item will be moved to the Council Workshop in August for discussion.

## **2. Flag Street Access Trail**

Correspondence has been received requesting Council to consider an access trail at Flag Street for bicyclists/walkers to Sullivan's Island Elementary School. Correspondence has also been received in opposition to this request.

Mr. Smith stated riding a bicycle to school on I'on Avenue from the west end of the island is a dangerous situation; however, the access trail on Flag Street may not be the best answer. The Flag Street right-of-way needs to be clarified. Also, school vehicular traffic was given the driving route to bring children to school; bicyclists could be directed to use Middle Street and cross at Station 20-1/2 where there is a crossing guard.

Mr. Howard stated the Town has an obligation to maintain the buffer zone next to the school as well as to the residents adjacent to the school. The bicycle racks are where the buses come in to school; not near Flag Street. Bicyclists could use the sidewalk and come in through the bus drop-off.

Mr. Clark stated the current bicycle route is very unsafe because bikers are directly facing traffic; however, Flag Street may not be the best answer. A sidewalk on I'on Avenue is an option. Mr. Smith's suggestion of using Middle Street to the crossing guard at Station 20-1/2 is an option that could be tested.

### **Public Comment**

Julia Khoury, 1728 I'on Avenue. She understands the safety issue; but the buffer zone around the school should not be disturbed. Mr. Smith noted the lease with the school district requires a buffer zone.

Tracy Hahn, 2662 I'on Avenue. She lived near a school for years before moving here, and parents would wait down the street for their children to walk to them, instead of waiting in the pick-up line. Multiple areas for non-designated pick-up were a big problem.

Barbara Spell, 1702 Atlantic, stated that some parents at the school are picking up their children in non-designated places, exactly as Ms. Hahn stated. It is an issue of not following the rules.

Mr. Smith stated the Flag Street access raises concerns about the buffer zone, as well as indications in the lease that adjacent historical structures should not be impacted or diminished, and the school or use of school should not damage any local properties.

This item will be placed on the Council Workshop agenda in August for discussion.

### **3. Boardwalk from Sullivan's Island Elementary School to Beach**

The Sullivan's Island Elementary School has asked Council to consider the installation of a boardwalk-style beach access path from the school playground to the beach.

Mr. Smith stated the only thing in the school district lease that impacts this is the requirement for the Town to offer access to the beach; however, it is not specific as to the access being improved. More input from the school may be needed, as it is not known why specifically the school is requesting a boardwalk.

#### **Public Comment**

Julia Khoury, 1728 I'on Avenue, asked about the status of the sand path from the school that winds down to the beach, which was maintained by the Boy Scouts.

Administrator Andy Benke answered the sand path is still there; however it was overgrown while the school was being built. The Boy Scouts are currently revitalizing it, including replacement of some plant identification signs. There is an outdoor classroom under the oak trees.

Fire Chief Anthony Stith stated the Station 21 path is a handicapped accessible path. The students could come out of the back gate of the school to Pettigrew Street to the handicapped path. With the sand path and the Station 21 path, the wooden boardwalk from the school straight to the beach would be a large expense to be utilized only during school hours during the school year. Also, weekend visitors would bring increased pedestrian traffic behind the school along the boardwalk.

Mr. Clark stated the section the students would walk before getting to the Station 21 path is very narrow; it is a busy place where many people park. His concern is the neighbors at the end of Pettigrew Street; however, if the gate is locked during the day, and during the summer months, beach visitors will not use that as an access to parking. He continued that the current winding sand path to the beach is a good choice.

Mr. Howard agreed with Chief Stith and Mr. Clark. He believed the current winding path was the best choice. The Town's obligation is granting them access, and building the boardwalk is out of the Town's scope.

Mr. Smith stated at this time he is in favor of exploring an alternative rather than building a boardwalk to the beach.

This item will be placed on the Council Workshop agenda in August for discussion.

#### **4. Boardwalk Construction and Improvement**

Boardwalk construction at Stations 29 and 23, and ADA improvements at Station 18-1/2 have been budgeted and approved for this fiscal year with Greenbelt funds. These boardwalks are being discussed again because of the financial impact of a potential boardwalk at the school. The Greenbelt available balance is \$83K. The additional building of a potential school boardwalk would cause a deficit in that funding.

#### **Public Comment:**

Julia Khoury, 1728 Iron Avenue, inquired if improvements will be made to the erosion problem at the end of the Station 18 handicapped path. Chief Stith stated the erosion has been a problem for about a year. His department has tried to keep it more manageable, but said when the sand bar attaches this summer, it will push the sand back. The improvement with the Greenbelt fund is for Station 18-1/2 path.

Susan Middaugh, 2424 Raven Drive, stated she is in favor of any improvements to paths that could easily be made ADA accessible to help the disabled and aging citizens.

Chief Stith stated there are rules for ADA paths, but they are different from a handicapped path. The handicapped paths have different rules such as a handrail the length of the path. He continued that funds are put in the Maintenance budget each year for ramps, and he planned to one day get ramps coming all the way to the street. This would help not only the handicapped, but also older people and parents of young children with strollers or wagons. It works well for the Fire Department also because the pedestrians are not on the emergency access paths. The path at 18-1/2 is at the end of an unimproved street. There is a street right-of-way that goes down that beach path and turns into Thee Street. This path is frequently used, and does get dug-out. It is on an ADA slant, but proposed to be a flat deck area so it does not get as sandy on that end.

Mr. Benke added that along with an ADA/ handicapped boardwalk such as at Stations 18 and 21, ADA/handicapped parking is needed. Every path will not be ADA/handicapped; the Town is improving what is already in place.

Mr. Clark stated this construction and improvement are needed. Also, he suggested signage at Station 22 directing visitors to the additional handicapped access beach paths.

This item will be placed on the Council Workshop agenda for August for discussion, along with the school boardwalk request.

#### **5. Island Clubhouse**

Building Official Randy Robinson gave an overview of the Island Clubhouse structure.

Over the past two years, improvements such as the handicapped ramp and ADA/handicapped bathroom have been completed. Last month an engineer was hired to look at the building. The

engineering report identified minor and major problems. The minor items have been corrected; however, the most concerning problem is the floor system. The floor is rotten in places and has termite damage. An appraisal needs to be done to determine the amount of work that can be done, because the 50% FEMA rule would apply. This building shares property with the Fish Fry Shack; and also the last three feet of building length are on the property of the National Park Service; so the appraisal will be more involved than usual. Mr. Benke noted that the surveyor in 1949 made an error when the building was conveyed to the Town.

### Public Comment

Mike Walsh, 2530 I'on Avenue, expressed concern with amount of money budgeted for Island Club as presented in June 1<sup>st</sup> Special Council meeting minutes. The inspection report shows that the structure is a disaster, and he strongly urged the Committee to not spend the amount of money in the current budget for the Island Club, although he was not certain the exact amount of that budget.

Sarah Church, 2215 I'on Avenue, and also Chair of the Recreation Committee, stated the budget of \$120K was inclusive of all recreational facilities. It includes the Island Club, park improvements, and Battery Gadsden physical space. The funds will be prioritized when the needs of all facilities and groups conducting recreational services for Sullivan's Island are known. No decisions have yet been made.

Barbara Spell, 1702 Atlantic Avenue, believed the recreation expenditures of Sullivan's Island should be revisited. Kiawah Island offered a referendum regarding recreation spending and the residents turned it down. Mount Pleasant is offering a referendum on recreation spending. The Town's comprehensive plan does not include funding more recreational facilities. The Town should have a referendum for residents to voice their opinion before large expenditures on recreation are spent.

Mr. Smith stated the Island Clubhouse is a Town facility in disrepair. The Town has the responsibility to keep people safe in and around its building, so the status of the building must be addressed. The next step is to get an appraisal to go along with the engineering report to better inform Council before any decisions are made.

Mr. Clark stated the immediate safety concerns have been met; an appraisal is the next step. Perhaps the building could be repaired to use it another two years while the Town finds a budget, location, and resources to provide an Island recreation facility that would be voted in as part of the future budget. He also expressed concern about the lease, and that while the facility is missing opportunities for income, the Town is paying the repairs and utilities on the triple-net lease. He added that the people who run the programs at the facility provide a valuable service and the children enjoy the activities. The Park Foundation members also are dedicated people who have fundraisers to help fund recreational items and functions on the Island.

Mr. Howard stated this was built as a temporary structure decades ago, and has no craftsmanship as other structures from that time period. The two-year plan that Mr. Clark mentioned could be a good idea; however, the building is not worthy of putting a lot of money into it.

Sarah Church agreed that the appraisal should be done, and stated that these issues with the Island Club have also been discussed in the Recreation Committee, as the Island Club falls under that Committee. Mr. Smith stated the Public Facilities Committee was interested in the safety of the building. These two Committees will discuss how to divide the duties for this item.

This will be discussed further after an appraisal is received.

**6. Resident requests access across town-owned property**

There was no discussion. Mr. Lasso is gathering additional historical information to furnish to the Town.

**7. New Matters - None**

**8. Matters Pending**

Raven Drive Extension – Request that the Town consider renaming the newly opened section of Raven Drive. Mr. Horan will furnish Council as to area residents' desires for a name change.

**9. Adjourn** – Motion was made by Chauncey Clark, seconded by Mark Howard, to adjourn at 9:44 a.m., carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Ellen Miller