

**TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, January 13, 2015

A meeting of the Public Safety Committee of Council was held at 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, January 13, 2015 at Fire Station Training Room, 2nd Floor, Fire Station, 2050 Middle Street, all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied. Present were Committee members, Chauncey Clark, Chair, Council members Pat O'Neil and Mary Jane Watson. Staff included Administrator Benke, Police Chief Howard, Fire Captain McDaniel and Asst. to Administrator Darrow.

I. Call to Order. Chair Clark called the meeting to order, stated the press and public were duly notified pursuant to state law and noted all members were present (approximately 26 audience members and 3 media in attendance).

II. General Discussion St. Patrick's Day Celebration

Chair Clark provided general introductory comments noting the Town has received a permit application to hold a St. Patrick Day special event, at present, from one eating establishment in the Community Commercial District. He noted the Committee was present to discuss the request, gather comments from the public and render a recommendation to Council on this special event application.

Public Comments:

Skipper Condon, 2201 I'On Avenue, SI

Would like to see the following scenario for the St. Patrick Day Celebration:

- No closing Middle Street
- Businesses conduct the event inside their individual eating establishments
- No netting or blocking the streets
- All expenses shared by businesses with nothing paid by the Town taxpayers

- Inquired why businesses are not concerned with the possibility of underage drinking and potentially losing a liquor license.
- Commented the Polar Bear Swim (January 1, 2015) went well.

Tim Reese, 305 Station 20, SI

- Submits the St. Patrick's Day celebration is an Island tradition that has gotten out of control and needs to be modified, but not eliminated.
- Islanders have enjoyed and attended the St. Patrick's Day celebration for 20 years. Submitted residents not attending have been "turned off" by the rowdy crowds.
- Stated the 2015 Polar Bear Swim went well: good crowd and traffic flow/control. Town businesses should strive to emulate the Polar Bear Swim for St. Patrick's Day.
- Asked for other restaurant owners to come forward now, not closer to the event, to indicate whether they will request a permit too.

Paul Boehm, 3209 Middle Street, SI

Requests Committee recommend to Council the following:

- No outdoor alcohol sales (inside only)
- No walking streets with alcohol

Aaron Siegel, Home Team BBQ, SI

- His restaurant will work with Town; stated he was unhappy with 2014 event

Jamie Maher, Dunleavy's Pub, SI

- Stated he would like to return St. Patrick's Day celebration to the way his family (Dunleavy's owners) held it for 20+ years
- Requests closure of Station 22 ½ from Middle-I'On only; no closing Middle Street
- Noted he is the only applicant for this event, at present

Karen Coste, 322 Station 19, SI

- Noted many residents cannot be at this meeting because they are working; submitted she is present to convey their messages.
- Does not support any St. Patrick's Day celebration: it is a drunk-fest and embarrassment to the Town. She noted many Island residents refuse to attend it.
- Noted Chair Clark commented he has met with commercial district (CCD) restaurants. Expressed interest in details of those conversations.
- Requested Town survey Island residents on their wishes for the event (scope, hours, etc)

Luke Lewis, 2102 Pettigrew, SI

- Supports the family event for St. Patrick's Day in the park (Town coordinated event)
- Asked for police staff opinion on the safety of the 2014 CCD street party. Submitted he did not feel safe during the event, due to the type and size of crowd, notwithstanding excellent police efforts.

Addison Ingle, 1719 Atlantic, SI

- Noted he was relatively new to the Island. Asked how the request process would flow, whether other restaurants could submit requests later, etc.

Committee Discussion:

Chair Clark reiterated that the Town has received a permit application to hold a St. Patrick Day special event, at present, from one eating establishment (Dunleavy's Pub) in the Community Commercial District (CCD). The request is to hold the celebration on two dates: Saturday, March 14th and Tuesday, March 17th (actual St. Patrick's Day).

Councilmember O'Neil observed it might be helpful to explain what is allowed, by right, and what would be considered special accommodations for a St. Patrick's Day celebration. He noted that, by right, the CCD businesses may:

- Hold a St. Patrick's Day celebration at each restaurant.
- Alcohol consumption is allowed within the property and the crowd size within the restaurant is limited by the fire marshal's maximum capacity.

Special accommodations (for activity not normally allowed) might include:

- Outside alcohol sales
- Consumption of alcohol on the street/public areas
- Closure of one or more streets

Councilmember Watson noted that the Town through the Recreation Committee holds a family-oriented, non-alcoholic morning event at Stith Park on St. Patrick's Day. It is well-attended (approximately 350 people, to include children and parents) and includes a magic show, storytelling, dancers, etc. She noted that for 2015 the Town will hold the family park celebration on Saturday, March 14, 2015 as children will be in school on St. Patrick's Day (Tuesday, March 17th). Otherwise, she asserted the event would be held strictly on St. Patrick's Day. She stressed that the Town's family park event be viewed as a separate event and not lead to allowing a street party further down the CCD on Middle Street.

Councilmember O'Neil noted the City of Charleston holds events only on St. Patrick's Day and does not close the road, unless it is for a parade. He supports having the event on St. Patrick's Day only.

Chair Clark noted Savannah holds St. Patrick's celebrations only on the actual day – March 17th.

Committee generally agreed to recommend only March 17, 2015 for the event. Discussion moved to hours for the celebration.

Committee asked for public safety officer input regarding recommended hours.

Police Chief Howard and Fire Captain McDaniel both agreed the event should be held from 10AM-sunset (6 or 7PM). They clarified that crowds should be dispersed by dark. Captain McDaniel noted closing off Station 22 ½ (between Middle Street & I'On Avenue, next to Dunleavy's) during those hours is not a problem. He clarified that set-up would begin at 10AM.

Administrator Benke asked for clarification from the Committee on factors such as:

- Closure of only Station 22 ½ between Middle Street and I'On to accommodate Dunleavy's Pub request;
- Beer only sales outside
- No outside sales in other restaurants

Committee comments segued to discussion of contingency plans for an unexpectedly large crowd. Administrator Benke noted that any decision on a contingency plan needs to be made early in this review process.

Aaron Siegel (Home Team BBQ) and April Bennett (Poe's Tavern)

Both interjected they would have extra security in their respective restaurants to handle their crowd/capacity control, with or without the Town erecting a street-side barricade. Both indicated they had no plans to join the Dunleavy's request for St. Patrick's Day street party, conduct outside alcohol sales, etc.

Committee directed crowd control questions to Police Chief Howard and how the Town Staff could keep people moving down the restaurant row if the Dunleavy's street crowd grew too big.

Police Chief Howard noted he would have extra police staff during the event day to monitor crowd size and flow, and, direct traffic as necessary.

Resident Paul Boehm asked about (party) buses and whether this was legal. Chair Clark noted the Town cannot prohibit transportation on the Island, whether rentals buses, limousines or taxis. He noted that the event date (Tuesday, a work day during work hours) will help reduce the traffic draw to the event.

Residents asked how the Town would communicate to the general public the scaled back event. Committee members noted that, besides using the Town's media outlets (website, E-Newsletters, text alerts, flyers, etc.), the Town would rely on local media to help spread the message (noting that Channel 5 TV news and print media, Island Eye and Post & Courier, were present at this meeting).

Resident Skipper Condon asked about no-parking signs on the Ben Sawyer Causeway. Administrator Benke noted SCDOT controls parking on the causeway rights-of-way. The Town would have to make a permanent request to change access to this.

MOTION: Councilmember O'Neil recommended to Council the following: consider approval of Dunleavy's Pub request for a permit allowing for special accommodations for its St. Patrick's Day celebration with the following contingencies:

- (a) Event held from 10AM-dusk on Tuesday, March 17, 2015 only**
- (b) Closure of Station 22 ½ from Middle Street and P'On Avenue only**
- (c) No closure of, or barriers on, Middle Street**
- (d) No outside sales/alcohol consumption on streets and public rights-of-way**
- (e) Town close acceptance of other special event permit application requests from other CCD businesses for St. Patrick's Day**

Seconded by Councilmember Watson; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

Chair Clark noted this recommendation moves forward to Council for consideration at its January 20, 2015 regular meeting.

III. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned (Councilmember O'Neil motion; Councilmember Watson seconded; unanimous approval) at approximately 5:15p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Chauncey Clark, Chair
Public Safety Committee

Approved at the January 20, 2015 Regular Council Meeting