

TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, June 11, 2018

A meeting of the Public Safety Committee of Council was held at 8:30 a.m. on Monday, June 11, 2018 at Town Hall, 2056 Middle Street, all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied. Present were Committee members, Chauncey Clark, Chair, Council members Mayor Pat O'Neil and Sarah Church; staff included Administrator Benke, Fire Chief Stith, Police Chief Griffin, Zoning Administrator Henderson 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 that all Committee members were present. Approximately twenty (20) residents (including Council members Howard, Langley & Reese, as interested residents) and one media (Lynn Pierotti, Island Eye News) were in attendance.

II. General Discussion: Parking Matters

A. Restriction of Middle Street Parking Outside of Commercial District and Public Safety Concerns

- **Station 20.5 Street to Station 18 Street**
- **Station 22.5 Street to Station 26 Street**

Committee discussed proposal, as recommendation by Police and Fire Chiefs, to extend one-side of street parking restriction on Middle Street from Station 20.5 – Station 18 Streets, and, from Station 22.5 – Station 26 Streets. Parking change is being proposed for safety considerations, specifically to allow for emergency vehicle apparatus access through Middle Street. This parking change would reduce Middle Street parking inventory by 82 spaces.

Committee Comments

Chair Clark supports parking change for safety reasons and to allow for maximum emergency response time.

Mayor O'Neil supports parking change to allow emergency vehicles to quickly respond to emergency calls, and, navigate through the CCD and major intersection at Station 22.5 and Middle Street. Parking change would allow for civilian vehicles to pull over for emergency apparatus.

Council member Church echoed comments by other Committee members, noting that she defers to recommendations made by the Fire Chief and Police Chief as to what support they need from Council in order to maximize public safety. She supports increased safety over additional parking spaces.

Public Comments

Bunky Wichmann (2211 I'On Avenue, SI) supports parking change for safety reasons but asks for consideration for business district employee parking. Also recommends evaluating and reducing speed limit island-wide for safety reasons.

Rusty Bennett (3124 Marshall Boulevard, SI) noted the 82 parking spaces that will be removed with this parking change, primarily in/around the community commercial district (CCD), will significantly impact the CCD businesses and, accordingly, asked for reconsideration of this large number of reduced parking spaces. Noted, in his experience and research, he has not found other municipalities that reduce valuable parking spaces to accommodate the potential need for a public safety vehicle to navigate a road. He specifically noted that the section of Middle Street from Stations 22.5 to 26 Streets was beyond the bottleneck area for fire apparatus coming from Middle Street/Station 20.5 Street fire station trying navigate in/around Station 22.5 and Middle Street, the location where the majority of traffic attempt to turn to get on/off the Island via Causeway.

Committee asked for Chiefs' comments at this point:

Chief Griffin – noted that in traffic jams his staff routinely stack vehicles approaching Station 22.5/Middle Street from Isle of Palms direction (Station 26 – Station 22.5). This is done to allow for vehicles along CCD to turn left to head off Island, the direction that creates the most traffic congestion in the CCD, particularly when the Ben Sawyer Bridge is open.

Chief Stith – noted King Street in downtown City of Charleston has one-side of street parking restrictions for the same reason as Sullivan's Island: to allow for emergency vehicle access along the road. Submitted that, in his opinion, vehicle congestion is equally problematic on either side of Station 22.5/Middle Street when cars are blocking emergency apparatus. Submitted vehicles need a place to pull over to allow emergency vehicles to quickly respond to, or transport off the Island, injured residents and visitors, or, to respond to a fire call.

Public Comments (continued)

Pat Ilderton (2507 Atlantic Avenue, SI) noted three considerations:

- Current narrow driving experience for vehicles along Middle Street, due to vehicles pulling in/out to park, makes drivers more inclined to drive slower along the road, regardless of the posted speed limit. Creating a wide-open road, with improved driver visibility, might encourage drivers to travel at the maximum speed limit, or more. Suggested speed limit be reduced to 15mph in CCD.
- Questioned how many instances occurred over the past two years where life or property has been compromised due to emergency vehicle access during bottleneck traffic problems
- Recommended Town retain a traffic engineer consultant to get professional input on the parking change proposal and increased safety

Chair Clark commented that the Town works closely, and has consulted, with SCDOT on its managed parking plan, and, SCDOT has given approval for necessary safety-related parking changes like the one proposed. He recalled that the Town has discussed for years the parking situation in the CCD, noting the Town retained a consultant firm circa 2008/2009 who held public charettes on CCD parking and traffic congestion.

Brian Hellman (2714 Atlantic Avenue, SI) remarked on the unintended consequences of removing paved parking along Middle Street. He noted that residential streets that were not host to beach parking in past years currently have beach visitor cars parked along the grassy rights-of-way. He noted that reducing parking along Middle Street pushes the burden of beach parking onto the residents, exacerbating congestion along the side streets, increasing difficulty for resident guests to find street parking, tearing up grass in unpaved rights-of-way, etc. Submitted Council's decisions should focus on what is best for residents and taxpayers, not Island tourists. He suggested establishing residential only parking areas like those on Isle of Palms.

Chair Clark noted that it would be difficult to copy Isle of Palm's policy of residential only parking districts as Sullivan's Island is geographically narrower than Isle of Palms. He commented that, since Mt. Pleasant is booming in population growth, all residents should expect every street on Sullivan's Island to fill up with beach traffic, whether the resident streets have seen parking in the past or not. Unfortunately, every street and Island resident will continue to share the pain of neighboring population growth and continually increasing beach traffic.

B. Commercial District Parking and Traffic Flow

Chair Clark presented a parking lot concept utilizing five (5) privately owned lots on Middle Street to provide off-street parking for CCD businesses and patrons, specific lots being:

1. Jasper Boulevard facing rear of split zoned lot (residential portion) properties on Middle Street addressed as 2214 A & B Middle Street, 2216 A& B Middle Street and 2210 Middle Street (behind Poe's Tavern) (TMS # 529-05-00-031; 529-05-00-094; 529-05-00-095; 529-05-00-090; 529-05-00-091; 529-05-00-032; and 529-05-00-033)
2. Portion facing Middle Street of split zoned lot property on 2202 Middle Street (TMS# 529-05-00-034)
3. Middle Street facing portion of split zoned lot (commercial portion) property at 2118 I'On Avenue/Middle Street (TMS# 529-09-00-022), at corner of Station 22 Street and Middle Street

Also, potentially

4. Middle Street facing portion of split zoned lot (commercial portion) property at 2102 I'On Avenue/Middle Street (TMS# 529-09-00-019), at corner of Station 21 Street and Middle Street

Illustrated below:



(Visual discussed during meeting)

Chair Clark and Staff noted between 40-50 parking spaces could be provided behind Poe’s Tavern and adjacent properties (hashed space in illustration above), and, approximately 20-25 parking spaces on 2118 Middle Street lot.

Considerations would include (not exhaustive list):

- Perpetuity of parking access on private lots
- Participating businesses allowed to use parking lots
- Fencing, buffers and landscaping
- Noise considerations for neighboring residents
- Connectivity between different TMS lots
- Lighting
- Potential text amendment changes to Zoning Ordinance:
 - §21-50C. (4): Short-term auto parking lot – currently allowed on the commercial portion only of CCOD split zoned lots
 - Section 21, Article III: RS District Special Exception for residentially zoned portions of CCOD-1 Overlay
 - Section 21, Article I: CCOD 1 Overlay Standards
 - Section 21, Article XV: Parking Requirements on lots in CCOD-1 (Accessory Structures)

Public Comments

Rusty Bennett (3124 Marshall Boulevard, SI) expressed support for off-street parking lot concept noting this was “an idea whose time has come” and recalled previous traffic and parking consultants suggesting the use of the split zoned lots as parking lots.

He offered two additional suggestions:

- (1) Create 2-hour parking on Middle Street in front of the tennis and basketball court areas at J. Marshall Stith Park; and
- (2) Enhance lighting on Middle Street in front of Stith Park, or within Stith Park, for restaurant employees who park behind Town Hall in order for restaurant patrons to use vacant parking spaces near CCD businesses

Tim Reese (305 Station 20, SI) suggested utilizing Town owned Battery Thompson, located on I'On Avenue behind US Post Office and in front of Sullivan's Island Elementary School complex, for permit issued restaurant employee parking.

Bunky Wichmann (2211 I'On Avenue, SI) recommended Town promote summertime parking on Sullivan's Island Elementary School parking, a Town owned parking lot

Heidi Brown (405 Station 22, SI) did not support proposed off-street privately-owned parking lot concept stating following objections:

1. Residential portion of split-zoned lots have not been offered for sale on the open market, to her knowledge, so Town cannot determine if people would want to build on residential section of CCOD-1 split zoned lots or not;
2. Safety considerations for vehicles entering/exiting these parking lots to the rear of businesses such as Poe's Tavern;
3. Town would, by allowing commercial parking activity on residentially zoned lots, shake resident confidence in the veracity of Town Council decisions and ordinances. This issue was extensively discussed years ago. The CCOD overlay districts within the Zoning Ordinance were a result of that study-decision making process that incorporated resident feedback/input;
4. The parking lots proposed would not be installed to benefit residents but, rather, tourists, patrons and some business owners.

Pat Votava (2213 Jasper Boulevard, SI) echoed Ms. Brown's comments noting

1. CCOD #1 & CCOD#2 study, deliberation and public feedback process resulted in the establishment of the overlay districts that included the specific goal of providing for residential construction on the properties along Jasper Boulevard.
2. Changing the use of these residential portions of the split zoned lots through special exceptions breaks faith with residents on Jasper Boulevard, and, other residents on the Island. If this change is allowed, is any residential lot safe if the Town feels like there is a special need? Asked which residents wanted a parking lot in front of their homes.
3. Submitted neighbors on Jasper Boulevard, across from CCOD#1 overlay, deserve the same quality of life, standards and protections as other residents on the Island.

Thereafter Ms. Votava read an email dated June 10, 2018 from **Cynthia Kolb (2208 Jasper Boulevard, SI)** and **Andy Kay (2202 Jasper Boulevard, SI)**, both who could not be present today (**Exhibit A**)

Susan Middaugh (2420 Raven Drive, SI) also echoed comments made by Ms. Votava and Ms. Brown, noting

1. The long process to establish the CCOD overlay districts was the best available compromise solution to the issue.
2. Submitted the residential character for Jasper Boulevard would be compromised with proposed change, specifically noting that noise barrier protections would be lost with a parking lot installed across from the Jasper Boulevard residences
3. Suggested the Town look to commercially zoned lots in the CCOD for parking lots solutions, and, noted the Poe Library/Battery Gadsden complex (1921 I'On Avenue) does afford some parking options for restaurant workers.

Bunky Wichmann (2211 I'On Avenue, SI) reiterated that Town needs to evaluate speed across the Island and take measures to proactively lower speed limits.

Committee Comments

Chair Clark noted SCDOT owns the roads and drainage on Sullivan's Island so the Town would have to work through a study and request process to change speed limits on the Island. He noted that Town staff do communicate with SCDOT peers on traffic and other issues.

Councilmember Church supports lower speed limits Island-wide, noting that this topic is on the Town's radar for potential funding of a traffic study as funds allow

Mayor O'Neil suggested Town staff reach out to CCOD business owners to see if there is an appetite to potentially engage in a privately-owned parking lot arrangement.

Councilmember Church noted there is a need to have good parking options for businesses along Middle Street, although not necessary along Middle Street. She expressed reservations in converting privately owned CCOD split zoned residential lots for commercial use, noting

- There is an issue of fairness to residents who purchased, built or improved on their homes along Jasper Boulevard with the expectation that the Town would keep the lots across the street for residential use only;
- Questioned the unintended consequences of expanding commercial use within the CCOD, specifically noting the split zoned lots along Jasper Boulevard, currently being used for residential use. What if those property owners wanted to change their property use and get a special exception for a parking lot or other commercial activity?

Mayor O'Neil expressed support for the idea of 2-hour parking on Middle Street in front of the tennis/basketball courts and J. Marshall Stith Park.

Member of public questioned how 2-hour parking would work. Administrator Benke answered the Town could use a paid parking kiosk system with parking slips issued for up to 2-hour increments.

Chair Clark suggested next steps would be to speak with residents in the Jasper Boulevard area and speak with business owners in the CCOD area, plus the Graham family that owns 2118 and 2102 I'On Avenue/Middle Street properties.

Committee actions/recommendations:

As to amending parking plan (Agenda item 2(a))

MOTION: Mayor O’Neil recommended to Council to proceed with changes to parking plan to create one-side only parking on Middle Street from Station 20.5 to Station 18 Streets, and, Station 22.5 to Station 26 Streets; seconded by Councilmember Church. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

As to privately-owned parking lot proposal, 2-hour parking only sections along Middle Street and J. Marshall Stith Park/Middle Street lighting (discussed with Agenda item 2(b))

- 1. Committee will render report to Town Council regarding the privately-owned parking lot proposal, deliberation and public feedback on same from this meeting. This will allow the body of Council to express whether they wished for the Town to further explore this option**
- 2. Committee will render report to Town Council for discussion of potential 2-hour parking along Middle Street in front of tennis/basketball courts within J. Marshall Stith Park complex for Council feedback on further pursuing this possibility**
- 3. Committee will render report to Town Council for discussion of potential enhanced lighting along Middle Street and/or within J. Marshall Stith Park for safety considerations for Council feedback on further pursuing this possibility**

Committee moved to next agenda item

C. General Parking Flow and Enforcement

Chief Griffin offered a report on summertime traffic flow strategies and parking enforcement:

- Utilize cones within street near Station 22.5 and Middle Street intersection for right turn onto Middle Street only on weekends. Process works well.
- In response to Mayor O’Neil’s suggestion for prominent stop signage, Chief Griffin noted Staff could include a temporary eye-level “Stop Sign” in the road area/near cones if desired or needed
- Department has increased parking patrols and doubled beach Kubota patrols as traffic calming, enhanced parking enforcement and safety measures

Mayor O’Neil strongly recommended residents avail themselves of the official Town communication platforms to learn of Town meetings, news and events instead of unofficial social media sites, official Town sites being:

- Town website
- Town e-newsletter
- Nixle platform
- Twitter and Facebook accounts
- Administrator’s mass email address “book”

III. Adjourn

There being no further written or public comment, and there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned (Mayor O'Neil motion; Councilmember Church seconded; unanimous approval) at approximately 10:00a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Chauncey Clark, Chair
Public Safety Committee

Approved at the June 19, 2018 Regular Council Meeting

Lisa Darrow

From: Votava, Patricia Ann <votava@musc.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 5:08 PM
To: Andy Benke; Lisa Darrow
Cc: Votava, Patricia Ann
Subject: RE: Town of Sullivan's Island Public Safety Committee Meeting June 11,2018
Attachments: SI Andy Kay letter re using residential lots for parking.docx

This message was sent securely by MUSC

Hi Andy and Lisa,
Here is the copy of my neighbor Andy Kay's letter that I mentioned at yesterday's meeting and was asked to submit. Please enter it in the record of the 6/11/18 Committee Meeting and distribute to Council.
Thanks so much
Pat Votava

From: Votava, Patricia Ann
Sent: Monday, June 11, 2018 4:45 PM
To: 'Andy Benke'; 'ldarrow@sullivansisland-sc.com'
Cc: Votava, Patricia Ann
Subject: FW: Town of Sullivan's Island Public Safety Committee Meeting June 11,2018

Hi Andy and Lisa,
Here is the copy of my neighbor Cynthia Kolb's letter that I read at the meeting this morning. Please enter it in the record and distribute it to Council.
Thanks so much
Pat Votava

From: Cynthia Kolb [mailto:kolb.cynthia.md@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, June 10, 2018 12:45 PM
To: Votava, Patricia Ann
Subject: Town of Sullivan's Island Public Safety Committee Meeting June 11,2018

Dear members of the public safety committee and other interested parties,

I am writing to you as a resident of 2208 Jasper Boulevard to oppose the use of residential lots on this street for business district parking. The look and feel of our neighborhood would suffer tremendously both from the aesthetic and noise level points of view. I have already noticed, as the summer season heats up, that parking is increased on our street, including where no parking signs already exist. Establishing parking lots would increase traffic to the street and encourage street parking. Removing the barrier that these residential lots provide would also increase noise and foot traffic. More car and foot traffic would create more litter further damaging the appeal and decreasing property values.

In an effort to continue to honor the charming nature of our small island, I would respectfully request a solution that continues to provide that barrier and keep the appeal of our residential street. I have visited Sullivan's Island since childhood for its beautiful beaches surrounded by quaint residential streets. I studied on these beaches for

medical school exams. I always dreamed of returning to the island and I was finally able to buy a small slice of this heaven for myself and family in 2009.

As described so eloquently by Dorothea Benton Frankin in her novels, Sullivan's Island is enchanting with its unique bluff mud beaches, Palmetto trees and colorful local lore. My neighbors and myself would like to continue to walk around the neighborhood or sit on our porches and enjoy the views.

Thank you for hearing my input. I apologize that I was not able to come in person to provide my opinion, but work keeps me away. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Best regards,

Cynthia Kolb

This message was secured via TLS by [MUSC](#).

Two Areas of Consideration

- Public Safety
- Zoning & Quality of Life

Assumptions

- Request is for additional parking in the residential zoned areas assumed to include access from Jasper Blvd

Summary

- Residents desire to maintain the residential character per the original rezoning discussions; anything detrimental to that is suspect. The original rezoning discussion emphasized maintaining a residential character for the area; using residentially zoned property along Jasper for commercial purposes runs counter to that original discussion and agreement
- The majority of traffic on the 2200 block of Jasper arrives or leaves via Myrtle Ave and Station 22 and thus impacts more than 2200 block of Jasper
- A significant amount of the current traffic thru the neighborhood travels at excessive speeds and without stopping at intersections in order to beat congestion at Station 22 1/2 and Middle or because they are late for work or because they are in a hurry to get off the island. This is in conflict with the residential use of the area and should be diminished rather than increased.
- The neighborhood sees substantial low speed traffic: kids, bikes, joggers, golf carts, etc. All travel the area to avoid the congestion on 22 1/2 and/or Middle. They come from the causeway or from the other side of 22 1/2. They are headed towards the playground, beach, library, school, post office, etc. They are children, seniors, residents and visitors. This low speed route of travel needs to be enhanced not diminished; no other good routes exist for this low speed traffic. A wider sidewalk along the playground would be a plus in this regard.
- About a dozen kids live on and play in these streets. Its terrifying to see them on skateboards, scooters, bikes, etc. during weekend or weekday peak traffic periods.
- While the number of major accidents in the neighborhood has been minimal; the number near misses is phenomenal. I myself was recently rear ended while stopped, waiting for traffic to pass, so I could pull into my drive. The other driver was coming onto the island and trying to beat the congestion at 22 /12 & Middle

This concession has not been given full and complete thought and may not stand following further consideration and discussion.

ANDY KAY
2202 JASPER