

November 19, 2002

The regular meeting of Town Council was held on the above date at Town Hall, all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied:

Present were: J. Marshall Stith, Mayor
Carl J. Smith, Mayor Pro Tem
Patrick M. O'Neil, Councilman
Alys Anne Wiedeke, Councilwoman

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Stith, followed by the invocation.

There were sixteen private citizens present and three members of the media.

The floor was opened for comments from the citizens. Mr. Stu Kimball of Sullivan's Island Elementary School reported that the fundraiser at the beach on September 24th was a success, raising more than \$2,400 for the school. He expressed his appreciation to the Police and Fire departments for their help with the event. The school would like to hold the event next year on September 20, with a back-up date of October 4. Mr. Kimball will be in touch concerning this date later. Make MacMurphy extended an invitation for everyone to come hear the Bishop at Holy Cross Church to consecrate the new building. Jerry Beach of Advanced Cellular Suncom, along with three representatives of Triton PCS, which is the parent company of Suncom, were present. They presented a proposal for a cell site on Sullivan's Island at the water tower, in order to increase quality of coverage to the residents, police and fire departments. There is no guarantee of improved service, however, the percentage of completed calls would be in the high 90% range, which would be 75-80% better than now. There are approximately 2,000 Suncom phones in use by Sullivan's Island residents. In the past Council has been concerned about the aesthetics of the antennas on the water tower, and the facility boxes. Suncom works with jurisdictions if their ordinances require landscape screen or another type of screen for the facility boxes. The antennas and the transmission line would be painted as the same color of the water tower. No other companies could use their antennas or cabinet space at this time, however, other antennas could be placed on the water tower. The water tower is the preferred location because of its height, with the handrail being approximately 110 ft above ground level. Before putting on the equipment, a third party provider would do a structural analysis of the water tower. Councilwoman Wiedeke asked whether there are any FEMA requirements for the facility box. The Building Inspector will check, however, utility companies are allowed to put them on the ground. Their antennas would not prohibit the function of future carriers' antennas on the water tower, as RD emissions studies are done, and the FCC regulates the amount of emissions. The wireless internet service could also locate their antennas on the water tower in the future. They are at a higher frequency, and would not interfere with the cellular service. If the Town of Sullivan's Island decided to remove the water tower, there would be a notification period to SunCom. Patricia Maher from Dunleavy's Pub questioned why we are considering the hospitality tax. Mayor Stith said that Sullivan's Island is looking for innovative ways to help with the general budget, in order

to offset any need to raise property taxes. As a small residential community, we need to consider the needs of the residents. The rumor that this tax is proposed in order to pay for parking spaces is incorrect. A portion of the tax will be used for the consultant for residential and commercial zoning. Matthew Treanor of Atlanticville Restaurant stated that the revenue generated from the cell services using the tower would be a great source of income. Mr. Treanor asked if Council looked at other ways to increase revenue. Mayor Stith responded that it currently is proposing a 1% Accommodations Tax on the agenda for short-term vacation rentals. The short-term vacation rental license fee has recently been increased. In the past, Council decided not to install parking meters in the business and residential areas. There was a real estate transfer fee of ½ of 1% on the sale of property. This was raising money until the State declared it unconstitutional. Mr. Treanor asked if some of the money collected will go to improving the business district. Mayor Stith said that better lighting, sidewalks, crossovers, making the business district safer and more desirable are goals, and the funds have not been available. Mr. Treanor asked if other businesses could be taxed, for instance, the gas station. All businesses can not be taxed based on state law. A municipality can not impose a gas tax. However, foods prepared in the gas station would be subject to the hospitality tax. Mr. Treanor also suggested that agendas and minutes of the meetings be e-mailed to residents in addition to being placed on the website. Chief Howard will talk with Mr. Treanor concerning this possibility. Margie Evans, of Sugar Shack, questioned that the elimination of short-term vacation rental licenses would eliminate more tourists, and she has very little support from the local population. Mr. Dave Brown from the Saltwater Grille asked that if the hospitality tax passes, when would it take effect, and how much revenue would be generated. It would take effect in January or February, with about \$100,000 total raised from the hospitality and accommodation taxes. Councilwoman Wiedeke stated that she appreciates all the businesses on Sullivan's Island. John Liberatos of 2624 Myrtle Avenue stated that because he saw his tax bill amount double, he commends Council for anything that can be done to reduce property taxes. Ann Graham of 2102 P'on Avenue stated that attendance is low at the Town meetings. She suggested that business owners or a representative should come to the meetings, especially the planning meetings so they will be aware of what's going on. Councilman Smith stated that he is strongly in favor of the hospitality and accommodations taxes because of the property tax. He could not have supported the hire of the consultant without some type of funding other than property tax. Councilman Smith recognized Mayor Stith and Ms. Make MacMurphy for their help with the Island Living History Series at Station 22 Restaurant.

Motion was made by Councilman O'Neil, seconded by Councilman Smith, to amend the October 15 minutes, carried unanimously. The minutes were approved as amended.

Councilwoman Wideke recognized Paul Fouchecourt as the Lab Technician of the Year for District 7 of the Water Environment Association of South Carolina.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Wiedeke, to adopt a Resolution to Retain the U.S. Post Office, carried unanimously.

New correspondence was received concerning property; will wait until full Council present to address this correspondence.

There was no Attorney's report.

Councilman Smith made a motion, seconded by Councilman O'Neil, to amend the agenda to add the bid of the Ford Explorer police vehicle, carried unanimously.

Councilman Smith made a motion, seconded by Councilman O'Neil, to accept the highest and sole bid of \$9,001 from Chris Gypin for the Ford Explorer police vehicle, carried unanimously.

Ways and Means Committee, Mayor Stith. Philip LaRoche from Charleston County presented the Charleston County Needs Assessment earlier this evening. The resolution to support keeping a post office on the island passed this evening. We will have second reading of the hospitality and accommodation tax ordinances later in the meeting.

Personnel Committee, Alys Anne Wiedeke. Motion was made by Councilman O'Neil, seconded by Councilman Smith, to approve Billy Topping as Shift Supervisor in the Fire Department, carried unanimously.

Water and Sewer, Councilwoman Hazen-Martin. Work has begun on the Poe Avenue sewer lines. The PER has been submitted to DHEC and will be waiting for their response. The engineers are reviewing the red water logs. The CPW main line break has been fixed. The cause of the damage has been inconclusive; the repair cost will be absorbed by all CPW customers. The phosphate feeding will start in a few days. Once distributed, results should be seen within weeks.

Building and Construction Committee, Councilman Wood. Building Official Randy Robinson has completed intensive training and passed the exam as Certified Floodplain Manager.

Fire Committee, Councilman Wood. The lobster & barbeque dinner went well with 740 lobsters and 503 pounds of barbeque being sold. The part-time training officer will become full-time in January 2003. The decorations for Dec. 6 tree lighting ceremony have begun.

Recreation Committee, Councilwoman Hagood. Motion was made by Councilwoman Wiedeke, seconded by Councilman Smith, to approve the November 23 wedding on Station 22 at 5:00 p.m. Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman O'Neil to approve the hosting of the Annual Charlie Post Classic Memorial Run, with the usual arrangements, carried unanimously. The Christmas tree lighting will be Friday, December 6 at 5:30. Santa Claus and the Wando Chorus will be there.

Real Estate Committee, Councilman O'Neil. The planning consultants have met with the Planning Commission, members of the Ad Hoc Committee and Town Council. They will be holding public meetings during their January visit. Motion was made by Councilwoman Wiedeke, seconded by Councilman O'Neil, to direct the Planning Commission to review the issues as outlined by the Zoning Administrator and to make recommendations to Town Council with the advice and counsel of legal attorney; carried by a vote of three, with Councilman Smith abstaining. A public hearing was held concerning the clarification of setbacks ordinance; it will have first reading tonight.

Police Committee, Mayor Stith. The Amber Alert system is now effective in the state. An arrest was made concerning the large cigarette theft at The Pantry.

Streets and Maintenance Committee, Councilman Smith. There has been no word from the Highway Department as to when the Breech Inlet bridge will be completed. Chief Stith is meeting with the company about the curbing next week.

Motion was made by Councilman O'Neil, seconded by Councilwoman Wiedeke, to pass first reading of An Ordinance to Amend Sections 21-28, Paragraphs (D), (F), (K), and (L) of Chapter 21 Zoning Code of the Town of Sullivan's Island Code of Ordinances pertaining to Front and Rear Yard Setbacks; carried by a vote of three, with Mayor Stith abstaining.

Motion was made by Councilman O'Neil, seconded by Councilwoman Wiedeke, to pass Second Reading on An Ordinance to Amend the Sullivan's Island Code of Ordinances by Adding Chapter 23, Establishing a Local Accommodations Fee for the Town of Sullivan's Island, carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman O'Neil, to pass Second Reading of An Ordinance to Amend the Sullivan's Island Code of Ordinances by Adding Chapter 24, Establishing a Hospitality Tax for the Town of Sullivan's Island, carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Wiedeke, to defer second reading on An Ordinance Amending Section 21, Zoning Code of The Sullivan's Island Code of Ordinances By Establishing An Historic Old Fort District Overlay District, Identifying Its Location, Amending The Official Zoning Map and Including Provisions Regarding the Removal and Demolition of Certain Buildings; carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Wiedeke, to defer second reading of An Ordinance Amending Section 21, Zoning Code of the Sullivan's Island Code of Ordinances by Establishing an Historic District Overlay District, Identifying Its Locations, Amending the Official Zoning Map and Including Provisions Regarding the Removal and Demolition of Certain Buildings, carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Councilman O'Neil, seconded by Councilman Smith, to adjourn into Executive Session, carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen McQueeney
Town Clerk