

March 21, 2016

A Special Meeting of Town Council was held on the above date at 5:00 p.m. at Holy Cross Episcopal Church, all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied.

Present were: Patrick M. O'Neil, Mayor
Chauncey Clark, Mayor Pro-Tem
Sarah Church, Councilmember
Mark Howard, Councilmember
Rita Langley, Councilmember
Susan Middaugh, Councilmember
Bachman Smith, IV, Councilmember

Mayor O'Neil called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. and stated the press and public had been duly notified. There were approximately 20 members in the audience, including one member of the media. The purpose of the meeting was for Town Council to review the transition zone plan that was passed at the February 25, 2016 meeting and discuss implementation issues. Public comment would be allowed, time permitting, with the meeting to end at 7:00 p.m. Mayor O'Neil expressed appreciation to Father Chris Warner and Hal Rose, along with staff of Holy Cross Episcopal Church for the use of their facility and their generosity.

Mayor O'Neil gave an overview of the approved transition zone.

Town Administrator Andy Benke stated the lot coverage of the transition zone between Station 16 and Station 28 ½ is roughly 30 acres, therefore, there are two different ways to approach the methods of work to be done: hand-cutting or using large machinery. Administrator Benke stated that there are pros and cons to both methods. Council would also need to consider the ability to use herbicide to prevent the roots from re-establishing and to prevent the wax myrtles from resurfacing. Administrator Benke asked if Jeff Jackson would go into detail with hand-cutting verses machinery.

Jeff Jackson stated that mechanical is a good way to do the work because it is fast, but it leaves behind a mulch area that would take 2-3 years to decompose which may alter the soil chemistry somewhat. He stated that hand-work would still be necessary even with the use of large machinery because some of the trees are too close together to fit a machine between. A few options of machinery are bush hogs and a Gyro-Trac. Mr. Jackson stated that hand-work is going to be labor intensive but less disturbing to the ground layer, which would be more aesthetically pleasing. He stated that hand-work would require chemical treatment, to prevent an intense maintenance program for years to follow. Mr. Jackson stated that chemicals are the most

effective way to get rid of the plant permanently. If you do not treat the stump once it has been cut, it will sprout back up. He commented that a good thing with using chemicals and doing the work by hand is once you give it a clean cut and apply chemicals to it immediately, you would be done with that tree. He suggested using stronger chemicals, to be more effective.

Councilmember Middaugh stated that she is opposed to using a Gyro-Trac because it eats into the ground and disturbs the soil. She also stated that she has a problem with using herbicides.

Town Administrator Benke suggested that the Town issue an RFP and have contractors submit proposals so Council can interview and hear different methods from the experts. Councilmembers were in agreement with this suggestion.

Mayor O'Neil then asked if Council would like to talk about financing, keeping in mind that the Town still is not sure what was going to be allowed by regulatory authorities.

Town Administrator Benke explained to Council they had a couple of options. Considering what the State Statue allows the Town to do, Council could create a special budgetary "bucket" to manage the Accreted Land; put funds in the bucket every year from the unrestricted surplus (which is anticipated to be about 625k this year). Then, at the end of next year, the Town could increase the millage rate to replenish the restricted reserve fund. Administrator Benke also explained that the Port Authority has inquired about buying some sand from the Town's spoil site for Port facilities work, which might add to available funds for the transition should Council approve, but that he is still waiting on the results of their soil testing which will determine whether they can use the Town's sand for that purpose.

Mayor O'Neil opened the floor for public comments.

Fred Wittle, attorney representing Margaret Buck, owner of 2673 Bayonne, stated concern regarding two items: work beyond the 100' Transition Zone; thoughts of a boardwalk in the maritime forest parallel to the ocean. Mayor O'Neil stated that Council has not gone beyond the Transition Zone at this time in its protected land planning, and that the Town's plans for additional Nature Trails involve very little, if any, boardwalks.

Julia Khoury, 1728 I'on Ave., stated her concern with materials and methods to be used for vegetation. She expressed concern with using any large machinery, and therefore, suggested doing everything by hand to ensure no accidental cutting would occur.

Tim Reese, 305 Station 20, showed Council a video of one of his clients' houses on Isle of Palms which cleared its beachfront areas using a Gyro-Trac. He stated that it took about an

hour and a half to clear out 130 feet of land. Mr. Reese also asked Council to please consider selling a Town lot to help with the finances.

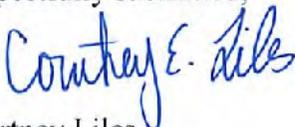
Wayne Guckenberger, 2105 Pettigrew, suggested to Council to take a small section in the accreted land and learn from that to help make a decision with what to do overall. He also had concerns about using herbicidal poison and potentially exposing the ground water to those chemicals through sprinkler systems.

Nicky Bluestein, 2513 Atlantic Ave., stated he was concerned with poison ivy being in the accreted land. Mr. Bluestein asked Jeff Jackson if only the top of poison ivy plants were cut off, will it grow back. Jeff Jackson answered "Yes, poison ivy is a native plant."

Evelyn Needle, 2419 Atlantic Ave., expressed concern with Julia Khoury's statement regarding using large machinery because residents have not been able to cut anything in the accreted land using large machinery. Mayor O'Neil suggested discussing this with Ms. Khoury after the meeting.

Motion was made by Councilmember Langley, seconded by Councilmember Smith, to adjourn at 6:14 p.m., carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,


Courtney Liles