

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Date: September 1, 2009

Time: 2:00 P.M.

Members Present: John Safay, George Williams, Drew Laughlin

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Scott Liggett, Charles Cousins, Jill Foster, Darrin Shoemaker, Jeff Buckalew, Mike Roan, Teri Lewis, Nicole Dixon, Bruce Skipper

Others Present: Tom Peeples, *Mayor*, Ken Heitzke, Bill Ferguson, Bill Harkins, *Councilmen*, Frank Soule, *Island Recreation Center*, Kyle Theodore, *Wood & Partners*, Alan Perry, past President, *Island Recreation Center*

Media Present: None

1. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 P.M.

2. FOIA Compliance:

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3. Committee Business:

Councilman Williams moved to approve the Minutes of August 4, 2009.

Councilman Laughlin seconded the Motion. The Minutes of August 4, 2009 were unanimously approved.

Chairman Safay made the suggestion that the Agenda be amended and proposed the Committee hear the Town Street Name Sign Improvements item first as it will be a shorter presentation. Councilman Laughlin moved that the Committee hear the Town Street Name sign Improvement item first, followed by the Proposed Aquatics/Recreation Center Enhancement. Councilman Williams seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Unfinished Business:

None

5. New Business

Town Street Name Sign Improvements

Darrin Shoemaker, Traffic and Transportation Engineer stated to the Committee staff recommends the Town proceed with installing oval shaped, decorative street name signs to serve the approaches of major arterials at all mast-arm mounted traffic signals within the Town. It is recommended that the signs be 5' in width by 2.5' in height, incorporate a 6" minimum font, a white border and legend on a mahogany brown background, flat-panel high intensity retro-reflective sheeting throughout the entire area of the sign, and they be

mounted on the mast-arm to be centered on the arterial street approach to the extent practical. Staff recommends the intersection of William Hilton Parkway with Shipyard Drive and Wexford Drive be treated initially, prior to any other intersections, in order to afford Town Council with an opportunity to evaluate the sign's performance before manufacturing similar signs for the remaining locations. Staff further recommends the Town's ground-mounted street name signs along major arterials within the Bridge-to-the-Beach redevelopment area and along Mathews Drive be replaced with the Town's new standard decorative support, that all sign panels incorporate a white legend on a forest green background, and are manufactured as a flat-panel sign with high-intensity retro-reflective sheeting throughout the entire sign area, both border and background.

Councilman Laughlin stated he still had concerns that the signs are not going to be visible enough with the size and mahogany background. Mr. Shoemaker told him he is very confident with the increase in size and particularly the increase in retro-reflectivity the visibility of the signs should be even greater due to a larger type face. Mr. Shoemaker stated his strong expectation is that the changes to the size, location and retro-reflectivity will address the visibility concerns.

Councilman Williams moved the Public Facilities Committee recommend to Town Council they accept staff's recommendation and go forward as presented. Councilman Laughlin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Proposed Aquatics/Recreation Center Enhancement

Chairman Safay stated he had met with Charles Cousins and other members of staff and this meeting will be for information purposes only. There will be no recommendations made to Town Council from this meeting. A subsequent meeting will be held at a later date at which time they will have a better opportunity to digest the information and make a recommendation.

Nicole Dixon, Planner, stated the idea of a new enhanced Recreation Center and new Aquatics Center has been discussed at various and several public meetings over the last several years. The People for Parks Group joined with the Island Recreation Center in 2007 in their funding efforts for a proposed facility. At that time they hired a Consultant called Leisure Group who conducted a Citizens' Attitude & Interest Survey. The results of the survey are included in your packet and will be discussed today. The current Recreation Center and pool were built approximately 22 years ago. Since then, the population of the Town has more than doubled and an increasing interest in aquatic activities has created a demand for an additional or enhanced pool facility. The Recreation Element of the Comprehensive Plan identifies the need for an additional swimming pool, specifically stating it should be built on the south end of the Island.

Kyle Theodore from Wood and Partners, a local Landscape Architecture and Land Planning Firm located on the Island who specializes in parks and recreation planning stated she was brought on board with this project to help People for Parks facilitate moving this project forward and doing some background planning work and research.

Wood and Partners worked with Leisure Visions to complete a public opinion survey that was issued in January and February, 2008. The results are included in your Agenda Packet today.

Ms. Theodore proceeded to review the results of the survey in detail.

Councilman Williams questioned how it was decided which homes would be mailed the survey. Ms. Theodore responded they were randomly selected using zip codes.

Going forward, Councilman Williams stated he was going to have to have a much better understanding of how the numbers on survey came about and how the numbers were extrapolated. Ms. Theodore responded and assured Councilman Williams the methodology that was used is an acceptable methodology for testing public opinion survey information. It is a representative sampling of the Island. She advised they would never be able to get all 30,000+/- folks to respond, therefore, a representative cross section of the Island was surveyed. It has a 95% accuracy rate. Councilman Williams stated if you are doing a survey and you ask the right questions, you will get the results you want. Councilman Williams stated he is concerned that they are not truly representative about the uniqueness of our Island.

Councilman Laughlin stated in general he is of the opinion that our public facilities at least with respect to some of these things are not adequate for our needs. Councilman Laughlin stated he read though the report and attached limited value. Councilman Laughlin stated he believes surveys of this nature have an inherent bias built into them. Councilman Laughlin stated he was one of the households that got the survey in the mail. He questioned who is likely to take the time to respond to such a survey and who is likely to respond to it because they want to see more recreational facilities. I suspect a lot of people just throw it away he stated. I am not sure that the folks who return it and the folks that throw it away are an even cross section of the hole.

Chairman Safay asked what type of aquatic facility they are talking about in the survey. Ms. Theodore stated the planning efforts have focused on a facility with a 50 meter lap pool, it also includes a therapeutic water tank which is used for rehabilitation, exercise classes and instruction.

Ms. Theodore reviewed the Master Plan which focused on the Recreation Center Building, the components contained within it are a gymnasium with track, a 50 meter lap pool, concessions, restrooms, locker room space, a senior space, multi-purpose rooms, offices, therapeutic water tank, weight room and cardio space. In addition to that building, are outdoor components which consist of a maintenance building which would be necessary to operate and maintain the facility, parking, flexible use open space, a walking trail, playground, basketball court, kiddie pool and splash pad, six tennis courts and a series of outdoor picnic shelters in addition to the detention requirements that the Town requires per the LMO and open space requirements. All of those things totaled and tested on paper equate to about 30 acres of land. Obviously the detention pond in and of itself consumes a significant chunk of almost 2 ½ to 3 acres.

Ms. Theodore stated in working with the Parks & Recreation Committee, they actually asked us to take the Master Plan that we created and to prioritize it and break it into multiple phases. For the purposes of that study they began with a portion of the Recreation Center and that particular **Phase I** component included the 50 meter lap pool, rest rooms and locker rooms, multi purpose room, offices, weight room and cardio space. It's also supported with outdoor components such as the walking trail, maintenance building, kiddie pool, splash pad, parking, open space landscaping and the detention pond required by the LMO.

Phase II called for the building to be completed with the addition of the gymnasium and track, senior space, therapeutic water tank and an outdoor basketball court.

Phase III brought on line the additional components of the six basketball courts, the flexible use open space, picnic area and additional parking that would be needed to support those components.

Ms. Theodore stated they presented all this information to the Parks & Recreation Commission. Fortunately, the Survey Consultant attended the meeting and was able to answer questions regarding the Survey which this Committee did not have the benefit of. They endorsed not only the things that we have presented today, but they also endorsed the methodology that was used.

Councilman Williams asked Ms. Theodore if anything beside the "Taj Mahal" was looked at. Ms. Theodore said what was looked at was what had been the public priority from the public opinion survey and that was what was tested. What was master planned and placed on paper are all of the components. That is not to say that they shouldn't be prioritized or phased. There is no community that can afford to go in and take on a building program and do everything all in one fell swoop. Councilman Williams stated he was very disappointed because what he can't find anywhere where we have 30 acres that is affordable and usable and can't find anywhere where we can come up in even a 5-7 year plan where we can actually think about even funding half of this. Councilman Williams also stated he knows there have been discussions regarding if they cannot afford something like this, what can we do with the existing Recreation Center and what can we do to expand, renourish, put part at one location and another part in another location. None of that has been addressed here and that is very disappointing.

Charles Cousins, Director of Community Development stated he realizes the Committee has many concerns and feels like what should be done is scale back and determine what we really need to do and not get tied up with this and the 30 acres and \$23,000,00. Once this is determined, then you can move forward and do a business plan and see if it is doable for the Town.

Councilman Laughlin said he applauded the effort and stated he would like to see a focus on things that those who do not have the opportunity to be a Country Club member and believes that everyone who lives on this Island has an opportunity for themselves and their families to go to a nice facility and not have it be overpopulated and not have it be over burdened and have it accessible.

Mayor Tom Peeples said it is his understanding that the County has built swimming pools virtually every where else in the County except Hilton Head Island. We need to talk with the County about building a pool. Mayor Peeples also stated he believes they should address the Board of Education about the land that is adjacent to the Recreation Center and see if we cannot come to some understanding either through long term lease and/or purchase of that property so we can renovate and expand the existing Recreation Center. Mayor Peeples stated that there definitely is not 30 acres of land to accommodate this plan. We need to figure out what we need. I believe we need additional pool facilities, a remodeled Recreation Center. We need to narrow down the focus. Mayor Peeples said we need to direct this back to Peoples for Parks or the Island Recreation Center and have them come back and make recommendations to this Committee as to what it is you think we ought to do that is realistic because this isn't.

Alan Perry, past President of The Island Recreation Center stated The Island Recreation Center came to the Parks & Recreation Commission back in 2007. They charged us with going out and getting the survey which they approved. They also came back and asked that it be put on paper. Wood and Partners did that for them. What you are seeing is something that was created for the Parks and Recreation Commission based on the findings of the survey. We understand it is the ideal situation and are not asking for the ideal situation. We are asking for improvements to the Recreation Center and the community as well.

Chairman Safay stated one of the things they didn't get today that would be pertinent would be to get some specific usage numbers of the current Recreation Center. We are making an assumption that because the population of the Island has double since the Recreation Center was built that the usage has doubled. If there is any data like that that could be made available for the next meeting, it would be helpful. I think from what I have heard from the Mayor and Committee members, we are essentially in agreement with the concept that we need to spend money to do a further analysis to find out what the direction for the expanded Recreation Center, along with the Aquatics Center is. It seems there is some sentiment towards trying to expand the existing Center. Perhaps we should look more in terms of expanding what we have got and if it means building a second pool in the same general area which might be an upgraded more competitive pool, perhaps that is the way we should go, but I don't know yet. Chairman Safay agreed with Mayor Peeples we should approach the County and the Board of Education for help. Maybe we are looking for a really good second community facility that folks could use and enjoy and perhaps it could have some element of competition but maybe not quite to the expense that is required to be able to be certified for national competition.

Charles Cousins suggested that this issue come before the Committee again at the November meeting.

6. Adjournment:

Councilman Williams moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Laughlin seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen D. Knox
Senior Administrative Assistant