

**THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND  
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

**Date:** Monday, March 23, 2009

**Time:** 4:00 P.M.

**Present from Town Council:** Thomas D. Peeples, *Mayor*; Ken Heitzke, *Mayor Pro-Tem*; John Safay, George Williams, Drew Laughlin, Bill Ferguson, *Councilmen*.

**Absent from Town Council:** Bill Mottel, *Councilman*

**Present from Town Staff:** Stephen G. Riley, *Town Manager*; Susan Simmons, *Director of Finance*; Scott Liggett, *Director of Public Projects & Facilities*; Michelle Green, *Finance Assistant*; Susan Blake, *Executive Assistant*

**Present from Media:** Daniel Brownstein, *Island Packet*

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**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. OPEN SESSION**

**a. Land Acquisition Funding**

Steve Riley reported that there was a total of \$5,184,000 available to spend for land acquisition. This was in addition to the approved \$17 million bond referendum. Given the state of the markets, it was recommended that Town spend the existing acquisition fund before borrowing money in the bond market.

The Town Manager briefed Town Council on thoughts and suggestions for the land acquisition strategy as outlined in his memo attached to the agenda package. One area of discussion involved the idea of using land acquisition funds to acquire properties the Town felt were in need of redevelopment; demolish older structures on the site if necessary; and re-sell the property with use restrictions to facilitate redevelopment. Another idea involved acquisition of properties for the purpose of hazard mitigation.

Mr. Laughlin observed that the Land Acquisition Manual criteria for the acquisition program were very restrictive. In a reading of those restrictions, it seemed to revolve around traffic congestion, open space and aesthetic quality, and public access and views to the water. Mr. Laughlin wondered whether the Manual would need to be revised if Town Council were to broaden their land acquisition program strategies.

Mr. Williams talked about the 2008 referendum language and said he was concerned that the public expected they would use the funding to acquire property for parks or open space, not for redevelopment. He was not saying that a redevelopment strategy was a bad idea; merely that they needed to be aware of the public's perception when they voted on this referendum.

Mr. Heitzke felt that the referendum did give the Town Council the right to purchase land for the purpose of redevelopment. Mayor Peeples said he agreed with Mr. Heitzke's interpretation. The Mayor was in favor of having the ability to acquire property for redevelopment purposes, mentioning The Vista neighborhood in Columbia, S.C. and the downtown area of Greenville, as examples.

**b. Public Comment**

Peter Ovens spoke about a request by the Heritage Classic Foundation to trade some properties with the Town.

Glenn Stanford expressed his support for the concept of acquisition of property for redevelopment. He encouraged Town Council to create a greenprint for the Island.

David Ames also encouraged the Town Council to evaluate a long term vision for the community.

Tony Andreano did not want Council members to purchase land for commercial development. He believed purchases should be to create parks and open spaces.

Perry White recalled the history of the land acquisition program. He remembered that in the past, the Town could buy property, down-zone it, and put it back on the market.

Bryan Hughes thought it was very important for the Town to consider redevelopment of the older areas that needed upgrading.

Mayor Peeples commented that they often receive inquiries from people who own property that is zoned RM-4. And unless the property allowed for use of a waterway, the Council is not interested in acquiring low-impact residentially zoned property. The Mayor wanted people to be aware of this.

Mr. Heitzke offered the opinion that it was important for the Town to encourage economic development.

Mr. Safay said that he thinks Council needs to be receptive to situations that can create a better economic base for the Island.

Mayor Peeples felt that if the right opportunity came along that could be a spur for redevelopment of an entire area of the Town, they should be ready and willing to consider it. If this required a revision to the Land Acquisition Manual, then he was in favor of doing that.

**4. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Steve Riley suggested that there be an executive session for matters pertaining to appointments to Boards and Commissions. They would then come back out to open session to deal with any appointments and then return to executive session to discuss land acquisition matters.

At 4:58 Mr. Heitzke moved to adjourn to executive session for the reasons stated by the Town Manager. Mr. Laughlin seconded. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

The Mayor called the meeting back to order at 5:02 p.m. and asked if there was any business to take up as a result of executive session.

Mr. Laughlin moved that Monte Leath be nominated to serve as the Hilton Head Island representative on the Aviation Advisory Board. Mr. Heitzke seconded. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

Mr. Laughlin moved that Michael Lynes be appointed to fill a vacancy on the Construction Board of Adjustments and Appeals. Mr. Williams seconded. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

Steve Riley requested another executive session to discuss land acquisition matters. At 5:03 p.m. Mr. Heitzke moved to adjourn to executive session for the reason stated by the Town Manager. Mr. Laughlin seconded. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

The Mayor called the meeting back to order at 6:53 and stated there was no further business to discuss as a result of executive session.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

At 6:53 p.m., Mr. Heitzke moved to adjourn. Mr. Ferguson seconded. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

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Susan Blake, Secretary

Approved:

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Thomas D. Peeples, Mayor