

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Date: January 5, 2010

Time: 2:00 P.M.

Members Present: John Safay, George Williams, Drew Laughlin

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Curtis Coltrane, Greg DeLoach, Scott Liggett, Charles Cousins, Jill Foster, Brian Hulbert, Jeff Buckalew, Darrin Shoemaker, Jayme Lopko, Nicole Dixon, Shea Farrar, Randy Nicholson

Others Present: Tom Peeples, *Mayor*, Ken Heitzke, Bill Ferguson, Bill Harkins, *Councilmen*, Michael Marks, *Coastal Discovery Museum*, Thomas Barnwell, Jr., Robert Smith, *Heritage Library Foundation*, Perry White, Richard Cyr, *Hilton Head PSD*, Paul Beckler and Rob Lolik, *Dove Street Residents*

Media Present: Laura Nahmias, *The Island Packet*

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:

1. Approval of Minutes

Councilman Laughlin moved to approve the Minutes of December 1, 2009.

Councilman Williams seconded the Motion. The Minutes of December 1, 2009 were unanimously approved.

4. Unfinished Business:

5. New Business

Hilton Head Island History Park

Mr. Robert Smith, President of the Heritage Library Foundation thanked the Committee for the opportunity to present their ideas relating to the development of a Hilton Head Island History Park at the mid-island site we own which heretofore has been known as the Zion Chapel of Ease site. In times past, this site was much more than a cemetery and Church. On it or close by, there were a Praise House, a Masonic Lodge and a Muster House – all important features relating to our history. Our Foundation acquired it when we merged with the Hilton Head Historical Society in 2005 and acquired their mission and their property.

The Foundation is asking the Committee to take action and confirm they are considering the Town's participation in the design to insure it will meet the standards of the other parks which the Town has created. Also, the Foundation is asking the Committee to commit to ask Town staff to start on evaluating access, parking and land acquisition solutions relating to this Park development. Mr. Smith stated these actions will clear the air by confirming the heretofore "dream" of having this park is an idea worthy of consideration and worthy of comprehensive practicable evaluations. The Foundation is not asking the Committee to commit to going ahead with the project at this time because there is much work to be done before a responsible decision can be made.

Mr. Smith said the Foundation's first objective in advocating the creation of this Park is to make the best use of our historic property in order to maximize the benefits from having such a park to our residents, tourists and visitors.

Next, we see this park as an asset to the tourism. We are as interested as any other Island organization in keeping this as a prosperous community, and believe our objectives are synergistic with all who are promoting the Island as a place to live and enjoy.

Finally, as an all volunteer organization, we see this project as one that can inspire our membership to support our Foundation with funds, with historical research and with participation in events at the park.

Mr. Smith stated this project is not sufficiently developed to enable the preparation of a working estimate, or even a preliminary estimate of its cost. Precursors to an estimate must be the development of a land acquisition plan to accommodate access and parking, followed by a preliminary layout and park concept specification plan. These tasks suggest that someone from the Town staff should be assigned as a Project Manager at the start. We would be happy to participate, naming our own Project Manager and working with the Town to establish the design parameters based on our research and familiarity with the history.

Our method of funding is through philanthropic giving and grants. Even if we were to achieve the full support and endorsement of the Town, we do not think that such funding efforts would be sufficient to enable getting the Park built because grant funds of the magnitude required and for that kind of purpose have not been identified.

Mr. Smith advised the one thing that has stood in the way of developing this site as a Park is its compromised access and limited parking spaces. As an organization that has absolutely no capability in highway or urban design, we can only rely on the Town for solutions to these problems.

The Foundation is ready to meet with people or a firm the Town may designate to do the planning for this project. Mr. Smith thanked the Committee for opportunity to present these thoughts.

Councilman Williams said his concern is that he knows of no facilities close by to accommodate the number of vehicles the Foundation is talking about when they

have a function and stated this location may not work because you just can't get the people there. The other thing is that when have groups come to the Town for some assistance, there is some discussion of what they are willing to participate in financially. From what I am hearing here, the Foundation is asking the Town to take this project on and find the money. Right now, there is just enough money to pay the expenses of what we are trying to do now, much less taking on additional long term capital projects.

Councilman Williams asked Darrin Shoemaker, Traffic and Transportation Engineer to speak regarding the access issues. Mr. Shoemaker stated he had completed a review of the access issues associated with this site as well as an adjoining Town owned site that is effectively in between Mathews Drive and the Zion Chapel of Ease site. There is a very large channelizing island that channelizes the right turn off of Mathews Drive onto on-Island William Hilton Parkway. Channelizing means that it passes around a very large triangular island and right turning motorists coming off of southbound Mathews Drive and turning to the on island direction pass around a very large triangular island and enter an acceleration lane that continues for ¼ mile in the on-Island direction. Currently the access to the site is provided off of that channelized right turn lane. The only way you can get into the site is to enter that right turn lane from southbound Mathews Drive and the only way to leave the site is to proceed in the on -Island direction of William Hilton Parkway when leaving. The feasibility of an access relocation would need to be reviewed and approved by the South Carolina Department of Transportation and it is highly likely that the Department would look more favorable on such an access location if the size of the channelizing island could be reduced thereby moving the point where that channelized right turn lane begins off of Mathews Drive and relocating that toward the intersection and away from the proposed access location on Mathews Drive.

Michael Marks, Coastal Discovery Museum congratulated the Foundation for their hard work. He stated the Coastal Discovery Museum has looked at that historic site as an opportunity for tours in their regular package, but have shied away from it simply because of the parking issue. If somewhere down the road something could happen to help the parking issue, they would like to make it a part of their historic tours of the Island.

Councilman Laughlin stated he believed there were a lot of interesting ideas here and certainly would be nice to figure out a way to make that property more available and accessible for the enjoyment of residents and visitors, but there are many challenges.

Chairman Safay stated there were a number of floating issues here and didn't believe the Committee was in a position to make any recommendation beyond what we could do with the agreement of the Committee and Town Council and that would be to informally recommend our Traffic Engineer and perhaps in consultation with some other staff members take another look at the site in light of the presentation and see if there is some way of shoehorning in something along the lines that you would hope to do and something along the lines of what is really going to be practical given the problems that we may be facing and come back for a subsequent look at it when we have some information that we can digest.

Councilman Laughlin motioned the Public Facilities Committee recommend to Town Council we devote further staff time to develop a possible concept plan and identify the challenges and what would be required to overcome them as far as the access issues. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation by Paul Beckler, Kristi Beckler, Rob Lolik and Ben Ham regarding utilization of Town owned property on North Forest Beach Drive as new location for the Dove Street holiday lights display.

Mr. Rob Lolik and Mr. Paul Beckler, residents of Dove Street introduced themselves to the Committee. Mr. Lolik stated that back in 1990 a group of energetic neighbors began a holiday lighting tradition when Mr. Lolik and his wife decorated the magnolia tree in their front yard with white lights and red ribbons for their daughter's first holiday season. Mr. Lolik spoke of the experience that has developed on the Street as an important piece of the community that needs to be maintained. It has matured to a point where we no longer ourselves are up to the task or challenge. In the early years people offered them money for their light bills and suggested they donate to charity. They built a well on the Street and collected money, food, etc. for Deep Well. They needed to find a better way to manage the collections and to assure that some people did not feel obligated. Mr. Beckler led the work with Deep Well partnering with Coligny Plaza to set up the well with volunteers and an established schedule.

A short video presentation was then shown to the Committee.

Mr. Beckler stated to date they have received over \$50,000-70,000 in cash and checks for Deep Well, 3, 000 toys and 20,000 in canned goods.

Mr. Beckler also stated they will be celebrating their 20th year of lights on Dove Street during the winter of 2010 and would like to transition this project afterward to an entity larger than ourselves. This will enable the tradition to sustain itself in the years to come without an enormous use of personal resources. Up until now, a handful of residents have maintained a light display which illuminates not only our residences but also those of many absentee owners and others who choose to have us decorate for them. Therefore, we propose that a Committee be established to explore the possibility of creating **Dove Street Park** on a tract of land currently owned by the Town between Egret Street and Heron Street in North Forest Beach.

We are requesting that a small, one way dirt road be placed within the park to allow vehicles, such as retirement home busses with seniors to enjoy the light displays. This road would also support bucket trucks and/or other vehicles between this road and the existing bike path. An entertainment area which could host school choirs, church choirs or other performers could be situated next to another area where donation of presents, canned goods and money can take place. These donations could be divided up among participating charities.

This passive park should require minimal construction, electrical connections would need to be established, unnecessary underbrush removed and a dirt road created. The park would need to be maintained by a non-profit organization which would be responsible for staffing the park with volunteers during this festival period and for setting up and maintaining the light displays. The displays would need to be

consistent with those currently on Dove Street and should have a professional feel to them. Emphasis on LED lighting would be a plus. Bubble machines and/or other snow simulators should be considered. Balloon figures and large prefabricated displays would be excluded. The park's natural beauty would be emphasized exclusively through light displays featuring animals, trees, birds and other flora/fauna. We are also proposing a Gateway to Dove Street Park, a display which will emphasize the wonderful work that has been done at Coligny Beach Park. Several buildings there would be decorated in addition to trees and shrubs. We would like to emphasize that we wish that the Dove Street Park and Gateway to the Park be consistent with the vision that we have created over the last 20 years.

Chairman Safay stated there are going to some potential concerns with the site, including environmental and traffic issues, not to mention that the residents of the new location might have some concerns. Chairman Safay also mentioned he had discussed with Mr. Beckler the feasibility or maybe having this event set up at the Coligny Circle and also at the entrance to Coligny Park and utilizing the Coligny parking area that we currently have and seeing if there is some way to bring your vision to that area which is less residential and may actually provide opportunity for easier traffic control.

Councilman Laughlin stated he thought the Town should try and work with these folks to see what assistance we might be able to provide. Councilman Williams agreed and motioned the Public Facilities Committee recommend to Town Council that we figure out how to get some staff time and work with this group to see where we can go from here. Councilman Laughlin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Safay thanked Mr. Lolik and Mr. Beckler for their presentation and stated they are pumped and want to continue their concept and vision and move forward.

Consideration for funding of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Area Sewer Projects

Scott Liggett, Director of Public Projects & Facilities/Chief Engineer asked the Committee to endorse the list of priority sewer projects listed below and recommend that Town Council accelerate these projects and expand the expenditure of TIF funds (currently budgeted only for the Stoney Area Sewer Project) to include these other projects as the budget may allow. Staff is prepared to develop the proposed FY11 CIP to support the acceleration of those projects.

Stoney Initiative Area (multiple Town properties)
Chaplin Initiative Area (Linear Park)
Squire Pope (Fords' Shell Ring Area)
Marshland Road East (Broad Creek Headwaters)

Thomas Barnwell, Jr. stated he was here in support of the TIF funding, particularly in the Squire Pope/Stoney Community. Mr. Perry White stated he had some concerns and is bothered to hear that the Stoney project is going into a Community that is 80% owned by the Town and there are no plans for building into that area in the future.

After a brief discussion, Councilman Laughlin motioned that the Public Facilities Committee endorse staff's recommendation and forward it to Town Council. Councilman Williams seconded. The Motion unanimously passed.

6. Adjournment:

Councilman Williams moved to adjourn. Councilman Laughlin seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen D. Knox
Senior Administrative Assistant

Approved: February 2, 2010